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SAMUEL JOHNSON AND SATIRE

by

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ABSTRACT

When Samuel Johnson first began to write for a living he turned almost immediately to satire. In 1738 he published London, an "Imitation" of Juvenal's Satire III, and in 1739 he published two prose satires, Marmor Norfolciense and A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage. In the years that followed, Johnson produced many other satires, including, most notably, The Vanity of Human Wishes, which appeared in 1749. By far the greatest number of his satires, however, are found in the periodical works of the 1750's, the Rambler, Idler, and Adventurer. During this time he also wrote a "Review" of Soame Jenyns' A Free Inquiry Into the Nature and Origin of Evil (1756), in which he made one of his most effective attacks on human cruelty and indifference. Although incidental satire appears in nearly all of Johnson's major works, including his Lives of the Poets (1779-81), his last significant attempt at extended satire is Taxation No Tyranny (1775), in which he exposes the hypocrisy of American slave owners.

Despite this large body of works, extending over Johnson's entire career, a number of critics have argued that he wrote no "true" satires at all, or that while he sometimes approached satire, the attack is somehow always foiled. Other critics have felt it necessary to add such qualifying terms as "tragic" to his satires, and still others have argued that some of his satires are insincere and derivative. This dissertation attempts to demonstrate that Johnson indeed wrote many

satires in which the attack is in no sense "foiled." It also argues that while many of Johnson's satires are jeux d'esprit, many others are intensely passionate.

Aspects of satire have been used as a means of focusing the discussion. The distinction between satiric and non-satiric humour and the opposites of humour and invective provide a basis for understanding Johnson's very different attitudes toward Scotland and America. The tonal spectrum of Johnson's satire, ranging from tolerant amusement at one end to hostile indignation at the other, is also studied, with particular attention given to the targets located within this spectrum. More extensive notice is taken of Johnson's choice of "fictions." It has been remarked that, apart from formal verse satire, satire has no distinct structure entirely its own; that is, it is incorporated instead within forms that exist independently of satire. Among the forms most commonly appropriated by Johnson are the dream vision, beast fable, character sketch, and letter to the editor. The choice of "fiction" is not haphazard, but in fact constitutes an important part of the satiric strategy. Whereas the earlier discussion is organized on the basis of particular aspects of satire, London and The Vanity of Human Wishes are dealt with more broadly. By paying attention to structure, imagery, and characterization it is demonstrated that while both are satires, they are very different satires. Finally, in addition to his satires, Johnson's criticism of satire is studied, and what is discovered is how closely his practice as a satirist conforms to his beliefs concerning the proper function of satire.

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INTRODUCTION

Since this is the fourth dissertation in recent years to deal with Samuel Johnson and satire, some justification is called for.[1] In the opening chapter of the latest of these dissertations, Samuel Johnson and the Style of Satire (1972), Donald Siebert exhibits the uneasiness that I might be expected to feel:

> it may appear from the subject of this study that I have chosen to desert the cow of truth, already exhausted by scholarship, and try my hand at milking the bull.[2]

Whether Siebert in fact milks the bull will be left unexplored, but I can assert that he touches very little on matters discussed in my own work. Three of Siebert's principal chapters are: "Satire in the Life of Richard Savage," "The Scholar as Satirist: Johnson's Edition of Shakespeare," and "Johnson as Satirical Traveler: A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland." None of these works is, in my view, essentially satiric, though incidental satire may be found in each. Consequently, the works to which Siebert devotes his major energies form only a small part of my discussion.

Delbert Earisman was the first scholar to examine Johnson's satires at length, but he restricts himself in Samuel Johnson's Satire (1962) to the periodical essays and Rasselas. My most extensive study of the periodical satires occurs in the third chapter where I focus on Johnson's adaptation of the epistolary framework for the purposes of

satire. Earisman, of course, mentions that many of the periodical satires are written in the form of letters, but his comments are more in the way of passing glances than thorough analysis.[3] Further, Earisman concentrates on what he terms "The Objects of the Satire in the Essays." What Earisman calls "objects," I refer to as "targets"; and while he seems most concerned with cataloguing the "objects" (e.g. "Men and Women," "Money," "The Intellectual," "Trades and Occupations"), I am more interested in relating target to tone.[4]

The remaining dissertation, The Satire of Samuel Johnson (1964), by Arnold Tibbetts, also impinges very little on my discussion. Like Earisman, Tibbetts is concerned primarily with identifying the targets in the periodical satires. His chapter on London and The Vanity of Human Wishes might also suggest duplication since these poems are dealt with in my final, and longest, chapter. Tibbetts' treatment of London, however, consists, for the most part, of a comparison of Johnson's poem to its Juvenalian model; whereas, insofar as I compare London at all, it is to The Vanity of Human Wishes. More importantly, my analysis of London deals with matters of structure, imagery, and characterization that are largely ignored by Tibbetts. Just as Tibbetts and I are concerned with different features of London, so, too, are our interpretations of The Vanity of Human Wishes widely divergent. Tibbetts, following the orthodox line of interpretation, sees the poem as "tragic" and "pessimistic," while I, on the other hand, see it as neither.[5]

It would be pointless to go into a detailed account of the dif-

ferences between my study of Johnson and satire and those of my predecessors. Siebert and I examine different works. And while, like Earisman, I discuss the periodical satires, and like Tibbetts, the two formal verse satires, there is very little overlapping of detailed analysis or of conclusions. Where we discuss the same works, we concentrate on different features, and in the most notable instance where we deal with the same features (Tibbetts on The Vanity of Human Wishes), our conclusions are opposite.

It is with some reluctance that I turn now to that unfortunately obligatory task, the definition of terms. One might be excused, perhaps, for wishing to agree with Northrop Frye that "no literary critic of any experience will make much effort to define his terms."[6] Regrettably, one needs Frye's experience and stature to make, or abide by, such a dictum.

Robert Elliott throws up his hands in despair at the problem of defining satire. "I can testify," he writes,

> that it is a sobering experience to have worked for years on a subject like satire and finally to realize that one cannot define strictly the central term of one's study.[7]

The difficulty that prompts Elliott's resignation arises, in part, from the fact that satire is used to denote at one time a tonal feature of a literary work and at another time a definite formal structure. Further, while at times an isolated fragment may be referred to as satiric, at other times an entire work is characterized as a satire. To say this is only to repeat what has often been stated. Ellen

Douglas Leyburn, for example, notes that "one of the quirks of usage which makes the word [satire] hard to define is that it refers now to a form and now to an attitude"; W.O.S. Sutherland states that satire "can dominate an entire work or appear as a single paragraph in a four volume novel"; and Edward Rosenheim writes that satire "can be a matter of moments, of brief transitory significance within literary products whose total nature . . . is of itself by no means satiric."[8] It is Elliott's view that:

> no strict definition can encompass the complexity of a word which signifies, on one hand, a kind of literature, and on the other, a spirit or tone which expresses itself in many literary genres.[9]

Elliott does not suggest that it is impossible to discuss the many features of satire; he despairs only of defining it once and for all in a manner that leaves no doubt as to what is, and what is not, a satire. There are many other critics, however, who boldly attempt to do just that; critics, in other words, who claim to pinpoint the essence of satire, and who claim to have isolated those features that separate satire from every other kind or mode of literature. Before examining a representative number of these critics and their definitions, however, some notice might be taken of how satire was viewed before the twentieth century.

The characteristic features, if not the essence, of satire were felt at one time to be clearly discernible. The satirists (or satyrists) of the English Renaissance were certain of what was needed to produce a satire and confident that their poems conformed to an

established, classical, model. As Elliott remarks, these poets, "misled by a false etymology, believed that 'satyre' derived from the Greek satyr-play." And since satyrs were "notoriously rude, unmannerly creatures . . . it seemed to follow that 'satyre' should be harsh, coarse, rough."[10] The etymology influenced the personae that these satirists created for themselves, their diction, rhythms, images, targets, and the tone that they adopted. O.J. Campbell notes that they

> worked themselves up into a state of vociferous indignation; their voices became strident and their lash played upon the prisoners of evil with cruel abandon.[11]

The first of the English "satyrists," by his own claim, was Joseph Hall:

> I first adventure, with fool-hardie might
> To tread the steps of perilous despight:
> I first adventure; follow me who list,
> And be the second English satyrist.[12]

The second was John Marston who displays more clearly the qualities noted by Elliott and Campbell:

> Blacke Cypresse crowne me whilst I up do plow
> The hidden entrailes of rank villanie.
> Tearing the vaile from damn'd Impietie.
> Quake, guzzell dogs, that live on putrid slime!
> Scud from the lashes of my yerking rhyme.[13]

Nearly a century later, when Dryden wrote his Discourse Concerning The Original and Progress of Satire (1693), the etymology of satire had been correctly traced to "satura," which Dryden translates as "hotch-potch."[14] As a consequence it was necessary for theorists and critics to revise their views concerning the essential features of satire.

Dryden reflects this change in the Discourse where he quotes Hensius:

> 'Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance, and error . . . are severely reprehended, partly dramatical, partly simple, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but for the most part, figuratively, and occultly; consisting in a low familiar way, chiefly in a sharp and pungent manner of speech; but partly also, in a facetious and civil way of jesting; by which either hatred, or laughter, or indignation is moved.'[15]

Patricia Spacks states that Dryden "accepts" this definition; but if he does, it is with definite reservations.[16] As he points out, the description "is wholly accommodated to the Horatian way," and excludes "the works of Juvenal and Persius, as foreign from that kind of poem." Dryden also remarks that this "definition, or rather description of satire," is "obscure and perplexed."[17] There is nothing "obscure" concerning what satire does (reprehend "vices, ignorance, and error"), or why it does it (to purge our minds), or in the emotion that it produces ("hatred, or laughter, or indignation"). The definition is "perplexed," however, in its attempt to define the manner of satire: it is "partly dramatic, partly simple," sometimes in "sharp and pungent" speech and at times "in a facetious and civil way of jesting," and if it proceeds only "for the most part figuratively and occultly," sometimes it must be expressed directly and clearly. Even calling satire a "poem" qualified by the absence of "a series of action" causes problems, for earlier in the Discourse Dryden mentions Varronian satire which is "not only composed of several sorts of verses," but is "also

mixed with prose."[18] What Dryden calls Varronian is now usually referred to as Menippean satire, and the distinction is often no more than that between verse and prose. It is, however, a consequential distinction since it allows for the inclusion under the cover of satire of such works as The Satyricon and The Golden Ass, works which do have a "series of action."

Dryden may not have been successful in discovering, or formulating, a totally satisfying definition of satire, but his Discourse is, as Alvin Kernan writes, "the last serious attempt to understand satire before this century."[19] In the intervening years the term has been more and more widely applied, making it even more difficult to arrive at an encompassing and yet useful definition. If the twentieth century has had any success at all in producing a description of satire generally acceptable to most critics it has been Mary Claire Randolph's anatomy of formal verse satire. Randolph's success is attributable, in part, to the fact that formal verse satire is, as she puts it, the only kind of satire "to have any sort of identifiable crystallized form or framework."[20] Formal verse satire is described by Randolph as bi-partite in structure. Within this framework "some specific vice or folly, selected for attack . . . [is] turned on all its sides in Part A . . . and its opposing virtue . . . [is] recommended in Part B."[21] Robert Elliott, following Randolph, summarizes some of the features commonly found within this framework:

> Generally speaking, the formal verse satire is a quasi dramatic poem "framed" by an encounter between the satirist . . . and an Adversarius

> who impels the satirist to speech. Within this frame . . . vice and folly are exposed to critical analysis by means of any number of literary and rhetorical devices: the satirist may use beast fable, Theophrastan "characters" [or] dramatic incidents, . . . he may employ invective, sarcasm, irony, mockery, raillery, exaggeration, [or] understatement . . . . Formal satires are written in the middle style; they are discursive, colloquial . . . . Juvenal's occasional self-conscious flights into the grand style, however, sanctioned the "tragical" satire of later writers.[22]

This analysis is of considerable value when applied to the works of Horace and Juvenal and the "Imitations" of their poems by Pope and Johnson. It is not, however, an attempt to define satire, nor are the comments particularly applicable to prose satire, or even to other kinds of poetic satire.

Unlike Randolph, who limits herself to description only, and to only a small corner of satiric literature, other critics have attempted to define satire itself. The most succinct definition is by Edward Rosenheim, who states that "satire consists of an attack by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historical particulars."[23] That satire attacks, and that the attack is conveyed in a fiction (or is delivered indirectly, or is rhetorically heightened) is a commonplace of many definitions of satire, but the addition of "historical particulars" is distinctly Rosenheim's. It establishes, however, as Rosenheim admits, a distinction that is "elusive and relative."[24] In an attempt to clarify the meaning of his terms Rosenheim says that to have "authentic historical identity" the "object of satiric attack . . . must yield meaningfully to historical predictions and descrip-

tions."[25] Elsewhere he says that "the reader must be capable of pointing to the world of reality, past or present, and identifying the individual or group, institution, custom, belief, or idea which is under attack."[26] The chief difficulty with Rosenheim's definition is that he is forced to exclude much that has come to be regarded as satiric. For instance, because lust, miserliness, greed, and gluttony are universal faults of which "it is difficult to make any meaningful historical mention," works which depict these faults in totally fictional characters cannot be said to be satiric.[27] By way of example Rosenheim points to MacFlecknoe, which, he states, "achieves its satiric dimension . . . by the fact that a historical Shadwell lived and can be identified with the dullard protagonist of Dryden's poem";[28] in other words, satire cannot attack dullness as such, but only dullness in Shadwell. Another unacceptable consequence of this definition is that works can obviously pass into and out of the realm of satire as the historical identities of the targets are discovered or lost. It would seem, according to Rosenheim, that MacFlecknoe and The Dunciad are not long for the world of satire, for in his view "the Shadwell of Dryden's verses and the Cibber of Pope's have become for the common reader little more than characters of fiction."[29] Rosenheim seems to suggest that MacFlecknoe is a satire for the scholar and something else for the "common reader." More importantly, as a result of his literal-minded view of the targets of satire Rosenheim misses an important part of the greatness of MacFlecknoe and The Dunciad: by becoming "characters of fiction" the central figures of the poems have become much more than Shadwell and Cibber; they are instead imaginative satiric creations

that transcend the actual historical figures. If Rosenheim's argument is applied consistently Horace's poems must be regarded as something other than satires, while Juvenal's poems remain satires only by virtue of information provided by modern editors in footnotes. Rosenheim does not draw back from such startling conclusions. While he grants that MacFlecknoe and The Dunciad have at least a tenuous hold on the right to be called satires, he views other works commonly regarded as satires as outright interlopers. The most notable of these is Book IV of Gulliver's Travels, which, because it lacks a historically particular target, is described by Rosenheim as philosophic rather than satiric.[30]

As the reaction to Rosenheim's book indicates, few critics are willing to accept a definition of satire that excludes Book IV of Gulliver's Travels.[31] For similar reasons Patricia Meyer Spacks' attempt to isolate the essential feature of satire must finally be regarded as unacceptable. Whereas Rosenheim looks to the target as a means of identifying authentic satire, Spacks finds the definitive feature to reside in the audience's response. In doing so she reverts to much earlier views of satire which stress its moral function. A satire exists, she argues, only when a work "creates a kind of emotion which moves us toward the desire to change."[32] It is not enough that a work simply holds up its target to ridicule or scorn; it must create psychic uneasiness in the reader. The reader must be involved in the satire to the point of being part of the target. In Spacks' words, "a work that evokes no uneasiness in the reader is in effect no satire at all."[33]

There is a sense in which Spacks' argument is the opposite of Rosenheim's. Rosenheim comes very close to reducing satire to lampoon. For him the satiric target is always an identifiable person, group, or institution that may be isolated from the rest of society. Satire, he seems to argue, may not attack more than this; that is, it cannot attack human faults, but only faults in a single individual. Spacks, on the other hand, argues that a work is not a satire unless it exposes more than an individual. Unfortunately, since she concentrates on the audience's response, it follows from Spacks' argument that a work might be a satire for one reader and not a satire for another. For example, if The Dunciad embarrasses one reader and not another, the work is a satire for the first reader and a comic work for the second. There is yet another objection that must be raised; because she insists on the moral function of satire Spacks is forced, like Rosenheim, to find another classification for a work that has long been regarded as one of the finest pieces of satiric literature. "One reads MacFlecknoe," she writes, "with a kind of innocent joy." Because Shadwell, in her view, does not "exemplify faults beyond himself," the poem is something other than a satire.[34]

Samuel Johnson, as we shall see, might well have agreed with Spacks. He certainly placed much emphasis on satire as an agent of moral change, and he insisted that satire should attack species of folly rather than individuals. Most modern critics, however, tend to discuss satire in more formal terms. While Renaissance satirists (and to some extent Rosenheim) emphasized the punitive function of satire

as a scourge of villainy, and eighteenth-century critics (and Spacks) justified satire as a means of reforming morals and manners, twentieth-century critics are more concerned with the structure and tactics of satire.[35] One of the most influential works dealing with satire as a formal structure is The Cankered Muse by Alvin Kernan, and of particular influence are Kernan's remarks on the plot of satire. "The most striking quality of satire," he writes, "is the absence of plot." If plot is defined as "a series of events which constitute a change" then what appears in satire is instead:

> a stasis in which the two opposing forces, the satirist on one hand and the fools on the other, are locked in their respective attitudes without any possibility of either dialectical movement or the simple triumph of good over evil. Whatever movement there is, is not plot in the true sense of change but mere intensification of the unpleasant situation with which the satire opens.[36]

Kernan's work has greatly influenced later theorists, and his comments on plot have been accepted by many as defining satire. Peter Thorpe, for example, echoes Kernan when he asserts that "satiric works may 'end' or 'conclude' but they do not resolve." "The characters in satire," he continues,

> are flat and static, so that the reader seldom expects them to change their ways; things end precisely where they began. The balance of power never shifts, and those who do not belong on top stay on top.[37]

Whereas Thorpe merely repeats Kernan, Philip Pinkus uses Kernan's

argument on the plot of satire as a basis for formulating his own theory of the "satirist's vision." Like Kernan, Pinkus discounts the idea that the satiric target is exorcised by exposure:

> If, for a moment, we can put aside the prejudice that satire annihilates its victim and see the text for what it is, we will notice that the 'victim', the dragon, usually does very well for himself, stretching his fat, prosperous tail across the stage until there is room for no one else.[38]

In contrast to notions that have prevailed at least since Horace and Juvenal, Pinkus writes that,

> it is obvious that the purpose of . . . satire is not to reform . . . behind society's smooth face is a mechanical, monstrous, vicious reality, the nightmare demon; and satire's purpose is to make men aware of this reality.[39]

In Pinkus's view, then, satire is defined by the world that it depicts. It does not attempt to "scourge" or "reform" villainy, but simply to present it. Satire is, in this sense, the reverse of pastoral. While the pastoralist deals with idyllic innocence,

> every satire culminates in an image of evil. It is the climactic vision of the satirist's world, and all of the weapons of the satirist's arsenal, whether Juvenal's corrosive anger or Horace's urbanity, the triple rhymes of Hudibrastic verse, or the delicate beauty of _The Rape of the Lock_, contribute to this final image.[40]

An objection to Pinkus's theory is suggested by one of the works that he selects to illustrate the "satirist's vision." Surely it is

something of an exaggeration to say that The Rape of the Lock (or the poems of Horace, for that matter) "culminates in an image of evil"—an image of something stronger than folly, perhaps, but nothing so strong as Pinkus suggests. To agree with Pinkus is to ignore completely the lighter end of the tonal spectrum of satire. It might also be argued that not every work that leads us to an "awareness of evil" is a satire, whether or not there is a resolution affirming the triumph of reason.[41] Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness comes to mind as a non-satiric work which leaves us with the disquieting notion that the evil that is presented surrounds, and is in, us.

My reservation concerning Rosenheim and Spacks, Kernan and Pinkus, is that their definitions and descriptions necessarily exclude many of the works that are usually accepted as satires. The critic, no less than the lexicographer, must take into account what a word has come to mean. Certainly the critic must choose among the various significations of a term, and state the limitations that he imposes for his own purposes, but he cannot prescribe how it is to be used henceforth by all writers. Samuel Johnson recognized the particular insufficiency and impermanence of literary definitions when he observed that there

> is . . . scarcely any species of writing, of which we can tell what is its essence, and what are its constituants; every new genius produces some innovation, which, when invented and approved, subverts the rules which the practice of foregoing authors had established.[42]

While Johnson argues that future works will change a definition, the distinctions by Kernan and Pinkus fail to encompass previous works of

satire. For example, while Kernan claims that a satiric plot cannot resolve, there are, in fact, many dramatists, including Ben Jonson, who have written plays that seem to be satiric, are commonly regarded as satiric, and which yet end with at least the appearance of virtue triumphant and vice overthrown. What Kernan says about plot may be true of many satires, but it is not true of all satires.

A further difficulty with Kernan's and Pinkus's theories is that they describe what for them is a satire, but they do not account for the kind of satire that in Sutherland's phrase "may appear as a single paragraph in a four volume novel." No one would describe Johnson's Dictionary as a satire, and yet his often quoted definition of "pension" is surely satiric:

> An allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.[43]

Any definition or description that will accommodate both sustained and incidental satire, and satires as different in tone as those of Horace and Juvenal, must, of course, be very inclusive. The most useful of such definitions always point to the two features stressed by Ellen Douglas Leyburn:

> there is always a judgement of faults, and there is always some sort of indirection in the conveying of the judgement, whether the concealment is laughter or some sterner sort of rhetorical intensification.[44]

Leyburn is intentionally general in her comments on the "conveying of the judgement." Others have tried to be more precise. Northrop Frye, for instance, after writing that "satire demands at least a token fantasy, . . . and at least an implicit moral standard," then rephrases his statement:

> two things, then, are essential to satire; one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack.[45]

To say that the fictional or rhetorical framework of the attack must be witty or humorous is to severely limit satire. Juvenal, Hall, and Marston have produced satires that elicit something other than laughter. Even "indirection" would be too limiting a term if it were taken to be synonymous with irony. Leyburn avoids this limitation by extending the tactics of indirection from "laughter" to "a sterner sort of rhetorical intensification." Frye, on the other hand, reduces satire to a particular kind of irony. "Satire is," he states, "militant irony."[46] If this is true, then irony must be defined in such a way as to include all of the fictions and rhetorical means through which an attack might be delivered. Though they are often loosely associated with all satire, humour and irony might better be considered as two of satire's chief, but not its only, weapons.

While every attempt at more precise distinction seems to wrongly exclude some work (or passage) that has come to be regarded as a satire (or satiric), it might be argued that Leyburn extends the boundaries of satire too widely. Might it not be claimed, for instance, that

Cinderella is a satiric attack on cruel step-mothers (or on envy)? "Fiction" and "rhetorical intensification" are very general categories, and "judgement" (or, more conventionally, "attack") is no more definite since it exhibits itself as a matter of tone. Elliott, in fact, seems to have "attack" in mind when he refers to satire as "a spirit or tone which expresses itself in many literary genres." Unfortunately, the "spirit" of satire, or "tone" of attack is an elusive quality. It is difficult to isolate and often impossible to categorize with any precision. If satire is identified on the basis of tone it also follows that the difference between a work that is occasionally satiric and a work that is a "satire" is discouragingly uncertain. As Rosenheim writes:

> Between the satire which is incorporated in a work of another species such as comedy and that which is sufficiently dominant so that the work itself is largely satiric, there is a difference which is one of degree.[47]

Although it might be unsatisfyingly ambiguous, Leyburn's definition at least accounts for the many kinds and degrees of satire that I deal with in this study; and for this reason I adopt it, not as a conclusive, but as a working, definition. To her comments I would add, hesitantly, that the focus in a satiric work, or passage, must be on the target. To say this is only to paraphrase what Randolph says about formal verse satire, that "the negative portion of the formal satire has always outweighed the positive portion, as it must in any satire."[48] Leyburn's definition allows me to write about satire in Johnson's

definition of "pension," in Taxation No Tyranny, in the Rambler, and in London, while the qualification of focus enables me to deal with the troubling example of Cinderella. For in that work the focus is clearly on the difficulties and eventual triumph of the virtuous heroine, while the wicked step-mother and step-sisters serve only as villains in a children's story rather than as satiric targets. Obviously, however, focus, like tone, is a matter of shading, and as such is often not amenable to categorical declarations. This fact will become more apparent later in this discussion where I examine certain of Johnson's epistolary satires in which it is uncertain whether the focus is on the virtuous writer or the satirized target. As I mention there, the more attention is directed at the speaker, the less the work seems a satiric attack.

Something also should be said about the words "judgement" and "attack" since both terms clearly lead to the moral considerations overemphasized by Spacks. I do not claim, as she does, that we must be moved by the attack to consider our own faults. There is no longer any need to justify satire as morally therapeutic, if such a justification were, indeed, possible. At the same time some sort of moral judgement is necessary if a work is to be satiric. One of the differences between Conrad's Heart of Darkness and the satires of Juvenal is that Juvenal makes an overt moral judgement. Conrad probes the dark side of the human psyche but he does not attack it. Juvenal, on the other hand, opposes the forces of chaos. It is not necessary to agree with, or be moved by, the moral judgement of the satirist. Indeed,

it may well be that the satirist himself does not care a straw whether or not he reforms his audience or stimulates their anger. In most cases he is more concerned with poetry than morality. As Johnson says of Pope, "He delighted to vex them [the Dunces] no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."[49] Nevertheless, without its moral judgement, implied through ridicule, The Dunciad would be a sociological or psychological study rather than a satire. It will not do, then, to talk about the "satirist's vision" without mentioning that this vision is, in part, a judgement.

Although a totally satisfying definition of satire has yet to be formulated, a great amount of work has appeared which deals with its many features, and which establishes important distinctions. One of the distinctions most important to this study, and the one which forms the basis for my first chapter, is that between satiric and non-satiric humour. Thomas Hobbes states that all laughter emanates from the audience's awareness of its superiority to the comic object, an argument that suggests that all humour is satiric.[50] This seems to be an inversion of the argument that all satire is humorous. Although both arguments are too categorical, laughter is, nevertheless, one of satire's chief weapons. It is, therefore, important to be able to separate laughter aimed at a satiric target from that which is produced by a comic object. Ronald Knox and David Worcester address this problem, and their comments are important to my first chapter where I deal with satiric and non-satiric laughter as a means of clarifying

Johnson's attitudes toward Scotland and the American colonies.[51]

The tone of laughter ranges from the extremes of innocent joy to intense scorn. It reflects, then, a scope of attitude wider even than that of satire. The tonal spectrum of satire is, however, only slightly less extensive. Since the time when Juvenal's satires were first compared to those of Horace, it has been conventional to talk about, in P.K. Elkin's words, "Smiling Versus Savage Satire."[52] In the second chapter, I discuss the tonal spectrum found in Johnson's satires, and locate within this spectrum the targets that draw forth his mildest and most powerful attacks.

While in the first two chapters I often deal with satire that is at most incidental (that is, satire that is incorporated within a work that is not itself a satire), in Chapter Three I deal with works that are themselves satires. To say this requires some explanation, even in an introduction. The symbiotic nature of much satire is suggested by Elliott's statement that it "expresses itself in many literary genres." It would be tedious to attempt a complete survey of the kinds of writing appropriated by satire, but a partial list would include essays, travel books, beast fables, allegories, letters, chivalric romances, epics, and histories. If the satire incorporated within any of these kinds of writing is only occasional, as is, say, the satire in Johnson's Dictionary, then there is no problem in classifying the work by genre. Johnson's Dictionary is a dictionary. There are other instances where the genre is so transformed by the satire that a qualification such as mock-epic or mock-history is called for.

Finally, there are other instances when satire pervades a work and yet the work retains its original generic identity. Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, for example, is a real letter and also a sustained satiric attack; and though it might be convenient to refer to the original Idler 22 as a satire, it could also be discussed as a beast fable. In those satires in which the satirist appropriates a distinct form, such as a letter or a beast fable, the choice of structure constitutes an important part of the satiric strategy. In the third chapter I discuss the range and function of the literary forms in which Johnson incorporated his satire.

Because of his importance as a critic, any examination of Johnson and satire might reasonably be expected to deal with his critical views on satire. It might also be expected that this chapter would open the dissertation. In this instance, however, logic has been overruled by other considerations. Johnson did not, unfortunately, produce any single extended discussion of satire, and therefore his views must be reconstructed by piecing together remarks scattered throughout his writings. Moreover, to assess correctly his views on satire, and to determine whether in fact he "feared" and "hated" satire, as Walter Jackson Bate claims, it is necessary to compare his comments on satire with his actual satiric writings.[53] The satires examined in the first three chapters provide the material for such a comparison.

It is certain to be noticed that the first three chapters are organized neither on the basis of chronology nor genre (poetic, periodical, pamphlet satires), but rather on the basis of topics

related to satire itself; satiric and non-satiric humour, the tonal spectrum and targets of satire, and the fictions of satire. I depart from this procedure in the final chapter where I examine London and The Vanity of Human Wishes. Here the works examined do fall within a single genre (or sub-genre) whether they are considered as "Imitations" or as formal verse satires. There is, however, a more important difference between my procedure here and in the earlier chapters. Whereas earlier I deal with single aspects of Johnson's satires, in Chapter Five I am concerned with the whole of each work. It would be possible, of course, to select a single feature, such as persona, as a basis for organizing the discussion, but to do so would require subordinating a great deal more that is not only of interest, but in fact demands study if the poems are to be properly viewed and compared as satires. With this I have arrived, however tortuously, at the raison d'etre of this chapter; for, while London is generally accepted as a rather conventional satire, The Vanity of Human Wishes, most critics argue, is a "tragic" poem, or at most, a "Tragical Satire." My intention in Chapter Five is to show that the Vanity is not only a satire, but a far more subtle and effective satire than London. Further, far from being "tragic" (by which most critics seem to mean "despairing") the Vanity is far more hopeful than London, which, indeed, does conclude despairingly. To demonstrate this it is necessary to look at each work in detail and to examine a number of features including narrative strategy, structure, characterization, and imagery, and to show how these features contribute to the vision in each poem.

As a final comment I might mention that there is no attempt in this dissertation to discuss everything that Johnson wrote that might arguably be called satiric, or even more narrowly, a satire.[54] I have chosen instead to examine representative works at length. The exception, of course, is the last chapter where I deal with all of Johnson's formal verse satires—but then there are only two.

NOTES

Introduction

[1] Delbert L. Earisman, "Samuel Johnson's Satire," Diss. Indiana University 1959; Arnold M. Tibbetts, "The Satire of Samuel Johnson," Diss. Vanderbilt University 1964; Donald T. Siebert, "Samuel Johnson and the Style of Satire," Diss. University of Virginia 1972.

[2] Siebert, p. 1.

[3] Earisman, pp. 32-35.

[4] Earisman, ch. 1.

[5] Tibbetts, ch. 1, passim.

[6] Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton, N.Y.: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 316.

[7] Robert C. Elliott, "The Definition of Satire," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, 11 (1962), p. 22.

[8] W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr., The Art of the Satirist: Essays on the Satire of Augustan England (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 9; Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr., Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 10.

[9] Elliott, p. 19.

[10] Elliott, p. 20.

[11] Oscar J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1938), p. 35.

[12] Joseph Hall, Virgidemiarum, Lib. I, Prologue, ll. 1-4, in The Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949).

[13] John Marston, The Scourge of Villanie, "Proemium in Librum Primum," ll. 17-20; in The Poems of John Marston, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961).

[14] John Dryden, A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire, in Essays of John Dryden, ed. W.P. Kerr, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), II, 54.

[15] Dryden, II, 100.

[16] Patricia M. Spacks, "Some Reflections on Satire," Genre, 1 (1968), 13.

[17] Dryden, II, 100.

[18] Dryden, II, 64.

[19] Alvin Kernan, The Plot of Satire (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 6.

[20] Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of Formal Verse Satire," Philological Quarterly, 21 (1942), 368.

[21] Randolph, p. 369.

[22] Robert Elliott, "Satire," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, p. 738.

[23] Rosenheim, p. 31.

[24] Rosenheim, p. 27.

[25] Rosenheim, p. 28.

[26] Rosenheim, p. 25.

[27] Rosenheim, p. 28.

[28] Rosenheim, p. 25.

[29] Rosenheim, p. 14.

[30] Rosenheim, p. 101.

[31] See Philological Quarterly, 43 (1964), 390-92, and 44 (1965), 272-73 for reviews of Rosenheim's book.

[32] Spacks, p. 16.

[33] Spacks, p. 28.

[34] Spacks, p. 28.

[35] "Target" and "tactic," two terms that appear repeatedly in this dissertation, have been borrowed from Professor Eugene Walz, University of Manitoba. "Target," I feel, is a more accurate term than "object," especially since satirists, and particularly Johnson, aim their attacks not at persons or things ("objects"), but at faults. It would be awkward to call miserliness an "object," but quite reasonable to call it a "target." "Tactics" is used to indicate the various means, such as irony, invective and ridicule, employed by the satirist to attack the target.

[36] Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 30-31.

[37] Peter Thorpe, "Satire as Pre-Comedy," Genre, 4 (1971), 3-4.

[38] Philip Pinkus, Swift's Vision of Evil: A Comparative Study of A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels, English Literary Studies No. 3, 2 vols. (Victoria, B.C., 1975), I, 7.

[39] Pinkus, I, 16.

[40] Pinkus, I, 11.

[41] Pinkus, I, 16.

[42] Samuel Johnson, The Rambler, ed. Walter Jackson Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale University Press), Rambler 125, IV, 300; The Rambler comprises volumes III, IV, and V. of The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, ed. Allen T. Hazen, John H. Middendorf, et al., 11 vols. to date (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-). The Rambler will henceforth be cited by Rambler number, volume number of the Yale series, and by page. The Yale edition of the works will

henceforth be cited as Yale Works.

[43] Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed., Rev. (Dublin: Printed for Thomas Ewing in Capel Street, 1775), s.v. Since this edition contains Johnson's last revisions and additions it will be used throughout; further quotations from the Dictionary will not, however, be recorded in the notes.

[44] Ellen Douglas Leyburn, Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 7.

[45] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 224.

[46] Frye, p. 223.

[47] Rosenheim, p. 11.

[48] Randolph, p. 373.

[49] James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., with a Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, Rev. by L.F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934-50), II, 334. This edition of the biography is used throughout and will be cited henceforth as Life: reference will consist of volume and page number.

[50] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakshott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), p. 36.

[51] Ronald Knox, Essays in Satire (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1928), pp. 11-31; David Worcester, The Art of Satire (1940; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), pp. 32-38.

[52] P.K. Elkin, The Augustan Defense of Satire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), ch. 8.

[53] Walter Jackson Bate, "Johnson and Satire Manqué," in Eighteenth Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde, ed. W.H. Bond (New York: Grolier Club, 1970), pp. 145-60, p. 150.

[54] By far the most obvious omission is Rasselas. While there are many satiric passages in Rasselas, I do not feel that the work itself

can be called a satire. The significance of the satirical passages is, admittedly, a debatable point. W.O.S. Sutherland finds a satiric pattern repeated in many episodes:

> It seems at first that each person Rasselas meets has something important to offer him, and often the person himself thinks so, or pretends to at least. But time after time the climax is ironic, and this irony is the basic element of the plot. (p. 96)

Sutherland also notes, however, that the satiric technique is not sustained throughout, and if some episodes are clearly satiric, "in many passages there is only straightforward moralizing" (p. 101). In addition, Sutherland writes that while "the early parts of the book show a fairly clear contrast between the satiric and non-satiric, . . . as the search continues these alternate frequently and with less regularity" (p. 104). Certainly Sutherland does not view the principal characters as satiric figures: Rasselas, he argues, is not a "satirized character," but "a seeker" (p. 95); and "Imlac is a wise man presented in the non-satiric mode" (p. 103). One other critic, however, goes much further. Alvin Whitley calls Rasselas "a 'general satire' of mankind." Imlac, he writes, "is not free of Johnson's lash," and Rasselas is revealed as a "sentimental visionary." Indeed all of the main figures in the work are, in Whitley's view, "fools." "The Comedy of Rasselas," ELH: A Journal of English Literary History, 23 (March 1956), 49, 55, 65.

CHAPTER ONE

Humour and Invective: Johnson on Scotland and America

Though they are not synonymous, it is easy to understand why satire and humour are so closely associated. From Horace to Rabelais to Swift to Mark Twain to Evelyn Waugh, the entire history of satire is filled with the names of writers who make us laugh. It was Horace who first taught the value of laughter in exposing folly: "humour is often stronger and more effective than sharpness in cutting knotty issues."[1] One of the principal functions of humour in satire is to distance the speaker and establish an appearance of self-control. As David Worcester remarks:

> when a salesman grows too hot or importunate over the telephone, the listener calmly hangs up the receiver. The satirist must keep his channel of communication open; and the only way he can retain his audience is by giving at least an illusion of detachment.[2]

For Horace, however, as for Dryden, humour is also seen as a way of correcting error without giving offense, even to the satiric target. Speaking of "fineness of raillery," Dryden says "a witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not." Dryden then points to the character of Zimri in Absolom and Achitophel by way of example. The character, he writes, "is ridiculous enough: and he, for whom it was intended, was too witty to resent it as an injury."[3]

Not all humour, however, is good-humoured, and not all men are "tickled" by being made ridiculous. Indeed, rather than softening censure, laughter is perhaps satire's most devastating weapon, if only because it permits no rebuttal. Certainly the rage that it often evokes from the object of satire, if it is an actual person, only makes that person more ridiculous. Swift knew this well and used his victim's anger, provoked by one attack, as material for further satire. Partridge's angry response to the first Bickerstaff letter gave Swift the means for renewing, and doubling, the laughter. Lord Chesterfield, on the other hand, was wiser, if less sincere, in pretending to be untroubled by Johnson's famous letter.

While it is easy enough to talk about the effectiveness of humour in satire, it is quite another matter to say exactly what it is. Though it is known when it is experienced, humour is even more resistant to definition than satire. Ronald Knox, nevertheless, takes what he calls "a random stab" at the problem:

> Let us say that the sphere of humour is, predominantly, Man and his activities, considered in circumstances so incongruous, so unexpectedly incongruous, as to detract from their human dignity.[4]

Perhaps more important than his definition is Knox's further observation that "in the long run every joke makes a fool of somebody; it must have . . . a human victim."[5] From this it would seem that, if not all satire is humorous, at least all humour is satiric. Knox, in fact, argues that "humour and satire are, before the nineteenth century,

almost interchangeable terms," and that "literature before the nineteenth century has no conscious humour apart from satire."[6] Only in the nineteenth century, then, does there emerge, in Knox's view, something that can be called pure humour.

Regardless of whether Knox is correct in dating its appearance, the present existence of pure, or non-satiric, humour is indisputable. The problem is to distinguish between satiric and non-satiric uses of humour, to separate laughter prompted by a comic object from that which is aimed at a satiric target. Knox's answer is direct: "the laughter which satire provokes has malice in it always. . . . It is not so with humour." Elsewhere he states that "The pure humorist is a man without a message."[7] David Worcester says much the same thing: "The laughter of comedy is relatively purposeless. The laughter of satire is directed toward a preconceived end."[8]

What Knox and Worcester point to so succinctly might be illustrated at more length. Satiric humour always elicits a disapproving judgement, of varying intensity, on the part of the audience. The reader, for example, is expected not only to laugh at Curl, Osborne, et al. in The Dunciad, but also to judge them, to see their participation in the mock-heroic games as both comic and degrading. The filth in which they immerse themselves, and their eagerness for the sport, produces laughter and at the same time serves as a metaphor for their characters and actions. Certainly no such judgement is intended, or is justified, in the purely humorous actions of a circus clown. What the clown does may be incongruous. He may appear inept and befuddled, but he is,

above all else, likeable. In fact, if the clown were disliked it is probable that he would be met with silence rather than laughter. Such laughter as he does evoke is sympathetic, then, rather than hostile.

It might be argued that while the clown is himself likeable, he represents, and thus satirizes, human folly in general. If such were the case then the clown would be a satiric figure. In fact, however, just as the audience does not judge the individual figure pretending, say, to be a drunk, neither does it generalize and see in the representation of one drunk a condemnation of drunks as a class. The difference between a comic drunk and a satirized drunk is, therefore, quite simple: the satirized drunk is judged either for what he is or for what he represents, while the comic drunk is neither judged as an individual, nor viewed as representing anything more than himself.

All of this leads, inevitably, to a conclusion that is compatible with, and in fact merely a reformulation of, the views of Knox and Worcester: it is the audience's laughter, in itself, and for no other end beyond itself, that is the motive or aim of non-satiric humour. In satire, on the other hand, laughter is directed at a target for the purpose of exposure and, ostensibly, reform, and the audience is expected to judge as well as laugh, or rather, to judge through its laughter.

This distinction between satiric and non-satiric humour is, admittedly, tenuous. Especially difficult is the middle ground where the two seem to converge. And many of Johnson's comic remarks fall into the middle area between the satiric and non-satiric. An episode

recorded in Boswell's Life is typical of such an instance. Boswell writes that Johnson once visited Plymouth at a time when that town was engaged in a dispute with the neighboring new town, called The Dock, over the apportionment of water. Plymouth had much water and The Dock not enough. When the suggestion was made in Johnson's presence that some of Plymouth's water might be diverted to The Dock, he said, "half-laughing" according to Boswell, "No, no! I am against the dockers; I am a Plymouth-man. Rogues! let them die of thirst. They shall not have a drop!"[9] In this episode it is uncertain which is primary, the mocking satiric attack on regional insularity and uncharitableness, or the laughter that Johnson elicits by assuming and exaggerating the sentiments of a Plymouth-man. Another anecdote demonstrates how humour might appear to assume the form of satire while being simply comic in intent. "'It is well known,'" writes Boswell:

> 'that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames, to accost each other as they passed, in the most abusive language they could invent. . . . Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest; a fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered him thus, "Sir, your wife, under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house, is a receiver of stolen goods."'[10]

Johnson's remark rises in form barely above simple invective. But the aim of his statement is solely the laughter that it produces. The tone of the episode, in fact, is totally good-humoured. Neither Johnson nor the boatman wished one another ill. Indeed, one might imagine

that Johnson was admired by his antagonist for his skill in this rough form of humour. The attack in this sally is, then, a means for the humour, thus reversing the satiric order. That is to say, Johnson pretends scorn to raise a laugh, rather than raising laughter to direct scorn.

These few examples should help to illustrate what may be taken as a general, flexible, and therefore imprecise rule: satire may be said to exist in those works and statements where the attack is as equally important as the fiction (whether it be humorous or not); pure or non-satiric humour exists in any statement or work where the risible response is primary and the attack (presuming there is one) is simply a vehicle for the humour. What is clear from this and the two anecdotes quoted is that satire, perhaps more than any other mode of literature, depends upon context. What might pass as an innocuous remark in one situation, might, in other circumstances, be perceived as a harsh rebuke. To correctly judge whether a work or statement is satiric it is often necessary to view it within any number of contexts, the most obvious of which is the historical. It may also be that a work is recognized to be satiric only because of its relationship to all that is known of a writer's works and utterances. If what we know about an author is to be disallowed as material for understanding his works then at least one notable work of satire, Defoe's The Shortest Way With Dissenters, should probably be reclassified as an intolerant attack on religious nonconformity. The story is well-known of how the High Church readers of Defoe's pamphlet took it at first to be straight-

forward, and when they discovered its irony, condemned him to the pillory (where he reigned triumphant). It would be unwise to accuse these readers of myopia, for it is unlikely that the work would be seen as ironic today were it not for our knowledge of Defoe's sentiments (and, possibly, the recording of this incident).

One other factor must be taken into account when considering conversational remarks that seem to be satiric. For statements made in conversation the immediate situation (who is being addressed, where, and in response to what) is as important to be considered as is the analogous historical setting of written satire. Johnson's taunt to the boatman illustrates this, for our knowledge of the situation (the playfulness of the contest, and its tradition) takes off all the asperity that the remark might seem to have if it were presented in isolation as an example of a Johnsonian insult.

To treat a subject with simple humour and to treat it satirically is to reveal, then, very different attitudes of approval (or at least neutrality) and disapproval. And to determine whether a statement or work is satiric or simply humorous requires, as has just been argued, that it be viewed in all of its contexts. This is nowhere more true than when considering Johnson's attitudes, expressed in writing and conversation, on Scotland and America. It is commonly said that Johnson was a bigoted Anglophile who hated all foreigners, and especially Scots and Americans, whom he supposedly detested with an equal passion. But by collecting together his many statements and writings on these two peoples, and by paying attention to the tone and contexts of his

remarks, it soon becomes evident that he abused the Scots by way of a joke directed primarily against Boswell, while his attitude toward America was indeed harsh and unforgiving. What emerges in Johnson's comments on America is satire threatening to degenerate into pure invective, while his remarks on Scotland, like his taunt to the Thames boatman, are instances of humour conveyed in the form of mock-attack.

The best-known words spoken by Johnson on Scotland are the very first he addressed to Boswell, who had somewhat obsequiously apologized for not being born elsewhere. As Boswell tells the story he was on the verge of finally being introduced to Johnson by the bookseller Thomas Davies, and recollecting Johnson's "prejudice against the Scotch of which I had heard much," said to Davies, "'Don't tell him where I come from.'—'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.'" To which Johnson retorted, "'That Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.'"[11] It is worth noting that Boswell writes only that he had "heard" of Johnson's prejudice against the Scots, for there is very little in Johnson's writings either before or after his meeting with Boswell to indicate that he had any aversion to Scotland. And it is important to remember that although Johnson could talk for victory, and sometimes say more than he meant in jest, his writings are uniformly sincere.

The absence of anything written by Johnson against Scotland does not, however, establish the absence of prejudice. Though most of his anti-Scots remarks recorded by Boswell were made in jest at Boswell's

expense, the fact remains that he had a reputation for anti-Scots sentiments before Boswell had met him. Johnson was, indeed, critical of a great many of the Scotsmen he had met; but criticism is not the same as prejudice, which Johnson defines as a "judgement formed beforehand without examination."

Johnson's dislike of many of the Scotsmen whom he met in England is best accounted for by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who observed that "the Scotch, when in England, united and made a party by employing only Scotch servants and Scotch tradesmen."[12] This natural tendency of a national minority to join together in a foreign land was irksome to Johnson, and he often condemned it: "'When I find a Scotchman, to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be as an Englishman to me.'"[13] But as much as their habit of only employing and buying from one another, Johnson disliked the tendency he felt the Scots shared of indiscriminately praising all things Scottish. Addressing Boswell, who certainly had this fault, Johnson said, "'You know, Sir, . . . that no Scotchman publishes a book, or has a play brought upon the stage, but there are five hundred people ready to applaud him.'"[14] Comparing the Scots in this respect to the Irish, Johnson said with a great deal more humour: "'the Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, Sir; the Irish are a FAIR PEOPLE;—they never speak well of one another.'"

Their habit of confusing merit with nationality was the entire basis of Johnson's anti-Scots feelings that were, to any degree,

sincere. Boswell relates that Johnson was outraged when

> A Scotchman of some consideration in London, solicited him to recommend, by the weight of his learned authority, to be a master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman.

Johnson, Boswell continues, "was shocked at this unconscientious conduct."[15] In matters of learning Johnson always felt that merit only should be rewarded. That a man's nationality should procure for him literary reputation or position could only be obnoxious to Johnson who had to fight his way through life with his literature. It might be said, then, that the single thing that Johnson did hold against the Scots in England was their own prejudice in favour of themselves. In all likelihood it was statements critical of this characteristic that Boswell had heard repeated and which he inflated into a "prejudice against the Scotch."

If Johnson had a reputation for being prejudiced against Scotland before he met Boswell, that reputation was greatly increased after the publication of the Life in 1791. Boswell, however, cannot be held totally responsible. Johnson did himself no good earlier, in 1775, by exposing the fraudulence of Macpherson's Ossian, thereby depriving Scotland of an ancient poet and a national hero. Neither did his definition of "oats" in 1755 endear him to the natives of Scotland: "a grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people." Here perhaps their anger was more justified, for although this definition has a lexicographical tradition, Johnson

did say that he "meant to vex" the Scots with his definition.[16] But it was a verifiable, and therefore refutable, observation that incurred for him the lasting enmity of many Scotsmen. "His crime," writes Arthur Murphy, "is that he found the country [Scotland] bare of trees, and he has stated the fact" (in A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland).[17] Mrs. Piozzi adds: "The Scotch I think never forgave his saying they had no trees in their Country."[18] Indeed, many of them did not, and the intensity of their anger can be detected in the Gaelic curse directed by James McIntyre against him, part of which reads:

> You are a slimy, yellow-bellied frog, You are a toad crawling along the ditches, You are a lizard of the waste, crawling and creeping like a reptile.
> You are a filthy caterpillar of the fields; You are an ugly, soft sluggish snail; You are a tick . . .

The entire curse, of which this is only a small part, is too tedious to record in whole, but the conclusion deserves notice:

> Foul is the wealth that you share, And if it were not that I do not like the name of satirist, I myself would earnestly desire to abuse you.[19]

Obviously, many Scotsmen were quite sensitive about the beauty of the Highland landscape. It is uncertain whether Boswell means to defend Johnson, or chide him for judging too quickly, when he notes that Johnson's

> remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road.[20]

The harshness of the landscape of Scotland was, for Johnson, often a subject of conversational humour. He once said to Mrs. Piozzi: "'Seeing Scotland, Madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked stalk.'"[21] On another occasion a "particular friend" of Johnson (no doubt Boswell) is said to have remarked to him that he hoped that his visit to Scotland had cured him of

> many prejudices against that nation, particularly in respect to the fruits. "Why, yes, Sir," said the Doctor; "I have found out that gooseberries will grow there against a south wall; but the skins are so tough, that it is death to the man who swallows one of them."[22]

And finally, in one of the few instances in which Johnson said something favourable of the Americans, he argued that they "'acted like philosophers'"in sending the Scots immigrants to "'Cape Fear and such like barren regions,'" for

> "if you turn a starved cow into clover it will soon kill itself by the sudden transition; and if the Scotch, famished in their own country, had been placed in the more fruitful parts of America, they would have burst by a bellyfull, like the cattle in clover."[23]

This last remark may seem rather insensitive, but it must be remembered that it was made facetiously and was directed not at Scotland

in general but at one Scotsman in particular: Boswell. Dr. Lettsom, who recorded the statement, relates that he heard it while dining with a company that included Johnson, Boswell, and John Wilkes. The key to the ferocity of Johnson's humour here, and his choice of topics, is the presence of John Wilkes together with Boswell. The story of how Boswell tricked Johnson into first dining with Wilkes, a man whose morals and politics Johnson detested, is well known. At their initial meeting at dinner Johnson was at first silent, but Wilkes soon won him over with assiduous politeness and respect; and then both men, recognizing Boswell as the agent of their coming together, gleefully turned on him and attacked him at his most sensitive point, his nationality:

> JOHNSON. (to Mr. Wilkes,) 'You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London' [an allusion perhaps to Wilkes himself]. WILKES. 'Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me' [in which Wilkes parries the allusion while continuing the attack on Boswell]. JOHNSON. (smiling,) 'And we ashamed of him.'[24]

Wilkes was as good as Johnson in abusing Scotland to Boswell, and once said to him that "'among all the bold flights of Shakespeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnamwood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub.'"[25]

It was with Wilkes that Johnson made the comparison of Scotsmen in America to cattle in clover, directing the laughter against Boswell.

When Johnson and Wilkes dined together again (this time without being tricked into doing so), the topic of their conversation remained the same. Wilkes asked Boswell "'how much may be got in a year by an Advocate at the Scotch Bar,'" to which Boswell replied, "'two thousand pounds'":

> WILKES. 'How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, the money may be spent in England; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?'[26]

Wilkes concluded the merriment on this occasion by remarking that the pirate Thurot plundered seven Scottish isles and made off with a booty of "'Three and six-pence.'"[27]

In each of these anecdotes the ostensible target is Scotland, but the real butt of the humour is Boswell. At the time of their initial meeting Boswell unwittingly provided Johnson with a subject that produced endless teasing throughout their acquaintance: "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England"; "Much . . . may be made of a Scotchman, if he be caught young"; "It is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost as that the Scotch have found it."[28] It must be kept in mind that Johnson wrote none of this. Almost all of his jibes at Scotland were conversational, and almost all were made in the presence of Boswell. Thomas Campbell, rather puzzled by this, wrote: Johnson "seems fond of Boswell and yet he is always abusing the Scots before him by way of a joke."[29] Though he seems to wonder that Johnson would

pick on Boswell in this manner Campbell at least recognizes that Johnson's remarks on Scotland were made jestingly. Bishop Percy noted the same thing: "Johnson's invectives against Scotland, in common conversation, were more in pleasantry and sport than real and malignant."[30] Like his Tory sympathies, which he admitted were "much abated" after the death of Gilbert Walmesley, Johnson's anti-Scots sentiments tended to fade in the absence of Boswell.[31] Once, after abusing Scotland in his presence, Johnson said after Boswell left the room, that though the Scots "were not a learned nation, yet they were far removed from ignorance," and he went on to add that "they were a fine bold enterprising nation."[32]

Boswell seems uncertain about Johnson's actual attitude toward Scotland, and his uncertainty is reflected in the ambiguity of certain of his observations:

> That he [Johnson] was to some degree of excess a true-born Englishman, so as to have ever entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head and not of the heart.[33]

This seems to suggest that Johnson, paradoxically, was rationally prejudiced; it might almost be taken to imply that Johnson naturally loved the Scots, but searched out reasons for disliking them. On another occasion Boswell talks of Johnson's prejudice and then claims that it "was not virulent." Such qualifications do little to dispel the impression that Boswell creates of Johnson as a "true-born Englishman" (a phrase Boswell repeats at least four times) who truly did

despise Scotland and its natives. There are at least eleven instances in the Life where Boswell editorially comments on Johnson's supposed prejudice, and a great number of other instances where he implies his belief in the reality of that prejudice. For example, Boswell refers to a note which he sent to Johnson "asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there." Johnson's exasperated reply demonstrates how badly Boswell misunderstood him: "'Mr. Johnson does not see why Mr. Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre.'"[34]

What Boswell seems often oblivious of is that Johnson's comic remarks on Scotland were never meant as serious reflections on that country, but rather were intended to raise his own Scottish ire. It is amazing that Boswell can suggest after so many examples to the contrary, many of which he provides himself, that Johnson's prejudice was ever anything "more than a matter of jest."[35]

The difference in tone between Johnson's remarks to Boswell and his written observations on the lack of trees in Scotland is a striking illustration of the distance between Johnson's teasing, jocular treatment of that country when speaking in Boswell's presence and his real attitude which emerges when he writes to the public. When he visited Scotland Johnson had with him a large oak walking-stick. At one point along the journey the stick was entrusted to a fellow who subsequently disappeared. Boswell tried to convince Johnson that the stick would be returned, but Johnson insisted with mock-gravity, "'No, no, my

friend, . . . it is not to be expected that any man . . . who has got it will part with it. Consider, sir, the value of such a piece of timber here.'"[36] This was said in conversation with Boswell who recorded the remark in A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides. In Johnson's own Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland the matter of the barrenness of the Highlands is treated with much more seriousness. Trees had a great deal of emotional significance for Johnson. "Were I a rich man," he once said, "I would propagate all kinds of trees that will grow in the open air."[37] But as much as he loved trees, the planting of them seemed inevitably to remind him of his own mortality. The absence of trees in the Highlands was, Johnson felt, the result of bad management, but he draws from his own feelings to explain the failure of the Scots to reforest their land. After mentioning the "frightful interval between the seed and timber," Johnson adds:

> He that calculates the growth of trees, has the unwelcome remembrance of the shortness of life driven hard upon him. He knows that he is doing what will never benefit himself; and when he rejoices to see the stem rise, is disposed to repine that another shall cut it down.[38]

And so what is a matter of humour in conversation with Boswell is the source of a rather more melancholy reflection when Johnson expresses his actual feelings in writing.

This is, in fact, the case with many of the subjects concerning Scotland that Johnson both talked and wrote about. The emigration of Scotsmen which was depopulating the country was again a matter of jest when conversing with Boswell, but when Johnson discusses this subject

in his Journey the tone is one only of concern:

> Some method to stop this epidemick desire of wandering, which spreads its contagion from valley to valley, deserves to be sought with great diligence. In more fruitful countries, the removal of one only makes room for the succession of another: but in the Hebrides, the loss of an inhabitant leaves a lasting vacuity; for nobody born in any other parts of the world will choose this country for his residence.[39]

Johnson's concern here is that the Scots were abandoning their own country and not that they were entering England, since, in fact, they were for the most part emigrating to the American colonies. In A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland Johnson does not mock the eagerness of the Scots to emigrate, but rather offers a solution that might persuade more of them to remain. One of the major causes of the exodus was an increase of land rents. Concerning this Johnson proposes that "the landlords be, for a time, restrained in their demands, and kept quiet by pensions proportionate to their loss."[40]

Johnson recognized, at the same time, that there were reasons for quitting Scotland that could not be remedied by legislation. In conversation he often touched jestingly on the harshness of Scotland's landscape and climate (a harshness especially evident in the Highlands) to pique Boswell's Scottish pride. But in the Journey the ruggedness of land and climate is presented simply as an objective fact that must be faced. If, he writes, the inhabitants of the Highlands "long for bright suns, and calm skies, and flowery fields, and fragrant gardens, I know not by what eloquence they can be persuaded,

or by what offers they can be hired to stay."[41] The Journey is, however, filled with admiration for those men who had the hardihood to persevere in this harsh land, and praise for those who attempted to improve its agriculture. One of the heroes of Johnson's account is Donald Maclean, or Young Col as he is called, who devised many schemes for improving his land and spent "considerable time among the farmers of Hertfordshire, and Hampshire to learn their practice." Of this industriousness Johnson writes: "If the world has agreed to praise the travels and manual labours of the Czar of Muscovy, let Col have his share of the like applause, in the proportion of his dominions to the empire of Russia."[42]

It is clear that in Boswell's absence Johnson was quite willing to praise the Scots. The Journey must be taken as his final and considered estimation of that land and its people, and in this work there is little evidence of the levity that characterizes his conversation. With the Journey in mind, William Tytler, a native of Scotland, praises Johnson for having "done us great honour in the most capital article, the character of the inhabitants."[43] John Knox, another Scotsman, writes approvingly of "the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he [Johnson] advances respecting both the country and the people," and concludes, noting Johnson's compassion, that "he also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders."[44]

It is not surprising that when the Journey appeared many of Johnson's defenders were Scotsmen, for, as Bishop Percy observed, "no man was more visited by the natives of that country, nor were there

any for whom he had a greater esteem."[45] To list Johnson's Scottish friends, a formidable task, would be proof enough of his actual feelings. Boswell mentions "that those with whom Johnson chiefly contracted for his literary labours were Scotchmen, Mr. Millar and Mr. Strahn."[46] Boswell draws attention to this as "remarkable," just as he claims that it is unusual that five of the six amanuenses who assisted Johnson with the Dictionary were North Britons.[47] In a subtle and perverse way Boswell reinforces the idea that Johnson disliked Scotsmen even in those instances where he provides evidence supposedly demonstrating an opposite attitude.

It is, ultimately, Boswell's obsession with Johnson's feelings toward Scotland that is responsible for the belief that Johnson actually was a bigot. The persistence of the theme of Scotland and the anecdotes that Boswell piles up of Johnson making light of Scotland reflect more than anything else Boswell's own insecurity. Johnson's remarks in conversation, it should be evident, were never meant as serious reflections, nor do they reasonably fall into the category of satire; there is no attempt to expose vice or folly, and no attempt is made to suggest or enforce reformation. If there is an attack the target is not so much Scotland as it is Boswell and Boswell's complicated sense of national inferiority, and his equal readiness to defend all things Scottish. Johnson was always more ready to laugh at, than indulge in, bigotry, and in one of the lighter moments in the Journey he mocks the tendency of foreigners too-readily to defend their native land by making himself the butt of laughter:

> At our inn we did not find a reception such as we thought proportionate to the commercial opulence of the place; but Mr. Boswell desired me to observe that the innkeeper was an Englishman, and I then defended him as well as I could.[48]

The ironic tone in this passage is unmistakable, but what is most interesting is that through self-directed irony Johnson exposes the fault of which he accused the Scots by facetiously assuming it himself. If Boswell had been as ready to laugh at himself as Johnson was to mock false English pride then Johnson's remarks on Scotland would have had no effect and his teasing would have stopped.

While Johnson's remarks about Scotland might be said to be humour which could be mistaken for satire, his comments on America reflect satire slipping into pure invective. On no other subject is his language more intemperate or his rage more uncontrolled. To Dr. Thomas Campbell, Johnson said of the Americans, "'Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging.'"[49] With just a small trace of humour he also said to Campbell, "'Had we treated the Americans as we ought, and as they deserved, we should have at once razed all their towns--and let them enjoy their forests.'"[50] So great was Johnson's hatred of Americans that he distinguished them from the rest of mankind as "'a race of mortals whom . . . no other man wishes to resemble.'"[51]

Boswell was himself sympathetic to the Americans; he agreed with their refusal to pay taxes, he supported their practice of slavery, and he sided with them in their rebellion. It is not surprising, then,

that he relates little of Johnson's conversation on the Americans, and that the little that he does transcribe is marked by its generality. At one point he merely remarks: "Johnson attacked the Americans with intemperate vehemence."[52] With only slightly more attention to Johnson's actual words, Boswell elsewhere relates that Johnson became a "violent aggressor" on the subject of America and said: "'I am willing to love all mankind <u>except an American</u>,'" and he "'breathed out threatenings and slaughters;' calling them, 'Rascals--Robbers--Pirates,'" exclaiming "'he'd burn and destroy them.'"[53] Johnson often thought of purging the colonists with fire; Dr. Campbell writes that,

> talking of the measures he would pursue with the Americans, he said the first thing he would do would be to quarter the Army on the Citys, and if any refused free quarters, he would pull down that person's house, if it was joyned to other houses, but would burn it if it stood alone.[54]

There is no satire in any of this. Johnson's remarks are unadorned threats and insults. In these rages he foregoes irony, humour, or any form of rhetorical indirection that might transform his insults into satire. The difference between satire and the kind of invective seen here is easily illustrated. To dramatize Socrates as a woolly-headed buffoon who climbs into a basket suspended from a ceiling in order to elevate his thoughts is to satirize him; to call him a lying, cheating, avaricious rascal is simply to insult him. Insults delivered under the cover of rhetorical indirection are far more effective, in part because of the suggestion that the satirist has a firm check on his emotions. That he is able to bring wit to bear on his target, or

to clothe his attack in a fiction or figurative language implies that though angry the satirist is yet capable of expressing his feelings through means that stop short of direct physical assault. Invective, on the other hand, suggests more often than not that the speaker is dangerously out of control. Rage that is so uncontrolled only inspires fear or, more often, ridicule, but it rarely succeeds in persuading others to share that anger. The truth of this is seen in Boswell's reaction to Johnson's conversation on America. Though he would often intentionally raise other conversational topics that would provoke Johnson's anger, Boswell rarely spoke about America in his presence for fear of the effect that it inevitably produced. Boswell quickly regretted one of the few occasions when he did defend the Americans to Johnson. Johnson, he writes,

> could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce; and the violent agitation into which he was thrown, while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me so, that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject.[55]

During one of Johnson's outbursts on America (a "tempest" as Boswell calls it) Boswell writes that he "sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his [Johnson's] heat of temper; till, by degrees I diverted his attention to other topics."[56] Boswell's description of Johnson is almost that of a man momentarily mad who must carefully be diverted from the consideration of an obsession. The intensity of Johnson's emotions is observed also by Thomas Campbell, who notes at the conclusion of a

transcript of Johnson's remarks on America: "After this wild rant, argument would but have enraged him. I therefore let him vibrate into calmness."[57]

So far Johnson's comments on America are relevant to this discussion only because they are similar to satire (that is they are attacks), although they are separate from satire because of the directness with which the attack is made. Johnson did, in one instance, ridicule the Americans in a manner less blunt, but before the satire in Taxation No Tyranny is examined it is necessary to search out Johnson's reasons for detesting the Americans. Only by doing so is it possible to identify the target of his satire; for, while many critics attribute Johnson's hostility to the fact that the Americans rebelled against England, the actual reasons for his anger lie elsewhere.

Although to Boswell and Campbell he might have seemed irrational in his attitude toward America, Johnson had good reason for his anger. Only a small portion of his hatred of the colonists was related to their refusal to pay taxes to England. Taxation No Tyranny, indeed, focuses on the legality of England's claim to American subservience, and its arguments are reasonable, powerfully stated, and convincing. One of Johnson's most telling points is his insistence upon the moral as well as legal duty of the colonists to pay taxes to help defray, in part at least, the financial burden incurred by England in defending them from the French in the Seven Years War. But the actual source of his rancour is not found in any resentment over colonial irresponsibility and lack of gratitude. His deeper anger is in reaction to the

genocidal war directed by the Americans against the Indians, and the colonists' equally detestable practice of slavery.

So little did Johnson support the right of the colonists to the lands that they had stolen from the Indians, and so totally had their treatment of the Indians deprived them of all right to their possessions in his eyes, that in a time of patriotic fervour occasioned by the Seven Years War, he could say of the combatants that theirs was "only a quarrel of two robbers for the spoils of a passenger."[58] Johnson had no romantic illusions about the passengers. He certainly did not view the Indians as noble savages. But they were human beings and possessed all the natural rights of human beings (in this Johnson had a more complete view of human rights than did the founding fathers of the United States). One of the rights that he felt the Indians had from birth was that of living unmolested on the land that they had occupied for centuries. This right was violated by the French and English who could themselves show "no other right than that of power," and who created their colonies through "usurpation, and the dispossession of the natural lords and original inhabitants."[59]

Had the English colonists acted less like thieves, had they, like the French, admitted the Indians "to an equality with themselves," they would have incurred less resentment from Johnson.[60] And had they made it their task to introduce Christianity to the Indians they would have gained his love. But they did neither, prompting Johnson to write:

> No man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes

> not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity . . . is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters of America.[61]

The only people to rival the Americans in the ferocity of their treatment of the Indians were the Portuguese, who made a mockery of their Christian principles by sending missionaries to the new world to "preach the gospel with swords in their hands and propagate by desolation and slaughter the true worship of the God of peace."[62] But in a sense the English colonists were even more guilty than the Portuguese. They made no pretense of converting the Indians, but rather drove them out as they moved in.

There is not the slightest doubt where Johnson's sympathies resided in the battles between the French and English during the Seven Years War. In fact the battle line as he drew it was not between the French and English, but between the French and English on one side and the Indians on the other. In Idler 81 Johnson reveals how he wished the contest to end. The Indian narrator of this piece overlooks the land that once belonged to his people and upon which they had lived peacefully before the invasion from Europe. The Europeans are, he admits, too powerful to be opposed, but there is hope that what has been lost can be regained. For, as he observes to his fellows:

> "the time perhaps is now approaching when the pride of usurpation shall be crushed, and the cruelties of invasion shall be revenged. The sons of rapacity have now drawn their swords upon each other; . . . let us look unconcerned upon the

> slaughter, and remember that the death of every European delivers the country from a tyrant and a robber. . . . and when they shall be weakened with mutual slaughter, let us rush down upon them, force their remains to take shelter in their ships, and reign once more in our native country."[63]

To suppose that Johnson's attacks on the Americans were prompted by injured English pride is to ignore first of all that he regarded the colonists as themselves Englishmen, and secondly that he gave vent to his wrath long before the colonists defied English rule. As Idler 81 (published in 1759, more than fifteen years before the outbreak of the American rebellion) shows, the real source of his anger has little to do with the right of England to rule her colonies. Maurice Quinlan is typical of those who mistake the reason for Johnson's hostility. In an article which attempts to show that Johnson did indeed love a few Americans, Quinlan concludes with the bland wish: "In view of Dr. Johnson's many American acquaintances . . . it is pleasant to believe he would have wished the new nation well."[64] In view of the continuance of slavery in the United States for nearly a hundred years more, and in view of the wars which decimated the Indian population, it is more likely that if Johnson had seen the nation's future he would have wished for it what he had always wished for it.

Consistent with Johnson's concern for the Indians is his total opposition to the American practice of slavery. His toast, "in company with some very grave men at Oxford . . . 'Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies,'" is well known; as is the fact that his residuary legatee, Francis Barber, was a freed black man.[65]

George Birkbeck Hill, in an excellent discussion of Johnson's attitude toward the Americans, argues that Johnson "hated slavery as perhaps no other man of his time hated it," and gives this as the principal cause of his detestation of the planters.[66] It is curious that a man who was presented by Boswell and received by succeeding generations as an insular bigot should have sided so strongly with the black and red races against the economic interests of his own country.

It would be pointless to argue for which crime Johnson hated the Americans more, their enslavement of blacks or their slaughter of Indians. The two actions are equally detestable manifestations of racist cruelty prompted by economic interest. It is perhaps not surprising that when speaking of a people capable of such actions Johnson would often simply roar and threaten. And when these people who had stolen the land and freedom of two races hypocritically demanded even greater freedom for themselves as their natural, and English, right, Johnson's anger intensified into a fever.

That Johnson did not try more often to reason with the colonists and their defenders may have something to do with the fact that rational argument had then, as it has now, little effect on those convinced of their racial superiority and their right therefore to inflict suffering upon supposedly inferior races. Boswell once asked Johnson to compose a defense for a "negro who was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the Court of Session in Scotland." Johnson did so, arguing, by the way, what the Americans claimed so vociferously, that "It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal"; and that

though a man can forfeit his own freedom he cannot "entail that servitude on his descendants." Johnson's argument is calm and well-reasoned, but was completely without effect. At the conclusion of his transcription of Johnson's argument, Boswell writes that Johnson's opposition to slavery was "owing to prejudice," repeating what he had said earlier, that in his opposition Johnson "discovered 'a zeal without knowledge.'"[67] Boswell's own defense of slavery, which follows, is of little interest; he merely parrots a few amoral arguments concerning the importance of slavery as a "necessary . . . branch of commercial interest," and worries that to deprive the planters of their human chattel would be "robbery to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects."[68] Boswell's concern for the slave owners is quite touching, and perhaps serves to explain why Johnson could scarcely contain himself when addressing the defenders of America.

In the face of such an example of the ineffectualness of reasoned argument, it is no wonder that Johnson more often damned, threatened, insulted and roared. But when he came to write his pamphlet in defense of England's right to tax its colonies it was necessary for him to bring his anger under control, at least enough to gain assent to his arguments rather than inspire astonishment at his rage. To a limited extent, Johnson did so, and produced what Donald Greene describes as "one of his best pieces of sustained ratiocination, comparable to that of the review of Soame Jenyns' Origin of Evil."[69] What Greene says is perhaps more true of the first half of the "Review" than of Taxation No Tyranny. Unlike the "Review," in which the satire is separated from

the argument, in Taxation No Tyranny there is an uneasy balance between reasoned and controlled argument and passionate anger that threatens to break through at any moment in a torrent of uncontrolled fury. In the "Review" Johnson is firmly in control of his emotions, and when he finally unleashes his scorn in an extended, savagely ironic, reductio ad absurdum of Jenyns' thesis there is nothing to suggest that he has lost this control. In Taxation No Tyranny, on the other hand, satire appears in more sudden and unexpected bursts. It is as if Johnson distrusted his ability to regain control if once he lost it for any great length. And so, though the work is full of satire and invective, such moments are incidental to it.

Unfortunately, not many readers have had the objectivity to calmly consider the arguments in Johnson's pamphlet. Donald Greene writes that:

> Taxation No Tyranny has seldom been taken very seriously. Those who admire Johnson generally pass over the pamphlet with an embarrassed smile, and those who do not admire him denounce it as the most shameful and damning piece of evidence of his blind Toryism.[70]

Joseph Wood Krutch, a critic who is quite sympathetic to Johnson, calls the work "the most unfortunate of his literary productions," and decides that "the less said the better." Krutch justifies his dismissal of the work with a deferential nod toward the authority of Boswell: "where even Boswell censures unqualifiedly, it hardly seems worthwhile to attempt any defense."[71]

It remained, then, for Donald Greene to treat the work with the objectivity and seriousness that it deserves. In an extended discussion

Greene points out that a great deal of what Johnson presents is "straightforward constitutional law, as valid today as in 1775." Greene, judiciously quoting the pamphlet, summarizes the theoretical foundations of Johnson's argument:

> 1. "All government is ultimately and essentially absolute." Sovereignty is by definition, unrestricted; once restricted in any way, it ceases to be sovereign, and whatever restricts it becomes sovereign.
> 2. Sovereignty "is not infallible for it may do wrong; but it is irresistible for it can be resisted only by rebellion . . . ."
> 3. Sovereignty, in the British realm, resides in the Parliament of Great Britain; subordinate legislatures, such as those of the American colonies, derive their power only by delegation from the sovereign legislature, which can resume them when and as it sees fit.
> 4. It is axiomatic that "the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all of its subjects such contributions as are necessary to the public safety or public prosperity."[72]

Only a few general observations might be added to Greene's summary: Johnson consistently saw the colonists as English subjects "entitled to the rights of Englishmen" and subject to English law; to the legal argument that the colonists were obliged to pay taxes Johnson adds the moral claim that "they who flourish under the protection of our government should contribute something toward the expense"; and to the Americans' cry that they were denied their right to representation in England's parliament Johnson points out that they, or their fathers, freely traded their right to vote for the chance of wealth in America, and in any case, the original purpose of diverse

regional representation was to spread "wide the care of general interest" so that no single interest would prevail against the general good. "This representation," writes Johnson, has had the "effect expected or desired," and since the number of representatives

> has been fixed for more than a century and a half . . . it will hardly be thought fit to new model the constitution in favour of the planters, who, as they grow rich, may buy estates in England, and without any innovation, effectually represent their native colonies.[73]

These are some of the major points made by Johnson in an attempt to explain England's claim to American obedience. It is, however, not Johnson's calm discussion of constitutional law, but rather another side of the work that is of most concern to this examination, a side of the work in which he does not so much argue as expose, and in which he persuades not with logic but with ridicule. There is no precise point in the pamphlet where Johnson shifts from straightforward argument to satiric attack, no place that can be marked out as dividing the two sides of the work. Satire and invective are imbedded in every page. An angry, mocking tone rises and subsides throughout the piece, but no single unified satiric technique or strategy is employed to achieve this effect. Rather it is through a repetition of mocking images and the intermittent surfacing of irony that Johnson balances argument with satiric scorn.

Johnson opens his Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress in a straightforward manner typical of one of the more philosophical Rambler papers:

> In all the parts of human knowledge, whether terminating in science merely speculative, or operating upon life private or civil, are admitted some fundamental principles, or common axioms, which being generally received are little doubted, and being little doubted have been rarely proved.

The calm and reasonable tone established in this opening statement is rather jarred by the introduction of a sardonic note as Johnson continues:

> Of these gratuitous and acknowledged truths it is often the fate to become less evident by endeavours to explain them, however necessary such endeavours may be made by the misapprehensions of absurdity, or the sophistries of interest.[74]

Nothing that Johnson wrote was more calculated to arouse the anger of the Americans and their British defenders than his thus making it a question which predominated, their duplicity or their stupidity.

This question is taken up almost immediately and the deceitful are quickly sorted out from the stupid. It is in the Americans' interest to claim for themselves exemptions from laws binding on all other Englishmen, but for Englishmen to defend the American claims is folly pure and simple. Before attacking the Americans directly Johnson first examines the mentality of their defenders:

> In favour of this exemption of the Americans from the authority of their lawful sovereign . . . very loud clamours have been raised, and many wild assertions advanced, which by such as borrow their opinions from the reigning fashion have been admitted as arguments.[75]

So far the attack is made satiric only by the slight indirection of the insults. Johnson does not say that the supporters of the Americans are stupid, but rather that they confuse sound with meaning, and conceive profound arguments out of empty noise.

As he elaborates on this theme Johnson transforms his attack even more into satire by means of personification. Although "to be prejudiced is always to be weak," writes Johnson, some prejudices, such as the blind love of one's country, have "been considered as virtue in men." But to blindly hate one's country is a prejudice of which "it has never been my fortune to find, either in ancient or modern writers, any honourable mention." This unnatural disposition is then described in images of malformed offspring which call to mind MacFlecknoe and The Dunciad:

> These anti-patriotic prejudices are the abortions of Folly impregnated by Faction, which being produced against the standing order of Nature, have not strength sufficient for long life. They are born only to scream and perish, and leave those to contempt or detestation, whose kindness was employed to nurse them into mischief.[76]

Having thus settled the matter of English folly, Johnson takes up the question of the motivation of the rebellious Americans. All of the arguments of the Americans, says Johnson, concerning "the laws of Nature, the rights of humanity, the faith of charters, the danger of liberty, the encroachments of usurpation, have been thundered in our ears, sometimes by interested faction, and sometimes by honest stupidity."[77] The piling up of American complaints and fears suggests

ridicule through volume alone. It is hard to take any single complaint seriously when there are so many of them, and the fact that they are "thundered" implies the absence of reason. Like small children the Americans support weak arguments with loud shouts. But it is in the patronizing tone of "honest stupidity" that Johnson most effectively twists the knife of mockery. There are a few men, he suggests, who are actually silly enough to believe what they say. For the most part, however, greater credit is given to the intelligence of the Americans, albeit at the expense of their honesty: "Those who wrote the Address, though they have shown no great extent or profundity of mind, are yet probably wiser than to believe it."[78]

Irony is not the only means of transforming anger into satire. A favourite technique of many satirists is to suggest a resemblance between the satiric subject and a lower animal. Samuel Johnson often made such analogies, the best known of which is his comparison of a woman preaching to a dog standing on its hind legs. Much more demeaning is his statement that trying to determine the relative poetic merits of Samuel Derrick and Christopher Smart is like "settling the point of precedency between a louse and a flea."[79] The use of animal imagery to satirize the Americans is discovered throughout Taxation No Tyranny, often simply in the echoes of verbs: like dogs the Americans are forever "yelping" for liberty, they "hiss" their warnings like snakes, and finally like ravens they are "croakers of calamity."[80] Animal imagery figures prominently in one of the most ironic passages in the work. We are told, writes Johnson with wide-eyed mock fear, that the

Americans are:

> too obstinate for persuasion, and too powerful for constraint; that they will laugh at argument, and defeat violence; that the continent of North America contains three millions, not of men merely, but of Whigs, of Whigs fierce for liberty, and disdainful of dominion; that they multiply with the fecundity of their own rattle-snakes, so that every quarter of a century doubles their numbers.[81]

Here is a precipitous descent: the Americans begin as men, tumble to Whigs, and conclude finally as rattlesnakes.

In the paragraph that follows, Johnson drops the pretence of fear and assumes instead a more belligerent stance, but the association of Americans with lesser beasts continues. Now they are compared to the mythological Hydra. With undisguised anger Johnson remarks: "when it is urged they will shoot up like the Hydra . . . [one] naturally considers how the Hydra was destroyed."[82] Johnson's response recalls the tone of his conversation on America. For a moment it seems possible that he might regress to naked rage as threats are answered with warnings. The danger passes, however, and control is re-established. Shifting his attitude, Johnson now appears more amused than angry. The Bostonians, he writes, claimed that if the Stamp Act had not been repealed they would have left their town "to disperse themselves over the country." "The blusterer," he continues "who threatened in vain to destroy his opponent, has sometimes obtained his end, by making it believed that he would hang himself."[83] Nothing is more humiliating than to threaten and to excite only laughter. Johnson's response must

have been particularly galling. If the Bostonians leave, he remarks, "the consequence, alas! will only be, that they will leave good houses to wiser men."[84] As if admonishing infants, Johnson reminds the Americans that they may do what they wish but they must accept the consequences: "The Bostonian may quit his house to starve in the fields; his dog may refuse to set, and smart under the lash, and they may then congratulate each other upon the smiles of liberty."[85] In this passage the American and his dog face one another as equals.

By far the most damaging of Johnson's remarks is a pointed question asked at the end of the pamphlet:

> how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?[86]

Johnson carefully prepares the ground for this ironic query by emphasizing the language of the Americans. The words "freedom," "liberty," and "tyranny" appear with hypnotic regularity. Johnson suggests, however, that the Americans confuse liberty with license. "These lords of themselves, these kings of Me," recognize no authority, whether English or colonial; they are, in short, "zealots of anarchy."[87] Johnson mocks the cant of the Americans simply by iterating their language, adding a heavy dose of irony: the Americans are "the descendants of men who left all for liberty," and they are themselves "fierce for liberty," elevated by their belief in the "'transcendent nature of freedom,'" and certain that "'independence is the gift of Nature.'"[88] As the pamphlet moves toward its conclusion a new word and a new concern is introduced. The "keenness of perspicacity" of

the Americans, Johnson writes, has "enabled them to see through clouds impervious to the dimness of European sight; and to find, I know not how, that when they are taxed, we shall be enslaved." Fear of enslavement is now emphasized as the negative expression of the love of freedom. "Slavery is a miserable state," Johnson agrees, ". . . and doubtless many a Briton will tremble to find it so near as in America."[89] The word is fixed in our minds by repetition. The Americans "have been taught by some master of mischief . . . to attract by the sounds of Liberty and Property, [and] to repel by those of Popery and Slavery."[90] Slavery appears three more times in the concluding pages preparing the way for, and leading ultimately to, the climactic question about yelps for liberty.

Thus, with a single stroke Johnson lays bare the essential hypocrisy of the American protestations, and reveals at the same time the source of his own intense hatred. The right of England to impose taxes and the responsibility of her colonies to pay them are legal questions that Johnson might, in another context, discuss with total dispassion. But the yelping of slave drivers for freedom from all responsibility was a sound to which he could react with only the most violent denunciation. Nevertheless, Johnson was enough in control to shape his question with extreme satiric effectiveness: first, the question is scathingly sardonic, while at the same time suggesting the total self-control of the speaker; secondly, the rhetorical balancing of the yelpers "for liberty" and the "drivers of negroes" exposes the contradiction between the demands and actions of the Americans; and

finally, in their yelping and driving the Americans are diminished to a pack of dogs who whine at any leash while yet harrying and enslaving an entire people.

The emotions aroused in Johnson were too great to be kept in check forever, and, as if to relieve a volcanic pressure, he finally erupts with almost uncontrolled fury. In his proposed response to the Americans Johnson seems to suggest a way in which England might redress its part in, what was for him, the American crime. "Let us," he says, "restore to the French what we have taken from them." Further, "Let us give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them now and then to plunder a plantation." And finally, if the slaves are set free, and "if they are furnished with fire arms for defence, and utensils for husbandry, and settled in some simple form of government within the country, they may be more grateful and honest than their masters."[91] Here Johnson reverts to the directness of his conversational remarks on America. There may be a moral appropriateness in his proposals but it is certain that they are presented as a means of catharsis rather than as a rational solution to the American problem. When once he begins to talk about slavery and the colonists' treatment of the Indians Johnson seems incapable of reasoning quietly for any length of time and unwilling to fashion his attack in any form other than direct insults and threats.

The distinction between invective and satire, though it has been less emphasized, is as important when considering Johnson's attacks on

the Americans as is the corresponding distinction between humour and satire crucial to an understanding of his feelings about Scotland. In truth, invective requires less discussion because it is so easy to identify. Humour, as was noted, is sometimes used to ridicule and at other times is completely innocent of malicious intent. And, as was also seen, it is not always easy to determine exactly what motives lie behind it. In contrast, invective is always apparent both in form and design. In most of Johnson's verbal attacks on the Americans ("calling them, 'Rascals--Robbers--Pirates'"), and in his proposals that their plantations be given to their black slaves and the Indians be armed to drive them out, there is no attempt at ridicule, no disguise through the use of metaphor or fiction, and no distancing through irony. The attack is direct and literal.

In Johnson's comic remarks on Scotland, on the other hand, there is a great deal of wit, exaggeration, and irony, but not much actual satire. The function of laughter in satire is to expose and (ostensibly) to reform, but, except in reference to the habit of Scotsmen to favour one another, few of Johnson's comments touch upon matters capable of being changed. What Johnson describes instead is the barrenness of Scotland's landscape and the harshness of its climate (and occasionally, it must be admitted, its poverty). The primary aim of Johnson's remarks is laughter, and the laughter only results because Boswell is present to rise to the bait. But in his reflections on the Americans Johnson focuses directly on the character of the people ("a race of convicts," "a race of mortals whom . . . no other

man wishes to resemble"), and so intense is his disapproval that though there is exposure it is implied that the Americans are incapable of reform--hence the repeated injunction to burn them as one would cauterize an infection.

It is a commonplace of Johnson criticism that no matter how free he felt himself to be to take liberties with the truth in his conversation, he considered himself bound absolutely to the truth when he wrote for publication. With this in mind it is instructive to compare his spoken and written comments on Scotland and to contrast these in turn with what he said and wrote about America. Quite simply, as has been shown, while Johnson treated Scotland with constant levity in Boswell's presence, in A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland he is completely serious and the tone that emerges is one of concern and respect. Johnson's spoken attacks on Americans are characterized not by humour, but by a fury that was apparently fearful to behold. The tone of Taxation No Tyranny is only slightly moderated. Johnson, for the most part, employs the devices necessary to turn abuse into satire, but in his concluding proposal his anger breaks forth once again in direct threats. So profound, then, are the differences between Johnson's conversational remarks on Scotland and America that they tend to recede from satire at opposite ends of a spectrum bounded by pure humour at one end and pure invective at the other. The contrast is as great in his writings, for while he maintained the distance necessary for satire only with difficulty in Taxation No Tyranny, in A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland there was no need to dis-

guise his feelings for what he felt to be "a fine bold enterprising nation."

NOTES

Chapter One

[1] Horace, The Satires of Horace and Persius, trans. Niall Rudd (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), I, 10, ll. 14-15, p. 67.

[2] Worcester, p. 36.

[3] Dryden, Discourse, I, 93.

[4] Knox, p. 13.

[5] Knox, p. 15.

[6] Knox, p. 18.

[7] Knox, pp. 23 and 28.

[8] Worcester, p. 38.

[9] Life, I, 379.

[10] Life, IV, 26.

[11] Life, I, 392.

[12] Johnsonian Miscellanies, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, 2 vols. (rpt. 1966; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), II, 226. This work will be cited henceforth as Miscellanies.

[13] Life, II, 306.

[14] Life, IV, 186.

[15] Life, II, 307. To moderate the number of potentially distracting notes when separate but successive quotations are taken from the same page of the same work only the last quotation is given a number.

[16] Life, IV, 168.

[17] Miscellanies, I, 430.

[18] Thraliana: The Diary of Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi) 1776-1809, ed. Katherine Balderston, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), I, 166; hereafter cited as Thraliana.

[19] James McIntyre, "'On Samuel Johnson, who wrote against Scotland,'" in Johnson: The Critical Heritage, ed. James Boulton, The Critical Heritage Series (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 240-41.

[20] Life, II, 301.

[21] Life, III, 249-49.

[22] Miscellanies, II, 169-70.

[23] Miscellanies, II, 403.

[24] Life, III, 77.

[25] Life, III, 73.

[26] Life, IV, 101.

[27] Life, IV, 101-02.

[28] Life, I, 425; II, 194; and III, 78.

[29] Miscellanies, II, 49.

[30] Miscellanies, II, 216.

[31] James Boswell, Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D. 1773, ed. Frederick A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett (Toronto: William Heinemann,1963), p. 378; cited hereafter as Journal.

[32] Miscellanies, II, 48.

[33] Life, II, 300-01.

[34] Life, II, 307.

[35] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Samuel Johnson," in Thomas Babington Macaulay: Selected Writings, ed. John Clive and Thomas Pinney (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 154.

[36] Journal, 309.

[37] Life, II, 168.

[38] Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, ed. Mary Lascelles, vol. IX of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 139; cited hereafter as Journey.

[39] Journey, p. 96.

[40] Journey, p. 97.

[41] Journey, p. 96.

[42] Journey, p. 76.

[43] Life, II, 305.

[44] Life, II, 304.

[45] Miscellanies, II, 216.

[46] Life, I, 287.

[47] Life, I, 187.

[48] Journey, p. 12.

[49] Life, II, 312.

[50] Miscellanies, II, 55-56.

[51] Samuel Johnson, The Letters of Samuel Johnson, with Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him, ed. R.W. Chapman, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I, 188, letter #184 (13 Aug, 1766); cited henceforth as Letters.

[52] Life, III, 315.

[53] Life, III, 290.

[54] Miscellanies, II, 53.

[55] Life, III, 205-06.

[56] Life, III, 290.

[57] Miscellanies, II, 56.

[58] Samuel Johnson, Observations on the Present State of Affairs (1756), in Political Writings, ed. Donald J. Greene, pp. 184-96, vol. X of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 188. This volume of the Yale Works will be cited henceforth as Political Writings.

[59] Observations on the Present State of Affairs, p. 186.

[60] Samuel Johnson, An Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain (1756), in Political Writings, pp. 126-150, p. 150.

[61] Letters, I, 188, #184 (13 Aug 1766).

[62] Samuel Johnson, Preface to the Translation of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, in The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. A New edition . . . With an Essay on His Life and Genius, by Arthur Murphy, Esq. 12 vols. (London, 1806), II, 323. This edition of the works will be cited henceforth as Works (1806).

[63] Samuel Johnson, The Idler, in The Idler and The Adventurer, ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L.F. Powell, pp. 3-320; vol. II of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), Number 81, p. 254.

[64] Maurice Quinlan, "Johnson's American Acquaintances," in Johnson, Boswell and Their Circle: Essays Presented to Lawrence Fitzroy Powell

in Honour of His Eighty-Fourth Birthday, ed. Mary Lascelles et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 207.

[65] Life, III, 200.

[66] George Birkbeck Hill, ed. Appendix A, Life, II, 476.

[67] Life, III, 200, 202, 203.

[68] Life, III, 203-04.

[69] Donald Greene, The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 213.

[70] Greene, Politics, p. 212.

[71] Joseph Wood Krutch, Samuel Johnson (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1944), pp. 449-50.

[72] Greene, Politics, p. 214.

[73] Samuel Johnson Taxation No Tyranny, in Political Writings, pp. 401-55 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 425, 413, 434, and 437; this work will be cited henceforth as Taxation.

[74] Taxation, p. 411.

[75] Taxation, p. 412.

[76] Taxation, p. 412.

[77] Taxation, p. 418.

[78] Taxation, p. 444.

[79] Life, IV, 183.

[80] Taxation, pp. 443, 448, and 454.

[81] Taxation, pp. 413-14.

[82] Taxation, p. 414.

[83] Taxation, p. 417.

[84] Taxation, p. 416.

[85] Taxation, p. 417.

[86] Taxation, p. 454.

[87] Taxation, pp. 429, 412.

[88] Taxation, pp. 413, 414, 439, 445.

[89] Taxation, p. 442.

[90] Taxation, p. 444.

[91] Taxation, pp. 451, 452.

CHAPTER TWO

The Tonal Spectrum and Targets of Satire

P.K. Elkin, in a discussion of the tonal range of satire, uses the terms "smiling" and "savage" to indicate the extremes of attitude possible in satiric expression.[1] To the extent that Johnson's comments on Scotland may be termed satiric at all, they must be located at the smiling end of the spectrum. Indeed, for the most part, his remarks should be regarded as simply humorous. On the other hand, Johnson's statements about the Americans must obviously be placed at the savage end of the spectrum.

It has become a critical convention to refer to Horace and Juvenal as examples of satirists whose works exhibit the two extremes of the tonal spectrum suggested by Elkin's terms. Horace seems rarely to be angry. A feeling rather of tolerant amusement pervades his work. For his targets Horace chooses small follies: the garrulousness of his slave, the pretensions of a would-be philosopher, or the persistence of a boor. Often, too, Horace includes himself as one of the targets of his gentle mockery, with the implication that there are few who are not guilty of minor faults. In his satirist's apology (a statement that almost every satirist feels compelled to make at some time), Horace speaks of the value of satire in instructing the young, but he gives as his own reason for writing, not a desire to chastise, but rather the simple need to write. In other words, for Horace satire

originates from an inner impulse, a creative need, rather than being wholly prompted by the degeneracy of the external world. The variety of narrative forms employed by Horace often gives his poems a narrative interest that outweighs simple moral concern. Many of his works appropriate minor genres (a letter to a friend, an account of the misadventures of a traveller), or are dramatically structured (miniature dialogues, an unwanted encounter on the street), while still others take minor comic forms. In fact, in Satires Five, Seven, and Eight of Book I the comic tale, pun, and joke almost bury what little satiric point each piece might have. Although the poems grouped as satires are properly categorized, they are satires which often verge on pure humour, and which in almost every instance exhibit qualities of tolerance, moderation, and amusement rather than anger.

A contrast could be drawn between the satires of Horace and Juvenal that would extend to nearly every feature of their works. Juvenal's satires are far more passionate in tone, and are marked by sudden shifts from scene to scene and subject to subject; description gives way to dialogue and dialogue to description, while in the midst of all of this are clustered portraits of individuals whose lives and characters provide examples of every kind and degree of vice. It is as if the formal clutter of Juvenal's satires (deliberate clutter to be sure) mirrors the moral chaos of the world that he depicts. Though there are exceptions where a second fictional character is present to whom the speaker addresses his remarks (the adversarius) more often Juvenal seems to speak in his own voice expressing his outrage directly

to the reader. The rhetorical emphasis in Juvenal's works resides in the many portraits of individuals which are presented to the reader's inspection in order to inspire indignation and disgust. And the figures in Juvenal's gallery are unquestionably repulsive: Messalina, the wife of Claudius, sneaking home from a night spent in a brothel with the smell and sweat of her activities still upon her; Naevolus, a prostitute in the service of both a husband and his wife; the citizens of Canopus whose fanatical religious rites involve cannibalism; Larga who teaches her daughter to be a whore; and Rutilius who introduces his son to the pleasures of sadism.

It is evident at once that, in contrast to Horace, Juvenal deals with the worst kinds of degeneracy. And it is, for the most part, his choice of targets that accounts for the difference in tone between his works and those of Horace. Because he deals with minor human frailties Horace is able to include himself in his satire. Indeed he must include himself or else unrealistically set himself up as a paragon. Juvenal, on the other hand, must separate himself from his targets for he exposes the most debased and vicious of human crimes. The difference between the frailty mocked by Horace and the crimes which Juvenal exposes is one not simply of degree, but of kind. Horace's subjects embarrass or harm primarily themselves, but the offenders depicted by Juvenal make victims of others: gluttons riot at the expense of the poor, corrupted parents corrupt their children, lecherous wives beget bastards and disgrace their families, and sadists torture the helpless. In attacking these crimes Juvenal cannot be moderate. Murder, greed,

lust, and cruelty demand an angry tone; gentle mockery, amusement, or anything less than total outrage would be incongruous and morally intolerable itself.

There is, then, an obvious correspondence between tone and target. As the offense attacked is more or less vicious so we might expect the tone to be more or less harsh. In considering this relationship, however, some attention must be given to factors which lie outside of the literary work. Differences in culture influence how conduct will be perceived. What might be a serious offense for Juvenal, writing in second century Rome (say the manliness of certain well-born women), would be a matter, at most, for light humour in twentieth-century North America, and even then such humour would probably be criticized as sexist. The fact remains, nevertheless, that within the context of his own culture the satirist is constrained by his subject matter. To express violent disapproval of what are generally felt to be trivial shortcomings would be ludicrous, while if the satirist were to appear tolerant of serious crimes he would himself be held morally culpable.

Amusement and anger are only the two extremes of tone in satire, just as talkativeness and murder are extremes of offenses. The targets of satire consist, in fact, of whatever an individual or society chooses to see as a deviation from normal or proper behaviour; and the corresponding possible gradations of tone are nearly infinite. Unfortunately it is not possible to categorize the many shades of attitude which appear in satire. It is usually a simple enough matter to distinguish between bare approval and disapproval--that is between the satiric and

non-satiric--but it is much more difficult to make fine distinctions. What Samuel Johnson said in his criticism of the Great Chain of Being is applicable to the tonal spectrum of satire: "everything that admits of more or less may be infinitely divided."[2] The critic of satire faces a particularly difficult task in trying to decide what is "more or less." For example, is Pope more severe in Moral Essay II, "To a Lady. Of the Character of Women," or in Essay III, "To Allen Lord Bathurst. Of the Uses of Riches"?

There are doubtless still a few readers who would argue that the problem is pointless with regard to Samuel Johnson, readers, that is, who imagine that Johnson was uniformly grave, and there is nowhere to be found in his works the light touch of some of Addison's Spectator papers. Somewhat connected to this stereotyped view (if only tangentially) is the belief that all of Johnson's characters speak something called "Johnsonese." The corrective to both of these assumptions is found in what these same readers would consider to be a most unlikely place, the Rambler.

The locus classicus for the idea that all of Johnson's characters speak alike is Oliver Goldsmith's remark that if Johnson were to write a piscine fable his little fishes "would talk like whales."[3] Goldsmith may have scored a rare point against Johnson, but he was not entirely accurate. Bellaria, the gentle belle who narrates Rambler 191, displays a verbal innocence completely in keeping with her character, and wholly different from what is commonly considered as Johnson's style.

Bellaria begins her letter with breathless impatience, complaining of forced indolence:

> Dear Mr. Rambler,
> I have been four days confined to my chamber by a cold, which has already kept me from three plays, nine sales, five shows, and six card-tables, and put me seventeen visits behind-hand; and the doctor tells my mamma, that if I fret and cry, it will settle in my head, and I shall not be fit to be seen these six weeks. But, dear Mr. Rambler, how can I help it? at this very time Melissa is dancing with the prettiest gentleman; -- she will breakfast with him to-morrow, and then run to two auctions, and hear compliments, and have presents; then she will be drest, and visit, and get a ticket to the play; then go to cards, and win, and come home with two flambeaus before her chair. Dear Mr. Rambler, who can bear it?[4]

There is so much to comment on in this passage that it is tempting to emulate Bellaria and connect everything with "ands." In the first place there is a perfect consistency between the speaker and her style. Just as she flits from activity to activity, so does Bellaria flit from one thought to another with artless indifference to form. She begins her first sentence by mentioning her cold, continues with a tedious list of complaints of the pleasures she has lost by it, and concludes at last by expressing the fear that it will affect her appearance. But the pace of her initial sentence is torpid compared to the avalanche of clauses which pile up in her envious recitation of the activities of Melissa. There is nothing of Johnson's usual conciseness and balance here. Bellaria's sentences are entirely linear. Thought follows thought in a loosely related progression just

as in her life activity follows activity in a procession of mindless gaiety.

It must be admitted, in deference to Goldsmith, that as the piece continues the writing sometimes lapses into the balanced style more characteristic of Johnson than of the young woman who begins the letter. Bellaria opens her final paragraph, for example, with a finely structured sentence: "For all these distinctions I find myself indebted to that beauty which I was never suffered to hear praised, and of which, therefore, I did not before know the full value."[5] This, however, is only a momentary lapse, and for the most part Bellaria continues in the style of her introduction.

As the ostensible narrator of Rambler 191 Bellaria is forced to expose herself. She does not, however, convict herself of much more than innocent foolishness. Though this is a satiric portrait the tone throughout is one of amusement rather than anger. Employing double-edged irony, Johnson even allows a hit at his editorial persona. Bellaria relates that her aunt brought her a bundle of Ramblers that she might spend her confinement profitably: "She says, you are a philosopher, and will teach me to moderate my desires, and look upon the world with indifference." Bellaria, naturally, has no wish to moderate her desires, and, identifying "the world" with parties, visits, card games, and young men, can bear to look upon nothing else. But, she complains, feeling very much put-upon, "I have been forced . . . to sit this morning a whole quarter of an hour with your paper before my face." Certainly Bellaria exposes herself through her inability to

concentrate her attention on a Rambler for even fifteen minutes; but at the same time Johnson seems almost to sympathize with her unwillingness by mocking the gravity of the paper and its author. Bellaria has her revenge in any case in the form of a letter from Mr. Tripp,

> which I put within the leaves, and read about "absence" and "inconsolableness," and "ardour," and "irresistible passion," and "eternal constancy," while my aunt imagined, that I was puzzling myself with your philosophy, and often cried out, when she saw me look confused, "If there is any word that you do not understand, child, I will explain it."[6]

Nothing could be lighter or more good-humoured than this passage: Bellaria's recital of the cant terms of the billet doux ("inconsolableness," "eternal constancy") the meanings (if not the insincerity) of which she knows very well, and her aunt's offer of assistance with the hard words of the Rambler, is as much a scene of comic misinterpretation as it is a satiric exposure of Bellaria's misplaced values.

The body of Bellaria's letter consists of two related complaints: the uselessness of literature, and the "ignorance and malice" of her two aunts who have attempted to direct her attention away from the world and to books by relating "tragick stories of the cruelty, perfidy, and artifices of men." Bellaria, as might be expected, has found her aunts out and discovered that men are actually quite wonderful creatures. With unconscious irony she explains that she has found little reason "to suspect them of stratagems and fraud":

> When I play at cards, they never take advantage of my mistakes, nor exact from me a rigorous observa-

> tion of the game. Even Mr. Shuffle, a grave gentleman, who has daughters older than myself, plays with me so negligently, that I am sometimes inclined to believe he loses his money by design, and yet he is so fond of play, that he says, he will one day take me to his house in the country; that we may try by ourselves who can conquer. I have not yet promised him; but when the town grows a little empty, I shall think upon it, for I want some trinkets, like Letitia's, to my watch.[7]

Clearly Bellaria is in danger through her innocence and confidence of losing her virtue for a few trinkets, the price it is implied of Letitia's honesty. The double entendre of the lecherous Mr. Shuffle escapes Bellaria's notice, but not the notice of her readers. Bellaria, however, is too conscious of her power over men to fear any danger. She boasts that she is able to make "the eyes sparkle and the cheeks glow of him whose proposals obtain my approbation," not realizing that the source of her power is also the source of great danger.[8]

But if she is not conscious of the deceit of men, Bellaria is certain of the dangers of books. In the first place she has no time for them. And secondly, they lessen one in the eyes of the world:

> I have talked once or twice among ladies about principles and ideas, but they put their fans before their faces, and told me, I was too wise for them, who for their part, never pretended to read anything but the play-bill.

But most importantly, Bellaria has discovered that a display of learning is liable to cause offense where offense is most to be avoided:

> If I had not dropped all pretensions to learning, I should have lost Mr. Tripp, whom I once

> frightened into another box, by retailing some of Dryden's remarks upon a tragedy; for Mr. Tripp declares, that he hates nothing like hard words, and I am sure, there is not a better partner to be found; his very walk is a dance.[9]

There is a temptation to relate Johnson's Bellaria to Pope's Belinda; the similarity of their names alone invites such a comparison. Rambler 191 and The Rape of the Lock have, in fact, been examined together by Arnold Tibbetts. His statement that "Bellaria's letter is a remarkable achievement, a prose comedy that can stand comparison with Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock'" is, however, vague and potentially misleading.[10] There are a few obvious similarities in the two women, but if Tibbetts means to claim equal merit for the two works he is unfair to both Johnson and Pope since Rambler 191 is far less ambitious in design. The similarities that exist are easily enumerated: like Belinda, Bellaria is too conscious of, and trusting in, the power of her beauty; again like Pope's heroine (and target), she is more concerned with appearances and opinion than with reality; and finally, though she does not live in a world of moral clutter as does Belinda, Bellaria is at least guilty of rejecting things of greater and more lasting value for the transient pleasures of the world. To the extent that these errors are exposed, Johnson's portrait is satiric; and in these general details his work does recall The Rape of the Lock. There is, however, much else in The Rape of the Lock that distinguishes it from Rambler 191. One of the most noticeable differences in the two works is the absence in Rambler 191 of the darker suggestions that cloud Pope's verses. The embittered and cynical Thalestris has no counterpart

in Rambler 191, nor is the surface of Johnson's work troubled with such images as are found in the description of the Cave of Spleen. The darkest hint is the mention of Mr. Shuffle, but that threat, like the possible ruin of Belinda, lies in a future not dealt with in the work. And although she desires his proffered trinkets, there is no suggestion that Bellaria is aware of their price, or would pay it. In this there is perhaps one other similarity to Belinda, for she only unwittingly offers an exchange of the fact for the appearance of virtue:

> Oh hadst thou, Cruel! been content to seize
> Hairs less in sight, or any Hairs but these!
> (IV. 175-176)[11]

The lightness of tone in Rambler 191 is attributable to two facts: Bellaria's folly has not matured into corruption, nor does she harm anyone but herself. In The Vanity of Human Wishes Johnson deals with coquetry much more harshly, but there the entire life of the vain beauty is envisioned. In Rambler 191 we see the belle only upon her first entrance into the world, while The Vanity of Human Wishes portrays both the flowering and decay of beauty. At first a lovely young girl's life is bounded only by pleasures, "By day the Frolic, and the dance by night" (I.325).[12] But beauty always invites an attack on the virtue of its possessor until finally its

> . . . guardians yield, by force superior ply'd;
> By Int'rest, Prudence; and by Flatt'ry, Pride,
> Now beauty falls betray'd, despis'd, distress'd,
> And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.
> (11.339-42)

This is perhaps the fate that awaits Bellaria, though it seems rather callous to disturb her thoughtless gaiety, or to darken the tone of this sprightly Rambler, with passages from Johnson's more sombre poem.

The male companion to the foolish coquette is, of course, the fop. A favourite stock character of comedy and satire, the fop is identifiable by his fashionable appearance, affected language (running mainly to cant terms), general air of self-satisifed superiority, and fundamental ignorance and impotence. Mr. Tripp, whose "very walk is a dance," is a fop, but he is only a minor figure in Bellaria's letter. Rambler 61 more fully exposes the class of being to which Mr. Tripp belongs in the figure of Mr. Frolic. Frolic is described in a letter written by Ruricola, a rustic, who seems genuinely undecided whether the young man is actually what he describes himself to be or a bragging impostor. Frolic, who grew up in Ruricola's village, has returned on a visit after spending seven years in London. Ruricola is greatly surprised by Frolic's display of worldly knowledge and success since he was known in his village only for being "a tall boy, with lank hair, remarkable for stealing eggs, and sucking them." But Frolic provides the villagers with sufficient evidence that he has risen above them. Ruricola writes that while attending a weekly gathering of the townsfolk on the bowling-green Mr. Frolic

> did not much endeavour to conceal his contempt of every thing that differed from the opinions, or practice, of the modish world. He shewed us the deformity of our skirts and sleeves, informed us where hats of the proper size were to be sold, and recommended to us the reformation of a thousand absurdities in our cloaths.

Consistent with Frolic's concern for fashion in dress is his delight in new modes of speech. In the simple world of the village Frolic is nearly incomprehensible, and, as Ruricola writes, he takes perverse pleasure in confusing the villagers: "when any of his phrases were unintelligible, he could not suppress the joy of confessed superiority, but frequently delayed the explanation, that he might enjoy his triumph over our barbarity."[13]

What little authority Frolic has stems, obviously, from the advantage of his residence in London and the credulity of the villagers. As Ruricola states, this time with his own irony, "a short residence at London entitles a man to knowledge, to wit, to politeness, and to a despotick and dictatorial power of prescribing to the rude multitude, whom he condescends to honour with a biennial visit."[14] But Frolic overplays his advantage and incurs the suspicion of at least one villager. With no one to refute him, Frolic advances from a display of his knowledge of fashion to relating outrageous stories of love, wit, and adventure, with himself, naturally, as the hero. Mr. Frolic tells us, writes Ruricola, that his "life has, for seven years, been a regular interchange of intrigues, dangers, and waggeries, and . . . [he] has distinguished himself in every character that can be feared, envied, or admired."[15] Ruricola obviously suspects the truth about Frolic, but like a wise philosopher he suspends his judgement until his suspicions can be confirmed. And so he asks the Rambler whether he has

> yet heard the great name of Mr. Frolic. If he is

> celebrated by other tongues than his own, I shall willingly propagate his praise; but if he has swelled among us with empty boasts, and honours conferred only by himself, I shall treat him with rustic sincerity, and drive him as an impostor from this part of the kingdom to some region of more credulity.[16]

Though the tone of this piece is far from "savage," Johnson is less tolerant here than in the portrait of Bellaria. There is a suggestion of a punishment soon to be dealt out to Frolic which implies a greater degree of disapproval. The reader's reaction to the anticipated humiliation of Frolic is far different from the concern felt for Bellaria's future. Because she is handled so gently by Johnson, our disapproval is balanced by affection. The danger posed by Mr. Shuffle is dreaded, and one wishes to warn Bellaria that unless she is less foolish she will end "a degraded toast." Frolic's disgrace, on the other hand, is imagined with pleasure. A cruel delight accompanies the thought of him skulking out of the village with his pretensions deflated and his lies found out. This is due in part to the fact that his fault is somewhat greater. To lie is a graver offense than to prefer dancing to reading. And lies are also an imposition on the credulity of others, while preferring a gay to a learned life brings harm to no one but the coquette.

But it is the honesty of Ruricola that most influences our attitude toward Frolic. The narrator of this paper and the person he describes could not be more opposite. Ruricola is a plain, simple, and honest villager. He is, as he puts it, a man "placed in a remote country" who is thirsty for knowledge of what passes in the world. Residing

"at a great distance from the fountain of intelligence," Ruricola is dependent upon out of date newspapers and the reports of others to satisfy his curiosity. Frolic's visit, then, should be a delight to him. From one who has come from London Ruricola might expect to learn "what changes of publick measures are approaching; who is likely to be crushed in the collision of parties; who is climbing to the top of power, and who is tottering on the precipice of disgrace."[17] Ruricola is concerned, then, with events which are of some significance, at least in the context of this satire. Frolic's knowledge, however, is only of the changing fashions of dress and speech, and he uses this useless knowledge only to embarrass and confuse the villagers. The only events that he has to report are fabrications suggesting his own daring and importance. Because Ruricola is such a likeable man Frolic's lies seem even more detestable, and the fact that he is patient enough to await confirmation of his suspicions before exposing Frolic increases our regard for him and our dislike of Frolic.

Still, Frolic is more foolish than vicious. His affected superiority, which might at first inspire awe in the simple villagers, will ultimately excite only their laughter. And his lies, too, will have no lasting effect, for they will be found out and provide even more material for ridicule. He displays many faults; he is boastful, dishonest, and foolishly addicted to fashion, and in another context some of these faults might be serious. But as he is presented in Ruricola's letter Frolic is only an insipid fop who is treated with derisive laughter.

Johnson wrote many other satires in which the mood is one of laughter and the fault exposed more foolish than criminal. Probably the best-known of his lighter pieces is "A Short Song of Congratulation":[18]

Long-expected one and twenty
  Ling'ring year at last is flown,
Pomp and pleasure, pride and plenty
  Great Sir John, are all your own.

Loosen'd from the minor's tether,
  Free to mortgage or to sell,
Wild as wind, and light as feather
  Bid the slaves of thrift farewell.

Call the Bettys, Kates, and Jennys
  Ev'ry name that laughs at care,
Lavish of your grandsire's guineas,
  Show the spirit of an heir.

All that prey on vice and folly
  Joy to see their quarry fly,
Here the gamester light and jolly
  There the lender grave and sly.

Wealth, Sir John, was made to wander,
  Let it wander as it will;
See the jocky, see the pander,
  Bid them come, and take their fill.

When the bonny blade carouses,
  Pockets full, and spirits high,
What are acres? What are houses?
  Only dirt, or wet or dry.

If the guardian or the mother
  Tell the woes of wilful waste,
Scorn their counsel and their pother,
  You can hang or drown at last.

The subject of this mocking birthday poem, Sir John Lade, was a nephew of Henry Thrale, and also, it seems, an incarnate Tony Lumpkin. Lade had suffered Johnson's barbed wit on another occasion when, upon

asking advice on whether he should marry, he was disconcerted by Johnson's reply: "I would advise no man to marry . . . who is not likely to propagate understanding." Johnson, typically, regretted this harsh rebuke, and soon assuming a more pleasant demeanor, returned the conversation to the subject of marriage, and made amends with a discussion both "instructive and gay."[19] Johnson did not, however, retract the satire of his poem. In a letter to Mrs. Thrale, to whom the poem was sent, Johnson wrote:

> You have heard in the papers how Sir John Lade is come to age, I have enclosed a short song of congratulation, which You must not show to any body. It is odd that it should come into any bodies head. I hope You will read it with candour, it is I believe, one of the authours first essays in that way of writing, and a beginner is always to be treated with tenderness.[20]

Johnson is concerned here not with the emotions of his victim but primarily with the poem's reception. It may be that his insistence to Mrs. Thrale not to show the poem was partly motivated by a desire to spare Sir John's feelings, but his concluding remark is a solicitation of tolerance only for himself. Johnson, in any case, need not have worried that he was attacking the innocent, for it seems that his assessment of Lade's character was for the most part correct. The editors of the Yale edition of the Poems note that Sir John "married a notorious woman, Laetitia Darby, in 1787, and carried out Johnson's prediction by squandering his fortune."[21]

Johnson's remark on marriage to Sir John is scarcely satiric. It barely misses being an outright accusation of stupidity. But if he

was discomfited by Johnson's comment, Sir John, had he seen it, would have been more disturbed by the poem in his honour. A laughing insult is always more effective than an intemperate one in which the speaker's scorn is apparent. Johnson himself seemed a bit embarrassed by the sharpness of his remark, and perhaps felt the need to make amends as much to ease his own conscience as to salve the feelings of Lade. Since the poem was not meant for publication, and could, therefore, cause no embarrassment, there was no reason for Johnson to abate or retract his ridicule. And so excellent is the ridicule in this poem that Sir John Lade has acquired a measure of unwanted literary immortality.

On the surface the poem is what its title suggests, a congratulatory piece written on the occasion of Sir John's coming of age. There is no honour conferred by the work, however, since all of its good wishes are delivered ironically. Adopting the carefree mindlessness of his subject the speaker goads the birthday boy on to satisfy his immediate desires with no regard for the future:

> Wild as wind and light as feather
> Bid the slaves of thrift farewell.
> . . . . . .
> Wealth, Sir John, was made to wander,
> Let it wander as it will.

In advising Sir John to spread his inheritance freely among women, gamblers, and pimps, Johnson is, of course, simply expressing his own prognosis. The behaviour that is advised is the behaviour that is anticipated. Reproof, however, enters into the poem in many forms.

The pleasures that are placed within Lade's willing grasp are ignoble, sinful, and wasteful ("Call the Bettys, Kates, and Jennys," "Here the gamester light and jolly," "See the jockey, see the pander"). Less obviously, there is a great deal of latent imagery in the poem that suggests the typical diversions of a somewhat vacuous country squire. Chief among these sports are riding and hunting, both of which are insinuated by the relentless piling up of images with which they are associated: "flown," "tether," "feather," "prey," "quarry fly," "jocky." Although Sir John may embrace the empty amusements of a country booby, his values are formed by the city. One of the major distinctions between Whig and Tory in the eighteenth century was that between the "monied" and the "landed" interest, that is, between wealth as capital and wealth as inherited land; Sir John, by implication, comes down clearly on the side of money:

> What are acres? What are houses?
> Only dirt, or wet or dry.

His inheritance is of interest to him only insofar as he is able to turn it into ready cash,

> Free to mortgage or to sell,

which he can then squander,

> Lavish of your grandsire's guineas,
> Show the spirit of an heir.

Though the implicit criticism in the first six stanzas is apparent,

the tone of the poem is yet buoyant and gay. This is attributable in part to the seeming approval of the speaker, but is due in greater measure to the happy diction of the poem. Most of the language in the first six stanzas suggests cloudless delight: "Pomp and pleasure, pride and plenty," "Wild as wind, and light as feather," "laughs at care," "joy," "light and jolly," "bonny blade," "spirits high." Of course taken in context these light-hearted phrases express a judgement of Sir John's light-headed extravagance. But in evoking Sir John's character these images also establish an over-all tone that is carefree.

No one could read "A Short Song of Congratulation" and not become aware of the insistent and unvarying meter. From the first to the last line the reader is carried along by rhythms which convey perfectly in their headlong rush the mindless unconcern of the poem's hero. This momentum is created by the regular alternation of eight and seven syllable lines, by the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes ("twenty," "flown," "plenty," "own"), and by the alliteration found in nearly every line ("Pomp and pleasure, pride and plenty"). Alliteration, metre, rhyme, and diction, then, work hand in hand to mirror the jolly spirit of the profligate hero.

In the final stanza something appears to challenge the happy mood of the poem. For a single moment Sir John's actions are seen from the point of view of a concerned mother and a guardian. The language of their concern contrasts with the gaiety that has gone before:

> If the guardian or the mother
> Tell the woes of wilful waste.

The contrast in tone between "Wild as wind and light as feather" and "Tell the woes of wilful waste" needs only to be mentioned to be apparent. Still, it is not to be expected that Sir John will be moved by this concern. He is advised to do what he would do in any case:

> Scorn their counsel and their pother.

Though the rhythms still bounce merrily along in the final stanza, the concern of Lade's mother, and his scornful repudiation of her counsel, add a discordant note to his imagined pursuit of pleasure. What develops now is a tension between the still happy movement of the lines and the more dire consequences of Lade's frivolity. The incongruity between statement and form is most apparent in the final line:

> You can hang or drown at last,

which flies along at the same pace as "Pockets full, and spirits high." If we look back over the poem we will discover that Sir John is invited to his ruin at the conclusion of three other stanzas:

> Bid the slaves of thrift farewell,
> Show the spirit of an heir,
> Bid them come and take their fill.

While each of these lines contains a summons to penury, at the same time each seems to point out to Lade the possible delights of his inheritance. In the final line, however, there is no disguise. To

"hang or drown" is the consequence of prodigality, not one of its pleasures. The carefree atmosphere created earlier in the poem through image and rhythm is disturbed, then, in the final stanza. Although the rhythm remains buoyant it is also somewhat incongruous since the scene has darkened considerably. The pleasures of spending over, Lade is now imagined suffering the fate of the prodigal.

Despite its rather ominous prediction, "A Short Song" is still one of Johnson's laughing satires. The explicitness of the concluding moral judgement does not finally overpower the lighter tone established in the first six stanzas. There is, however, a degree more of reproval in the laughter directed at Sir John than in the ridicule heaped upon Mr. Frolic. In fact, though they are all examples of mild satire, there is a gradual intensification of tone through Rambers 191 and 61, and "A Short Song of Congratulation." Bellaria, Frolic, and John Lade are their own chief victims, but Frolic to a slight degree, and Lade to a somewhat greater extent, affect others through their folly. Frolic momentarily deceives a few honest villagers, but ultimately his lies will only redound to his greater humiliation. Sir John irrevocably involves at least his family in his fall. An estate is annihilated by his wastefulness, his mother is consumed with worry, and his family name is degraded. Still, it is Sir John who suffers most for his foolishness; it is he who must "hang or drown at last." And though he does involve others in his ruin, it is unintentionally. Sir John is, in other words, like Frolic, more foolish than cruel, and is a man more to be laughed at than reviled.

Many other examples of the lighter vein of Johnsonian satire might be supplied, some of which, as might be expected, are to be found in the Idler papers--but not all. Bellaria and Frolic are creations of the Rambler as is the vainglorious author of Rambler 16, the trivia collector, Quisquilius, of Rambler 82, and Hypertatus, the very Swiftian projector and putative author of the epistle in Rambler 117. These characters, too, entertain foolish delusions which are harmful only to themselves, and each is satirized with the same light and amused touch employed by Johnson in his portraits of Bellaria and Frolic. These are only a few of the Ramblers in which the satire is moderated by good humour and in which follies are laughed at rather than crimes exposed. But these examples alone should be enough to justify at least a modification of the notion of the Rambler typified by Patrick O'Flaherty. In order to emphasize the wit and humour of the Idler, O'Flaherty contrasts it to the Rambler, which he describes as a work which deals with "the permanent, suffering condition of mankind in general."[22] O'Flaherty also remarks that in the Rambler Johnson "indulge[s] in generalized reflections on topics like the inevitable misery of life, the role of chance in human affairs, or the prevalence of vice among men."[23] If the Rambler does often deal with the "misery of life" and the "prevalence of vice," it also examines lesser follies that are treated with amused detachment. Indeed, a substantial number of the Ramblers are as diverting as they are instructive.

Implicit in O'Flaherty's remarks is the assumption that the only speaker in the Rambler is Johnson, and that he unrelentingly "indulges"

in moral pronouncements and grave observations on the human condition. But, as was seen, the voice in Rambler 191 belongs to a very young and foolish girl. And in creating her voice and personality Johnson renders the frivolity and innocence of an empty-headed coquette in language perfectly adapted to her character. The narrator of Rambler 61 is, again, a fictional character, but in this instance his personality, and that of Frolic, appears not so much by how he writes as in what he says. In "A Short Song of Congratulation" the style descends once again to the level of the subject though the speaker is Johnson himself.

The distinction between satire that laughs at folly and satire that condemns crimes is both conventional and useful. But such a distinction defines the extremes of satire and says nothing at all about the middle range in which a great deal of satiric writing falls. The portrait of Suspirius in Rambler 59 is a convenient example of satire which is neither light and amusing nor savagely ironic, but somewhere in between.

Johnson portrays in Suspirius a man who through his constant complaints breeds discontent and unhappiness. Johnson begins the attack by noting that "it is common to distinguish men by the names of animals which they are supposed to resemble. Thus . . . an extortioner gains the appellation of vulture, and a fop the title of monkey." Those malcontents who interrupt the peace of others with their grumbling, Johnson continues,

> may be properly marked out as the screech owls of mankind.
>
> These screech owls seem to be settled in an opinion that the great business of life is to complain, and that they were born for no other purpose than to disturb the happiness of others, to lessen the little comforts, and shorten the short pleasures of our condition, by painful remembrances of the past, or melancholy prognosticks of the future; their only care is to crush the rising hope, to damp the kindling transport, and allay the golden hours of gaiety with the hateful dross of grief and suspicion.[24]

Despite the expectations that are aroused by the introduction, Johnson does no more with the image of the screech owl than to apply its name to Suspirius. Satire is achieved ultimately not through animal associations but by an exaggerated portrayal of the habits of the complainer as they are manifested by Suspirius.

It is not quite correct to call Suspirius a complainer, or at least the term has to be explained. Suspirius does not complain of injustices done to himself but to those around him. To some he offers a galling reminder of their neglected merit, while to others he imparts fears that they had not felt before. For example, upon meeting a struggling lawyer Suspirius is certain to remind him "of many men of great parts and deep study, who have never had an opportunity to speak in the courts." To Serenus, a physician who, like Dr. Levett, must make his rounds on foot, his expression of sympathy is calculated to have less than a soothing effect:

> "Ah doctor," says he, "what a-foot still, when so many blockheads are rattling their chariots? I told you seven years ago that you would never meet with encouragement, and I hope you will now take

> more notice, when I tell you, that your Greek, and your diligence, and your honesty, will never enable you to live like yonder apothecary, who prescribes to his own shop, and laughs at the physician.

In a passage that is reminiscent of Swift in its attention to numerical exactness Johnson recounts the history of Suspirius's eminently successful career as a disturber of other people's peace:

> Suspirius has, in his time, intercepted fifteen authors in their way to the stage; persuaded nine and thirty merchants to retire from a prosperous trade for fear of bankrupcy, broke off an hundred and thirteen matches by prognostications of unhappiness, and enabled the small-pox to kill nineteen ladies, by perpetual alarms of the loss of beauty.[25]

Certainly Rambler 59 is not one of Johnson's best pieces of satire. The image of the screech owl is not developed, nor does the character of Suspirius achieve particularity. He does not reveal himself in his own words as does Bellaria, nor is he distinguished with a single satiric stroke as is Frolic ("a tall boy, with lank hair, remarkable for stealing eggs, and sucking them"). In fact the only reason for including Rambler 59 in this discussion is that it provides an excellent example of the middle range in the tonal spectrum of Johnson's satire. There is none of the ferocity of Johnson's treatment of the Americans in his description of Suspirius; but then there is none of the gaiety that characterizes his portrait of Bellaria. Neither Frolic nor Sir John Lade is a very likeable character, but each is an enemy primarily to himself. Their offenses are against good sense, but neither takes malevolent pleasure in disturbing the happiness of others.

Suspirius, on the other hand, has no other pleasure than in exciting envy and fear. His crime has no great magnitude, but still it is an offense that intends to cause unhappiness.

Many other of Johnson's works fall within the middle range between "smiling" and "savage" satire. One of the best of these is Rambler 12, which consists of a letter from a young girl named Zosima, who describes herself as "the daughter of a country gentleman" whose estate has been "much impaired by an unsuccessful lawsuit."[26] Having now to support herself she has travelled to London to search for a position as a maid. After this brief preface Zosima goes on to describe the treatment she receives from those persons to whose advertisements she has responded: Mrs. Bombasine asks for references and when she discovers that Zosima is well-born sends her away with the reproach, "Such gentlewomen! people should set their children to good trades, and keep them off the parish"; Mrs. Standish even more cruelly mocks her before company and questions her virtue ("And what brought you to town, a bastard?") before rejecting her; another lady keeps her waiting two hours and then drives her away because she writes too well for a maid; Lady Lofty pretends to be insulted because she is dressed too well, and another lady is angered because she is dressed too plainly; after being kept waiting six hours a day for three days at Lady Bluff's she is told that the position is not open after all; and at the Courtlys' she is first teased by the master and then accused of being a thief by the mistress, and when she objects to these advances and insults she is sent off with a threat, "Insulted! Get down stairs, you slut, or the

footman shall insult you."[27] Finally Zosima is taken in by Mrs. Euphemia, who, though she has already hired another girl, promises to care for her until she can find a secure position.

The target attacked in this piece is a species of cruelty which is as petty as it is pointless, the arrogance of the rich toward the poor and the pleasure which is sometimes taken by the well-born in displaying their contempt of, and power over, those more humble than themselves. To Ladies Lofty and Bluff, the Courtlys and Mrs. Standish, Zosima is an inferior being unworthy of consideration, and their treatment of her reflects their consciousness of what they take to be their own superiority. She is by turns patronizingly taunted, cruelly insulted, and simply ignored.

Johnson had himself experienced the superciliousness of the nobility. In fact, it was only two years before the writing of this Rambler (1750) that, as he puts it, he was "repulsed" from Lord Chesterfield's door.[28] Johnson, however, unlike Zosima, was independent enough to be able to revenge his injured pride; and Lord Chesterfield, despite his own works, is now perhaps best known as the recipient of the most crushing letter ever written. Johnson's own sensitivity for the feelings of those ostensibly under him is exemplified in the story of how when his cat was old and sick, and would eat only oysters, he "always went out himself to buy Hodge's dinner" so that his servant, Francis Barber (though he was more a member of the family than servant), "might not be hurt, at seeing himself employed for the convenience of a quadruped."[29] Such delicacy contrasts sharply with the behaviour of

the ladies described by Zosima, who delight in displaying the power that comes with position. These ladies, however, occupy a much lower station than Lord Chesterfield, and so their rudeness must be exercised on a diminished scale. Whereas he could keep Samuel Johnson (a man of some reputation, even in 1748) waiting in an outer room (though only once), they must be satisfied with mean triumphs over waiting girls. Johnson had no wish to abolish rank, but neither did he think that rank justified ill-manners.[30] These ladies see rudeness to menials as a prerogative of their position and a confirmation of their standing in society.

Somewhat below the surface of the treatment accorded Zosima, especially by Mrs. Bombasine, is the suggestion that she is actually better born than some of those to whom she applies, and that their rejection of her is prompted by their awareness of her superior lineage. More important to the satire, however, is the apparent fact of Zosima's superior goodness. As in Ruricola's letter, but to a greater extent, the offense that is attacked is accentuated by being contrasted with the personality of the narrator. Zosima's prefatory history of the sorrows of her family, together with her helplessness and her frequent tears, engages our sympathy and makes us dislike her boorish tormentors even more. And finally, their cruelty is further magnified by the appearance of Mrs. Euphemia who, of all the women to whom Zosima has applied, is the only one who has treated her with kindness and compassion. Mrs. Euphemia is then, quite obviously, the satiric norm, the type of virtue against which the other characters are judged.

A pause is in order at this juncture to point out a pattern that is beginning to emerge, and which will become even more apparent as this chapter continues: the tone of anger in Johnson's satires increases in intensity as the targets tend more to be offenses that make victims of others. And as a corollary of this, the more helpless the victims are, the more severely his targets are treated. A shift in tone is perhaps detectable even in the few works that have been discussed so far. Suspirius and the gallery of ladies who appear in Rambler 12 are dealt with much more harshly than either Bellaria, Frolic, or Sir John Lade. The laughter with which Johnson treats fools turns to indignation as he depicts more serious offenders. Still, the tone in Ramblers 12 and 61 is not as severe as that of which Johnson was capable since the cruelties that are exposed are relatively minor compared to the full extent of pain that human beings are willing to inflict upon one another and upon animals.

Just as some of Johnson's most amusing satires appear in the Rambler, so are some of his most caustic attacks found in the Idler, a work that is generally regarded as lighter in subject and tone. In fact, one of Johnson's most intense attacks is found in Idler 17. This number actually begins rather mildly. The target is dilettante practioners of science and medicine, and the first portraits are of relatively harmless men. In a passage reminiscent of Book IV of The Dunciad, one man is described as passing "the day in watching spiders that he may count their eyes with a microscope," and another is mentioned

who "erects his head, and exhibits the dust of a marigold separated from the flower with dexterity worthy of Leeuwenhoeck himself." The tone of droll humour is maintained as Johnson continues:

> There are men yet more profound, who have heard that two colourless liquids may produce a colour by union, and that two cold bodies will grow hot if they are mingled; they mingle them, and produce the effect expected, say it is strange, and mingle them again.[31]

One of the clichés most often repeated about Johnson is that he neglects the kind of detail that might bring his scenes and characters to life. It is necessary only to glance at this passage to see that the humour in it arises out of two small details: the botanist pridefully craning his neck to receive expected applause; and the chemists muttering "how strange" to themselves as their liquids perform exactly as expected.

The tone in these miniature portraits is, obviously, more amused than critical. Indeed, Johnson is usually rather sympathetic toward the harmless drudges who toil in the peripheral regions of learning. In Rambler 83 he softens the asperity of Rambler 82, in which he had mocked a gallery of trivia collectors, by arguing that "No man can perform so little as not to have reason to congratulate himself on his merits, when he beholds the multitudes that live in total idleness, and have never yet endeavoured to be useful."[32] There is little reason to be angry with these humble experimenters; their obsessions are at least harmless, and at times they produce findings of incidental value to more serious investigators.

As Idler 17 continues, however, Johnson's attention shifts from

these harmless experimenters and toward their more vicious brethren. And as he describes these scalpel-wielding fiends humour gives way to anger:

> The Idlers that sport only with inanimate nature may claim some indulgence; if they are useless they are still innocent: but there are others, whom I know not how to mention without more emotion than my love of quiet willingly admits. Among the inferior professors of medical knowledge, is a race of wretches, whose lives are only varied by varieties of cruelty; whose favourite amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive; to try how long life may be continued in various degrees of mutilation, or with the excision or laceration of the vital parts; to examine whether burning irons are felt more acutely by the bone or tendon; and whether the more lasting agonies are produced by poison forced into the mouth or injected into the veins.[33]

Related to the objection that Johnson is far too "general," is the assertion (now heard less frequently) that he was incapable of vivid concrete imagery, and that he made "up for his lack of versatility by packing his lines with abstractions."[34] It would be difficult to imagine a more vivid description than that of these vivisectors whose "amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive."

Satirists frequently rely on distortion to draw attention to, and expose, significant features of their targets. At first glance this might seem to be what Johnson does in his description of these unfeeling men of science. In fact, however, Johnson distorts nothing. His descriptions are intensely graphic, but entirely accurate. An account of the history of vivisection published in the Journal of the History of Medicine substantiates the actuality of what Johnson attacks,

but it does so in language so antiseptically objective as to suggest unconscious parody. For example, we are told that "while Brunner extirpated the pancreas, Borelli studied muscular contraction and measured the temperature of various organs of the deer" ("extirpate" is a wonderful euphemism for "to cut out by surgery").[35] The author tells us that "the aim of vivisection was the study of living organs," but he leaves it to someone else to mention that "in the days before anesthetics . . . [these] experiments and radical surgical procedures must have caused animals a great deal of suffering."[36] The historian of vivisection unwittingly approaches Swiftian irony as he continues his account. Giuseppe Zambeccari (1655-1728), he writes,

> proved that the removal of abdominal organs in the dog did not prevent the survival of the animal. He removed the spleen, the gallbladder, the caecum, parts of the intestine and the kidney.[37]

If Idler 17 is satiric, it is obvious that the satire is produced by something other than simple distortion. In fact, it is developed through an elaborate series of oppositions which scathingly expose the intellectual fraudulence and moral degeneracy of these pseudo-scientists. The structure of Johnson's second sentence in the paragraph quoted suggests, by its form, a rational process. Stated abstractly these men are depicted as trying to determine which, of alternate pairs of stimuli, will produce a series of desired effects; but the concrete reality of their experiments betrays the irrationality of what they are about. The complex problem confronted by these "wretches" is whether

they can cause more pain one way, or another: whether by amputation or incision; whether by torturing bone or muscle; whether by an oral or an intravenous injection of poison. The pose of scientific interest is specious; not one of the alternatives presented is morally thinkable, and the knowledge that is desired is as pointless as it is horrible. There is, then, a satiric contrast between form and content. The disparity of the carefully balanced sentence and the irrationality of what is described draws attention to the viciousness of scientific experiments, themselves rational in form, when they are undertaken only to gratify cruelty.

The tone in this passage is unmistakably angry. It is, in fact, angrier than that of any of Johnson's writings that have been examined so far apart from Taxation No Tyranny. It made little difference to Johnson that the beings senselessly tortured in the name of science were dogs. On the contrary, their vulnerability undoubtedly increased his hatred of their tormentors. Leopold Damrosch, in a discussion of the "Review" of Soame Jenyns' Inquiry, states that "sentimentality about animals" plays no part in Johnson's attack.[38] It is difficult to say how much Jenyns' implicit approval of man's cruelty toward animals might have angered Johnson, but it is certain that he was compassionate (which is not at all the same as "sentimental") in his regard for animals. The anecdotes recorded by Mrs. Piozzi and Boswell illustrating Johnson's love for his cat Hodge provide sufficient examples of his fondness. But perhaps the most pleasing testament of his "sentimentality" is found in an anecdote recorded in the European

Magazine: while Johnson was visiting with a Colonel Middleton, the Colonel's gardener

> caught a hare amidst some potatoe plants, and brought it to his master, then engaged in conversation with the Doctor. An order was given to carry it to the cook. As soon as Johnson heard this sentence, he begged to have the animal placed in his arms; which was no sooner done, than approaching the window then half open, he restored the hare to her liberty, shouting after her to accelerate her speed.[39]

There is one quality shared by the animal martyrs of Idler 17, American Indians, enslaved blacks, and nearly all of the other victims of the kind of brutality exposed in Johnson's sharpest satires: their inability to resist the menaces of enemies more powerful than themselves. In a pamphlet written during the Seven Years War, Johnson disputes the legitimacy of the English and French colonies, and contrasts the power of these invaders to the helplessness of the Indians, who, he writes, yielded to the Europeans,

> as to beings of another and higher race, sent among them from some unknown regions, with power which naked Indians could not resist, and which they were therefore, by every act of humility, to propitiate, that they, who could so easily destroy, might be induced to spare.[40]

Sympathy and anger are often intertwined in Johnson's satires, though not in the manner imagined by Walter Jackson Bate. Bate argues that Johnson was moved, in part by compassion for his potential satiric targets, to always withdraw the satiric blow on the point of striking.[41] In his attacks on the Americans and vivisectors Johnson follows through

with his blow with vehemence. His compassion is for the victims of his targets, and it is this compassion that is found in, and inspires, many of his satires. Because he sympathized with the Indian victims of European rapacity he condemned the English and French invaders, just as his fondness and concern for animals led him to denounce their more powerful and unfeeling tormentors.

The resemblance between the vivisectors and the Americans extends beyond the fact that their victims are similarly defenseless. The Americans, Johnson said, are "a race of mortals whom . . . no man wishes to resemble."[42] That is, they are a race apart, a degenerate people that had lost the right to identify with the rest of mankind. The vivisectors too are described as having descended to a level less than human: "he surely buys knowledge dear, who learns the use of the lacteals at the expence of his humanity," and elsewhere Johnson wondered that these same men were "yet suffered to erect their heads among human beings."[43]

In the last of Johnson's works to be considered in this chapter, the "Review" of Soame Jenyns' A Free Inquiry Into the Nature and Origin of Evil, a more passive form of cruelty is exposed: indifference. That Johnson himself was incapable of looking with unconcern upon human misery is attested by his many acts of charity. In addition to maintaining a house full of dependents, Johnson out of doors "frequently gave all the silver in his pockets to the poor, who watched him, between his house and the tavern where he dined."[44] Frances Reynolds movingly relates that as Johnson "return'd to his lodgings about one or two

o'clock in the morning, he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls, and . . . he used to put pennies into their hands to buy them a breakfast."[45] It is little wonder, then, in view of his own active compassion, that Johnson so vehemently denounced the arguments of the Inquiry in favour of abandoning the wretched to their misery.

Soame Jenyns has a great deal to say about suffering in the Inquiry, all of which betrays callous unconcern. In an attempt to give respectability to his views, Jenyns builds his moral philosophy on a metaphysical foundation which is itself put together from many sources, but which is borrowed most particularly, as Johnson points out, from Alexander Pope.[46] The result is that Jenyns' work consists of shallow metaphysics and vicious morality in almost equal parts. In his "Review" Johnson treats differently the different aspects of Jenyns' argument. Where Jenyns' error is intellectual Johnson counters with arguments which confute that error, but where he is vicious Johnson exposes him with savage irony.

One of the arguments in the Inquiry that Johnson treats dispassionately is Jenyns' assertion that from the perspective of "the universal system" pain is necessary, but no more of it exists "than what is necessary to the production of happiness." Johnson's response is calm and reasoned:

> whether Evil can be wholly separated from Good or not, it is plain that they may be mixed in various degrees, and as far as human eyes can judge, the degree of Evil might have been less without any impediment to Good.[47]

As a framework for his theodicy Jenyns repeats the traditional theory of a Great Chain of Being. Johnson's treatment of this theory, though critical, is nevertheless without satire. The theory holds that there is a hierarchy of existence from non-Being to God, and that every possible order of Being has been created by God to fill the links of this chain. But, as Johnson points out, arguing first by analogy,

> Every reason which can be brought to prove, that there are beings of every possible sort, will prove that there is the greatest number possible of every sort of beings; but this with respect to man we know, if we know anything, not to be true.[48]

Johnson goes on to argue that the links in the chain cannot be continuous, for there is an infinite distance between non-existence and the lowest order of Being, and again between the highest non-infinite Being and God. Finally, Johnson also points out that there is room for an infinity of intermediate levels of existence between any two links of the chain:

> everything that admits of more or less, and consequently all the parts of that which admits them, may be infinitely divided. So that, as far as we can judge, there may be room in the vacuity between any two steps of the scale . . . for the infinite exertion of infinite power.[49]

The significance of this passage, apart from the fact that it hastened the demise of an exhausted idea, is that it is a simple exercise in logic. Jenyns' error here is of the mind not of the heart, and Johnson opposes this error with simple good sense.

It is not long, however, before Jenyns moves from metaphysical theory to an apology for human misery. And as he does so he exhibits both ignorance and indifference. Much of what Jenyns says makes satire seem almost redundant; to quote him is to ridicule him:

> "Poverty, or the want of riches, is generally compensated by having more hopes and fewer fears; . . . The sufferings of the sick are . . . almost repaid by the inconceivable transports occasioned by the return of health and vigour; . . . I doubt not but there is some truth in that rant of a mad poet, that there is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know; Ignorance, . . . the appointed lot of all born to poverty, . . . is a cordial administered by the gracious hand of Providence; of which they ought never to be deprived by an ill-judged and improper education."[50]

To this point Johnson's harshest judgement of Jenyns has been that he borrowed most of his ideas from Pope. But now, as Jenyns' remarks become more insensitive, Johnson's response becomes more severe:

> Life must be seen before it can be known. This author and Pope perhaps never saw the miseries which they imagine thus easy to be borne. The poor, indeed, are insensible of many little vexations which sometimes embitter the possessions, and pollute the enjoyments of the rich. They are not pained by casual incivility, or mortified by the mutilation of a compliment, but this happiness is like that of a malefactor, who ceases to feel the cords that bind him when the pincers are tearing his flesh.[51]

The images by which Johnson contrasts the pain of the rich and the poor suggest his rising anger as he progresses through Jenyns' treatise. The suffering of the poor, imagined so abstractly by Jenyns, is given

concrete reality in Johnson's comparison. To the fanciful sufferings of the wealthy Johnson contrasts the actual physical pain of the poor, who, not surprisingly, do not much regard a "casual incivility." Johnson's anger is increased by the fact that what Jenyns only imagines, he had seen and experienced first-hand. Poverty, hunger, sickness, and madness, as Johnson well knew, have few of the compensations that Jenyns romantically assumes. Point by point Johnson replies to Jenyns with knowledge gained through observation and experience:

> The compensations of sickness I have never found near to equivalence, and the transports of recovery only prove the intenseness of the pain; . . . I cannot forbear to observe, that I never yet knew disorders of mind increase felicity; . . . The privileges of education may sometimes be improperly bestowed, but I shall always fear to withhold them, lest I should be yielding to the suggestions of pride, while I persuade myself that I am following the maxims of policy.[52]

As Johnson continues, the signs of his increasing anger become more evident. That his patience is growing thin is obvious in his opening description of the third section of Jenyns' work:

> The Inquiry after the cause of natural evil is continued in the third Letter, in which, as in the former, there is a mixture of borrowed truth, and native folly, of some notions just and trite, with others uncommon and ridiculous.[53]

Here is clear warning that Johnson is about to move from argument to satire, from refutation to exposure. The statement by Jenyns that finally ignites Johnson's satire is both impious and secondhand. Jenyns "imagines," writes Johnson, "that, as we have not only animals

for food, but choose some for our diversion, the same privilege may be allowed to some beings above us, who may deceive, torment, or destroy us, for the ends only of their own pleasure or utility!"[54] Shakespeare's Gloucester says much the same thing: "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods. / They kill us for their sport." The great difference in Jenyns' restatement of Gloucester's terrifying idea is that he blithely approves of such divine viciousness. We should not worry over-much about the misery that we see, he says comfortingly, for it may provide merry diversion for beings greater than ourselves. Such an idea offers little consolation and makes monsters of these higher beings. To drive this point home to the obtuse Jenyns, Johnson subjects the idea to a rigorous reductio ad absurdum. What Jenyns imagines abstractly, Johnson presents in concrete detail:

> I cannot resist the temptation of contemplating this analogy, which I think he might have carried further, very much to the advantage of his argument. . . . As we drown whelps and kittens, they amuse themselves now and then with sinking a ship, and stand round the fields of Blenheim, or the walls of Prague, as we encircle a cock-pit. As we shoot a bird flying, they take a man in the midst of his business or pleasure, and knock him down with an apoplexy. . . . Many a merry bout have these frolic beings at the vicissitudes of an ague, and good sport it is to see a man tumble with an epilepsy, and revive and tumble again, and all this he knows not why.[55]

This is only a small portion of an attack which runs through two pages, but it is enough to show the heat of Johnson's anger and the method by which he reduces Jenyns' argument to absurdity. Midway through his development of the implications of Jenyns' statement, Johnson turns the

point of his attack directly against Jenyns himself. These higher beings, writes Johnson, might now and then amuse themselves with an empty-headed fellow who might be turned into an author:

> their first diversion commonly begins with an ode or an epistle, then rises perhaps to a political irony, and is at last brought to its height by a treatise of philosophy. Then begins the poor animal to entangle himself in sophisms, and flounder in absurdity, to talk confidently of the scale of being, and to give solutions which himself confesses impossible to be understood.[56]

Johnson concludes his examination of this portion of Jenyns' solution to the problem of evil with further concrete illustrations of an argument that in the Inquiry is only abstractly conceived. "The only end of writing," says Johnson, "is to enable the reader better to enjoy life, or better to endure it." This is not likely to be accomplished by a writer who tells us that

> a set of beings unseen and unheard are hovering about us . . . putting us in agonies to see our limbs quiver, torturing us to madness, that they may laugh at our vagaries, sometimes obstructing the bile, that they may see how a man looks when he is yellow; sometimes breaking a traveller's bones to try how he will get home; sometimes wasting a man to a skeleton, and sometimes killing him fat for the greater elegance of his hide.[57]

This passage is reminiscent of Swift, not only in its vividness, but also in the tension between the matter-of-fact language and the horror of what is described. There is one other similarity between the two writers that deserves mention: both were driven by their humanity to

expose the cruelty inflicted by the powerful on the weak and the unfeeling indifference of most men toward suffering not their own. It might be argued that Johnson's most trenchant works and, especially, Swift's Irish pamphlets are defensive satires. Both writers lived among the people that they defended, and both knew at first hand the miseries of sickness and poverty (Johnson was poor for much of his life, and Swift had certainly seen poverty), while their targets were at an emotional and (in the case of English landlords) physical distance from the suffering that they caused or thought so easily borne. Giving the lie, then, to notions about the vindictiveness of satirists, Johnson and Swift were motivated by compassion.

In Samuel Johnson and the Problem of Evil, Richard Schwartz argues that

> however famous the Jenyns Review may be, it must be noted that the display of outrage in the piece is somewhat uncharacteristic, particularly the shrill *ad hominem* attack on a writer whom one would expect Johnson to overlook as unworthy of his time and energy.[58]

The surprise expressed by Schwartz may be the result of a failure to separate the parts of Johnson's "Review." Schwartz is particularly interested in Johnson's philosophical understanding of the problem of evil and so concentrates on his refutation of the theory of a Chain of Being which supports Jenyns' theodicy. The idea of a hierarchy of Being is used by Jenyns to explain the existence of evil, but in itself the theory posits nothing about God other than that He is unable to withhold His goodness. There is, then, nothing in the theory to arouse

Johnson's anger, and so his comments are confined to revealing its logical weaknesses. It is only after Jenyns proposes that suffering has its own rewards and is compensated by the fact that it might give pleasure to higher beings that Johnson turns to satire. Johnson's attack is indeed harsh (though hardly "shrill" since it is fully controlled), but it is intended to expose the viciousness of Jenyns' insensitive and impious arguments. There is nothing uncharacteristic after all in the severity of Johnson's attack, for he was always uncompromising in his denunciation of cruelty, and Jenyns justifies his own viciousness by ascribing the same qualities to divine beings.

Seven of Johnson's satirical works (or works containing significant satirical passages) have been considered in this chapter, ranging in tone from gentle to severe. There is a simple principle that lies behind the gradual intensification of tone in these satires: as the faults that are exposed tend more to be crimes which bring suffering to others, so the tone tends to increase in sharpness. In other words, the degree of scorn that Johnson directs against his targets is proportionate to the degree that they make victims of others. Although Bellaria is the object of some laughter, her faults are treated indulgently since they affect only herself. Johnson, on the other hand, ridicules Frolic for imposing upon the honesty of others, and is slightly more severe with Sir John Lade for his prodigality which brings disgrace and ruin to his family. There is, nevertheless, little bitterness in Johnson's treatment of Frolic and Lade, for neither

intends to cause pain to others. Such is not the case with Suspirius, the screech owl, however, whose chief activity is to breed envy, suspicion, and discontent. In this portrait Johnson's ire is apparent, but it is well under control, as it is in his description of the ladies who derive petty satisfaction from humiliating servants. It is in Idler 17 and the "Review" of Jenyns' Inquiry that Johnson turns to "savage" satire of the sort that characterizes his attack on the Americans. The reason for his severity is the same in each instance: the Americans brutalized two races, the vivisectors performed unspeakable atrocities upon helpless animals, and Soame Jenyns argued that since the existence of suffering is God's will, and perhaps even provides His sport, the ignorant, the poor, and the sick should be left to wallow in their misery unassisted and unpitied. The differences in the crimes of the Americans, the vivisectors, and Soame Jenyns are simply stated: the Americans differ from the vivisectors only in their choice of victims, and they both differ from Soame Jenyns only by being active murderers rather than passive and approving witnesses.

It is typical of Johnson that his severity in the "Review" of Soame Jenyns' work, and in many other of his satires, is a product of his compassion. This may be an obvious point, but it is not an inconsiderable one, especially in view of the picture that has come down to us from such writers as Leslie Stephen of the satirist as a splenetic misanthrope, motivated by personal bitterness, aiming his poisoned darts at men whose only crime was to affront the writer.[59] Johnson published no attacks on his personal enemies, nor did he respond to any of the

satires directed at him. He did, however, employ satire to chide the follies of his time, and more energetically, to expose cruelty and indifference. In these more "savage" satires two classes of figures appear prominently: the targets and the victims of the targets. Indeed, as will be shown in the following discussion of the "fictions" of Johnson's satires, it is difficult to point to a satire by Johnson exhibiting any degree of severity in which there is not a victim who has suffered directly and intensely at the hands of the figure who is the target. The compassion that is found in Johnson's satires is for these victims and not the targets. Johnson does not draw back from lashing Jenyns. His regard for the distresses of the poor would not let him do so.

NOTES

Chapter Two

[1] Peter Elkin, The Augustan Defense of Satire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), ch. 8.

[2] Samuel Johnson, Review of A Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, in The Works of Samuel Johnson LL.D., ed. Arthur Murphy, 12 vols. (London, 1806), VIII, 30; hereafter cited as Review. This edition of Johnson's works will be cited hereafter as Works (1806).

[3] Life, II, 231.

[4] Rambler 191, V, 233-34.

[5] Rambler 191, V, 238.

[6] Rambler 191, V, 234.

[7] Rambler 191, V, 237-38.

[8] Rambler 191, V, 237.

[9] Rambler 191, V, 236.

[10] Tibbetts, p. 75.

[11] Alexander Pope, The Rape of the Lock, in The Poems of Alexander Pope: A one volume edition of the Twickenham text, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 217-42.

[12] Samuel Johnson, The Vanity of Human Wishes, in Poems, ed. E.L. McAdam with George Milne, vol. VI of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 90-109. This edition of Johnson's poems is used throughout and will be cited hereafter as Poems. Line numbers will be given in the text.

[13] Rambler 61, III, 326.

[14] Rambler 61, III, 326.

[15] Rambler 61, III, 327.

[16] Rambler 61, III, 329.

[17] Rambler 61, III, 324.

[18] Poems, pp. 306-08.

[19] Thraliana, I, 168.

[20] Letters, II, 386, #691 (8 Aug. 1780).

[21] E.L. McAdam, Jr. and George Milne, Introduction to "A Short Song of Congratulation," Poems, p. 306.

[22] Patrick O'Flaherty, "Johnson's Idler: The Equipment of a Satirist," ELH: A Journal of English Literary History, 34 (March 1967), 214.

[23] O'Flaherty, p. 213.

[24] Rambler 59, III, 314.

[25] Rambler 59, III, 316.

[26] Rambler 12, III, 62.

[27] Rambler 12, III, 63-67.

[28] Life, I, 261.

[29] Miscellanies, I, 318.

[30] Speaking of those who claimed to wish to abolish rank, Johnson said: "Sir, your levellers wish to level down as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling up to themselves" (Life, I, 448).

[31] Idler 17, p. 54.

[32] Rambler 83, IV, 72.

[33] Idler 17, p. 55.

[34] Ian Jack, Augustan Satire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 140-41, n. 2.

[35] Joseph Schiller, "Claude Bernard and Vivisection," Journal of the History of Medicine, 22 (1967), 248.

[36] Schiller, p. 248; Richard French, Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 20.

[37] Schiller, p. 250.

[38] Leopold Damrosch, Samuel Johnson and the Tragic Sense (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 84.

[39] Miscellanies, II, 397.

[40] Samuel Johnson, Observations on the Present State of Affairs, 1756, in Political Writings, p. 187.

[41] Walter Jackson Bate, "Johnson and Satire Manqué," in Eighteenth Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde, ed. W.H. Bond (New York: Grolier Club, 1970), pp. 145-60. Bate's important and influential views are discussed at length in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

[42] Letters, I, 188, #184 (13 Aug. 1766).

[43] Idler 17, p. 56; Samuel Johnson, Johnson on Shakespeare, ed. Arthur Sherbo, vols. VII-VIII of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), VIII, 881, note to Cymbeline I.v.23.

[44] Life, II, 119.

[45] Miscellanies, II, 251.

[46] Review, p. 25.

[47] Review, p. 25.

[48] Review, p. 29.

[49] Review, pp. 30-31.

[50] Review, pp. 31-32.

[51] Review, p. 33.

[52] Review, pp. 33-36.

[53] Review, p. 37.

[54] Review, pp. 45-46.

[55] Review, p. 46.

[56] Review, p. 47.

[57] Review, p. 48.

[58] Richard Schwartz, Samuel Johnson and the Problem of Evil (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), p. 31.

[59] Leslie Stephen, Alexander Pope, English Men of Letters (London: MacMillan, 1880), pp. 118-36.

CHAPTER THREE

Johnson and the Fictions of Satire

Some attempt was made in the introduction to distinguish between the attack which forms the core of every satire and the rhetoric of attack, or the means by which the satirist attempts to arouse the passions of his audience. This distinction, in effect, separates the moral and literary aspects of satire. To the extent that the satirist exposes vice or folly he acts as a moralist; but at the same time, since to rise above bare invective he must convey his attack, in Edward Rosenheim's phrase, "by means of a manifest fiction," he also produces a work of imaginative literature.[1] In the preceding discussion of the targets and tonal spectrum in Samuel Johnson's satiric works, and the relation of tone to target, emphasis was placed, though certainly not exclusively, on the moral features of his works. It is, of course, impossible to totally separate the two sides of satire. Amused mockery and hostile indignation, though widely different in tone, are both expressions of moral attitudes; but any investigation of these extreme attitudes, and all that falls between, necessarily involves a consideration of such matters as dramatic or narrative structure, plot, characterization, language, and imagery. In this chapter, then, which deals with these features of Johnson's satires, it goes without saying that notice will continue to be taken of the moral judgements necessary to any work of satire.

Mention was also made in the introduction of the symbiotic nature of satire. That is, with the possible exception of formal verse satire, satire is always incorporated within a form that has an independent literary existence. Whether or not a work is defined as a satire would seem to depend, more than anything else, on the degree to which the satire pervades the fiction. It is possible to identify at least four degrees of incorporation. Satire may first of all be entirely incidental to the work. There are numerous satirical remarks scattered throughout the Lives of the English Poets, but the Lives remain biographical and critical prefaces. A second level of incorporation is found in those works that are identified generically and yet are also characterized as satiric. Jonathan Wild and The Plain Dealer might serve as examples. Fielding's work is first a novel and Wycherley's first a comedy, but there is adequate satiric material in each to justify calling one a satiric novel and the other a satiric comedy. There are yet other works, often indistinguishable from the preceding class, that are usually referred to simply as satires even though they could as easily be categorized by genre. Voltaire's Candide is a work that might be classified as a picaresque romance though it is usually referred to simply as a satire. Finally, there are satires which are not only incorporated within another form, but which also substantially alter that form. The most obvious example, of course, is mock-heroic verse of the sort perfected by Pope. I do not intend to make much of this schema, nor do I pretend that it is complete. My only purpose in formulating it is to illustrate the complexity and confusion that must

be dealt with if one wishes to distinguish between incidental satire and works that might be called, however qualified, satires. Such a distinction is necessary for this chapter since in it I examine the vehicles of satire, and attempt to show how Johnson's employment of various literary forms constitutes part of what might be called a satiric strategy. Some of the works examined in Chapters One and Two (Taxation and the "Review") are only occasionally satiric; but in this chapter I deal only with those works in which satire supplies the dominant tone, works which are, therefore, satires.

No matter how confusing the concept of satire might be, it is clear that the satirist, in addition to being a moralist, must also function in another capacity, whether as novelist, dramatist, essayist, fabulist, letter-writer, or author of travel books. Apart from novelist, Johnson was all of these and more. Although he did not employ all of these forms for satire, he did, nevertheless, incorporate satire into many different kinds of writing. In addition to the two formal verse satires, London and The Vanity of Human Wishes (which are also Imitations), Johnson produced a small body of poetic satires of a different sort including a number of parodies and "A Short Song of Congratulation." In prose he composed A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage, which is ostensibly a political pamphlet, and Marmor Norfolciense, which purports to be a scholarly paper written by a retiring antiquarian. It is, however, in the Rambler and Idler that most of Johnson's prose satires are found. Within the somewhat limited confines of the periodical paper Johnson produced some of his best satires, most of which take

the form either of character sketches, with Johnson (or the periodical's persona) as the narrator, or of letters to the editor in which the satire is sometimes directed at, and sometimes by, the fictional letter writer.

When Johnson first began to write for a living, satire was one of the most dominant modes of literature. And so, when the tragedy that he brought with him and completed in London failed to find a producer, he turned first to translating and then to the kind of writing that had made Pope and Swift so successful. Among Johnson's very earliest works, two in particular, both satires and both published in 1739, reveal the influence of other authors to a degree not found in any other of his writings. A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage is an attempt at the kind of extended irony perfected by Swift, and Marmor Norfolciense is an elaborately conceived piece modeled on the Scriblerian example of learned foolishness. A third work, London, published in 1738, which will be discussed in the final chapter, is an Imitation of Juvenal's third satire, and there is little question that Pope's Horatian Imitations were very much in Johnson's mind.

The first of Johnson's prose satires, Marmor Norfolciense, begins with an account of the discovery in a Norfolk field (Norfolk being the home county of Robert Walpole) of a stone upon which is carved an ancient prophecy written in "Monkish Rhyme."[2] The verses foretell the ruin of the poet's country which will occur whenever the stone upon which they are engraved is uncovered. There is satire enough in the

poem alone which through symbol and image pointedly alludes to George II, Walpole, England's military weakness, and the hardships inflicted upon the countryside by a rapacious, but cowardly, standing army. The verses, however, merely provide the basis for a much broader political attack. The narrator of the work is a befuddled pedant, and the greater part of the work consists of his reflections on the inscription. Through the writer's blundering misinterpretation of the meaning of the prophecy Johnson exploits the ridicule in the lines and strikes out at a number of new targets.

In outline Marmor Norfolciense seems firmly structured. The work is broadly divisible into five sections: in addition to the Latin verses found on the stone and a translation of them into English, the essay consists of a brief introduction which recounts the discovery of the stone; an attempt to determine the author of the verses; an interpretation of the lines; and a proposal for a continuing study of the prophecy. The appearance of structural order is deceptive, however, for, in fact, Marmor Norfolciense is a great deal less controlled than this outline might suggest. To explain the aimlessness that appears in the work it is first necessary to mention the obvious fact that Marmor Norfolciense is not a scholarly essay but rather a satire incorporated into a fictional essay. Thus in a sense the work has two structures: the external structure of the fiction which provides a vehicle for the satire, and the internal organization of the attack itself. Perhaps one way to make this duality of structure clearer is to postulate an ostensible work (a scholarly essay) and to distinguish

it from the actual work (a wide-ranging political satire). Ideally, the fiction within which the satire is incorporated should merge with, and become part of, the attack as it does, as will be seen, in A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage. But in Marmor Norfolciense, while the essay form is itself cohesively structured, it does nothing to organize the internal satire. In short, the ostensible work and the real work remain structurally separate.

In large measure this is due to the fact that the satire lacks a central focus. The attack in the Vindication is directed at a single legislative act, what its passage implies about its proponents, and its potential consequences. Because his target is well-defined and limited, as the ostensible work develops Johnson is able to develop his attack on censorship. Donald Greene points to such a narrowing of focus as typical of Swift, who, he writes, "takes a comparatively small area of disease, and expertly and relentlessly probes every crevice of it with his scarifying needle." But in Marmor Norfolciense there is no single target, but rather a proliferation of targets that are only loosely related. As Greene puts it, "Johnson lustily lays about him with a bludgeon at everything in sight."[3] In turn the work attacks Hanoverian rule, George II's divided loyalties and his licentiousness, Walpole and his administration, the standing army, the cowardice and rapaciousness of the army and the ignorance of its officers, England's military weakness, the failure of the government to revenge Jenkins' loss of an ear, excise collectors, lawyers, the Licensing Act, and the sinking fund. And this is only a partial catalogue. With so many

shifts in attention it is difficult to find any unified pattern of development in the satire. The order that does appear is external only. That is, ironically, the essay composed by Johnson's incompetent narrator is better organized than the satire conveyed through this fiction.

The lack of focus on a single target is paralleled by an indefiniteness in point of view, or at least an inconsistency in the attitude of the narrator. The speaker is intended to be a learned fool who naively says more than he knows and unwittingly exposes faults of which he is totally unaware. Irony of this sort requires delicate control and a well-defined character whose naiveté is believable. But it also demands a character who is consistent in his attitudes and in his incompetence. It is nearly always the case that whatever the fictional narrator says has one meaning or value for himself and another meaning or value for the reader. But it sometimes happens in satire that this distinction is not maintained, and when this occurs the reader is left to puzzle out for himself whether the point of view is that of an ironic narrator/character or merely the author speaking ironically.

The difference between an ironic narrator and a narrator who speaks ironically is not very complex. An author, first of all, may speak ironically with the full intention that his reader recognize immediately that he is doing so. Johnson's adoption and extension of Jenyns' argument, for example, is explicitly confessed to be ironic. On the other hand, the writer may create an entirely fictional character, an ironic narrator who has an existence as much apart from the author

as any character in a novel or drama. It is, admittedly, sometimes uncertain whether the speaker is consciously or unconsciously ironic, whether the narrator is the actual writer speaking tongue-in-cheek or a fictional character who actually believes what he says, however absurd his ideas might be. Whichever the case, the narrator must be one or the other but never both. If the actual writer drops the mask he cannot don it again. That is, once the speaker himself reveals awareness of the irony he will no longer be a believable dupe.

One of the most perplexing difficulties in Marmor Norfolciense is that the narrative point of view seems to fluctuate from a fully realized ironic narrator to Johnson speaking ironically and then back again. That the narrator is intended as a fictional being is clear. Donald Greene describes him as a "smug, self-deceived scholarly hypocrite," and as a "judicious and pedantic scholar, well-affected to the administration."[4] There are times, however, as will be shown, when the narrator inconsistently turns against the administration, and with conscious irony attacks what he previously defends. There are times, in other words, when the fictional narrator is in fact shouldered aside while Johnson takes up the attack in his own voice.

As he first appears, the narrator is an entirely familiar figure. Greene's description of him as a "bumbling pedant of an antiquarian" is borne out as he hyperbolically enlarges the importance of the discovered artifact and quarrels with the original discoverer's translation.[5] Greene also describes the narrator as a loyal supporter of the king. If he is such then he must always be unaware of the potential

reflection of his remarks on George II. The first unconscious allusion to George II (apart from those in the poem) occurs as the writer attempts to determine the author of the prophecy. The fact that the poet describes England as "my country" does not prove that he is a native-born Briton, argues the narrator, "since we find that in all ages, foreigners have affected to call England their country, even when like the Saxons of old they came only to plunder it."[6] So far it is possible to conceive that the narrator does not see that his words might apply to George II. Nor is it inconceivable that his naiveté continues as he takes up the question of whether the lines might have been written by a king. The writer prefaces his discussion by professing to be a sincere admirer of all royalty, one who has "a natural affection to monarchy, and a prevailing inclination to believe that every excellence is inherent in a king."[7] Despite his admiration the narrator cannot bring himself to believe the verses were composed by royalty, for kings, unlike the author of the prophecy, have never shown any concern for posterity, nor have they "discover'd any other concern than for the current year, for which supplies are demanded in very pressing terms."[8] Though it is possible to believe that the narrator still does not intend his remarks to be read as a criticism of the present monarchy, it is interesting that Donald Greene does not think so; he instead sees the statement as a conscious repudiation of the speaker's earlier insistence that "every excellence is inherent in a king."[9] If this is so then surely the narrator is not the "loyal commentator" as described earlier by Greene.

But the most critical passage still lies ahead. The poet is concerned above all else for posterity, which, argues the narrator, suggests that he is out of favour at court. In as Swiftian a passage as is to be found in any of Johnson's works, the narrator states that

> The frown of a prince, and the loss of a pension have indeed been found of wonderful efficacy, to abstract men's thoughts from the present time, and fill them with zeal for the liberty and welfare of ages to come.[10]

There is much in this passage that brings Swift to mind. The sardonic tone, for example, is achieved by hiding the criticism within language that suggests purely objective analysis. The complexity of the irony suggests Swift as well: there is in this passage what might be described as a layering of tone and meaning. Unlike many other passages in which the irony works by reversal (that is, what is right is simply the opposite of what is said), here Johnson's and the narrator's intended meanings overlap. The irony is in part the narrator's as he sarcastically impugns the motives of those who express concern for posterity. In doing so he means, of course, to defend the court and its concern only for the present. It is more difficult to determine Johnson's position, however. Certainly he mocks the cynicism of the narrator and, more obviously, the conclusion that he reaches. At the same time, the sarcasm is so effective that it is tempting to suggest that in part Johnson is speaking through the narrator--that he, too, mocks the motives of some of those who profess such concern for posterity. A parallel in Swift's works might be found in Book I of Gulliver's

Travels. Most readers now view Gulliver as an ironic figure, yet surely Swift agrees with Gulliver's ridicule of the "infamous Practice" in Lilliput (England) of "acquiring great Employments by dancing on . . . Ropes, or Badges of Favour and Distinction by leaping over Sticks, and creeping under them."[11] Although the irony in the passage from Marmor Norfolciense is complex, the narrator's intention is not in doubt: he attacks patriots only to defend the court. But as he continues his position shifts radically. Rather than questioning the sincerity of patriots, he inconsistently goes on to ridicule the court itself:

> I am inclined to think more favourably of the author of this prediction, than that he was made a patriot by disappointment or disgust. If he saw a court, I would willingly believe, that he did not owe his concern for posterity to his ill reception there, but his ill reception to his concern for posterity.[12]

It is here that the confusion is most serious, and it arises because Johnson's and the narrator's sentiments more than overlap; indeed, they now seem to be the same person. There is no mistaking the narrator's attitude. No longer a "loyal commentator," "well affected to the administration," he is now an overt critic. There is not even the possibility that he is unaware that his statement is a criticism since the attack is expressed, not ironically, but directly. Despite the rhetorical fineness of its balanced antitheses, the ultimate effect of this passage is to cause doubt. For if this is now the narrator's view of the court, what is to be made of his previous statements in

support of the king, and all of those which follow? If we read the entire work suspiciously, attempting to make the irony consistently the narrator's as well as Johnson's, then we are confounded by his apparently sincere regard for the king and his real misreading of the poem; but on the other hand, if the narrator's naiveté elsewhere is accepted as genuine then in this passage Johnson inconsistently reverses his character's attitude and speaks with rather than through the pedant.

The loss of confidence in the narrator occasioned by this passage has the further effect of calling into question the honesty of his attitude in other passages where the irony is so apparent that only the most credulous of dullards could be suspected of missing it. Though Johnson achieves a Swiftian excellence in many isolated instances, the irony is often of a simpler, more obvious kind. Typical of what Paul Fussell calls Johnson's "crude" use of "Swift's weapons" is the following passage:[13]

> What nation is there from pole to pole that does not reverence the nod of the British king? Is not our commerce unrestrained? Are not the riches of the world our own? Do not our ships sail unmolested, and our merchants traffick in perfect security? . . . if some slight injuries have been offered, if some of our petty traders have been stopped, our possessions threaten'd, our affects confiscated, our flag insulted, or our ears crop'd, have we lain sluggish and unactive?[14]

Even if Johnson's narrator were consistently naive to this point it would be difficult to accept the sincerity of these remarks since all that he maintains is contradicted by events of which he obviously has

knowledge; otherwise why would he mention these specific matters? To suppose that he accidentally supports his defense of the ministry with the most unfortunate examples available to him is at least to convict the passage of being contrived. It is easier, in view of other inconsistencies, to imagine that once again the narrator's voice and Johnson's are the same; that once again the character of a naive narrator is replaced by a consciously ironic speaker; and it is difficult not to identify this speaker as Johnson himself.

In charity, what Johnson said to Mrs. Thrale about his "Short Song of Congratulation" should be applied to Marmor Norfolciense: this is the author's first attempt at this "way of writing, and a beginner is always to be treated with tenderness."[15] Although final estimation of its merit varies, most critics would agree that the work that immediately followed Marmor Norfolciense is immensely better.

The question of Johnson's motives arises inevitably whenever A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage is discussed. Joseph Wood Krutch regards the pamphlet as "pure hack work."[16] Paul Fussell agrees, arguing that "sales rather than any very profound objection to the current administration would seem to have been Johnson's main motive."[17] Donald Greene admits the possible truth of Fussell's conjecture, but goes on to argue that it is yet "hard to read through the Vindication and not catch some warmth from the white heat in which Johnson forges his shafts against the 'petty Tyrants' of vested bureaucracy."[18] Perhaps the most compelling reason for doubting the

candour of the Vindication is its apparent derivativeness. So Swiftian is the pamphlet that as Fussell says, "a careless reader might just have imagined that Swift was the author and have told his friends to buy copies."[19] The motive of gain ascribed to Johnson by Fussell actually implies a compliment. Johnson's usual work is so identifiably his own, that when, as in this rare instance, he imitates another author his intention must have been to benefit from the popularity of his model; for unlike lesser writers, Johnson never imitated for lack of having a voice of his own. Another feature that might give rise to doubts concerning the motives of the work is that it presents views that are not entirely consistent with Johnson's mature thought. This argument, however, is much less persuasive. To insist upon strict consistency throughout a life as long as Johnson's is unreasonable.

On the other hand, though "white heat" is possibly an exaggeration of the tone of the Vindication, a number of points might be made in support of Greene's belief in Johnson's moral earnestness. It must be kept in mind that Johnson was a young man when he wrote the Vindication, and his political feelings were not necessarily those that characterize his later views. It is certainly true that he was more concerned at this time with who governed England and in what manner. It was not until 1766 that he added the couplet to Goldsmith's The Traveller:

> How small of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.
> (ll. 429-30)[20]

In any case, the political views implicit in the Vindication seem perfectly consistent with the sentiments that passed between Johnson and Savage during their memorable ramble which took place during Johnson's first years in London. Forced out of doors by lack of money for lodgings, the two men repaired to St. James's Square, where,

> in high spirits and brimful of patriotism, [they] traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and 'resolved they would stand by their country.'[21]

Finally, the judgements of Krutch and Fussell seem certainly too hasty when it is remembered that the freedom of the theater, and ultimately of the press, is the main concern in the Vindication and not, as in Marmor Norfolciense, the general rule of Walpole and the Hanoverian king. Although his attitude toward censorship grew more complex in his later years, as a young man Johnson might well have opposed any restraint of speech on bare principle alone.[22] In the face of this it is too facile to dismiss the piece offhand as "pure hack work."

Whatever Johnson's reasons for writing may have been, the external inspiration for the work was the enactment by Walpole's government of the Stage Licensing Act of 1737. This Act gave to the Lord Chamberlain the power to censor any theatrical production. While on the surface the Vindication supports the Act, of course, from the opening inscription "By An Impartial Hand," to the closing advocacy of the total suppression of literacy, the work is an entire piece of extended irony.

Johnson's success in this form of uninterrupted irony is also a matter of debate between Paul Fussell and Donald Greene. Fussell

compares Johnson's technique to that of Swift, claiming that "Johnson's development of Swift's weapons is fairly crude."[23] Greene, though agreeing that "the technique is cruder than that of . . . some of Swift's great pieces of irony," goes on, nevertheless, to describe the Vindication as a "masterpiece of contemptuous caricature." To argue that the Vindication is inferior only to the best works of Swift is, in fact, to praise it highly. Greene even excuses the faults that he does notice, arguing that they arise "from the exuberance with which the scornful innuendos come tumbling out one after another."[24]

Certainly Sir John Hawkins did not regard the Vindication as a masterpiece. In it, he states, "the author is compelled to advance positions which no reader can think he believes, and to put questions that can be answered in but one way, and that such an one as to thwart the sense of the propounder."[25] Perhaps one reason for Hawkins' obvious lack of sympathy is his failure to distinguish the narrator from the real author, something that, as was seen, is a real problem in Marmor Norfolciense, but is much less so in the Vindication. It seems that Hawkins does not view the speaker as a character at all, but rather as Johnson speaking tongue-in-cheek. Clearly Hawkins is in error in this since Johnson provides ample biographical detail to insure that his speaker is seen as a fictional character. Hawkins does, however, point to two important aspects of the irony in the work: its transparency and its simplicity. In this Johnson is less than polished since what the narrator defends and proposes is usually simply the reverse of what is just. Because it is so obvious the irony also

lacks any element of delay, and is, therefore, ineffective if one of its purposes is to involve the reader in the satire.

While the irony in the Vindication does not work by surprise it is effective by means of distortion. The most immediate focus of exaggeration is the speaker himself, and through him Johnson parodies the mentality and morality that produced the Licensing Act. This is, in effect, all that Greene claims by saying that the work is a "masterpiece of . . . caricature." By occupation the narrator is a hack writer employed as an apologist for the reigning Whig faction. And apparently he has had a great deal of apologizing to do, for he boasts that "It is . . . with the utmost satisfaction of mind, that I reflect how often I have employ'd my pen in vindication of the present ministry, and their dependents and adherents."[26] It is not surprising that he is a defender of the present ministry; the narrator would be a defender of any present ministry as long as it were profitable. In this way he mirrors those who employ him, for both the hack and those he defends are interested only in an immediate accumulation of wealth and power regardless of the consequences to their own and future ages.

The assignment which the narrator undertakes in the Vindication is a defense of the Licensing Act, especially in its application to Henry Brooke's play, Gustavus Vasa, which had been denied a license by the Lord Chamberlain. The defense that he presents can be divided into four sections. After directing an ad hominem attack against those opposed to the Act, the narrator next attempts to justify the new powers given to the Lord Chamberlain; he then offers a brief criticism

of a few lines from the offending play by Brooke, and concludes with a number of proposals for increasing the government's power of censorship.

The narrator begins by noting that his previous works in defense of the ministry have been successful in convincing all but one group of readers. But these men, whose opposition is based only on "a regard for posterity" he has been unable to convert either by flattery or threats. He has even gone so far as to infiltrate the ranks of his enemies in the guise of a proselyte ("Dissimulation to a true politician is not difficult") but has only discovered that there is no motive behind their opposition other "than that which they make no scruple of avowing in the most publick manner."[27] This lack of guile is most surprising to the hack who is unable to account for behaviour which will only benefit "a race of men . . . from whom nothing is to be feared, nor anything expected; who cannot even bribe a special jury, nor have so much as a single riband to bestow."[28]

As a spokesman for the ministry one of the narrator's main concerns is to prove the government's right to increase its power. After ridiculing the unworldly patriots the narrator next defends the Lord Chamberlain's arbitrary exercise of his power of censorship. Brooke complains, writes the hack, that "the licenser kept his tragedy in his hands one and twenty days, whereas the law allows him to detain it only fourteen."[29] What Brooke fails to recognize is that it is "'the business of the judge to enlarge his authority.'" The narrator then goes on to hope that the licenser "will extend his power by proper degrees,

and that I shall live to see a malecontent writer earnestly soliciting for the copy of a play, which he had delivered to the licenser twenty years before."[30] Brooke also complains that the licenser gave no reason for refusing to license the play. But, says the narrator, the entire purpose of the new act is to invest the licenser "with new privileges, and to empower him to do that without reason, which with reason he could do before."[31] It is easy to see, based on these examples, why critics find comparisons with Swift irresistible. The broad humour that arises out of the tension between the matter-of-factness of the tone and the absurdity of what is said has a parallel in A Tale of A Tub where the pedant boasts that "we of this Age have discovered a shorter, a more prudent Method, to become Scholars and Wits, without the fatigue of Reading or of Thinking."[32]

The section of the Vindication dealing with the text of Brooke's play is remarkable for how little of the play is actually discussed. Only fifteen lines are examined, and of these only two are dealt with in detail: "Stampt'd by Heav'n upon th' unletter'd mind," and "O Sweden, O my country, yet I'll save thee."[33] The narrowness of the narrator's examination provides one of the most comic and damning moments in the entire work: "These are the most glaring passages," he writes, "which have occur'd in the perusal of the first pages; my indignation will not suffer me to proceed farther, and I think much better of the licenser, than to believe he went so far."[34]

In the first three sections of the pamphlet, then, the narrator mocks the concern of the patriots for the welfare of England, defends

the arbitrary exercise of power, and condemns a play without bothering to read it. It is in the final section of the work, however, that Johnson's irony is most effective. Not content with prohibiting the printing of contemporary plays, the narrator suggests "drawing up an Index Expurgatorius to all the old plays," for as he argues, "The productions of our old poets are crouded with passages very unfit for the ears of an English audience."[35] The problem with literature is that it often extols virtue, and, as the hack notes, "A man, who becomes once enamour'd of the charms of virtue, is apt to be very little concerned about the acquisition of wealth or titles, and is therefore not easily induced . . . to vote at the word of command."[36] A man who reads, in other words, is, by virtue of the morality acquired through reading, no longer easily bribed or threatened. For this reason the hack suggests "extending the power of the licenser to the press, and making it criminal to publish anything without an imprimatur."[37] But this, he realizes, is "rather to be wished for than expected, for such is the nature of our unquiet countrymen, that if they are not admitted to the knowledge of affairs, they are always suspecting their governors of designs prejudicial to their interest."[38] Recognizing that the expedient of censoring the press will not completely prevent the dissemination of dangerous ideas promoting virtue, the narrator finally reveals his ultimate solution. There are, he notes,

> scatter'd over this kingdom several little seminaries in which . . . are taught . . . the pernicious arts of spelling and reading. . . . These seminaries may, by an Act of Parliament

> be at once suppressed, and . . . it may be made a felony to teach to read, without a license from the Lord Chamberlain.

With the closing of all grammar schools censorship will be unnecessary since no one will be able to read, and then, the hack exults, the Lord Chamberlain will be able to enjoy his "salary without the trouble of exercising his power, and the nation will rest at length in ignorance and peace."[39]

This prophecy of the nation resting in somnolent ignorance illustrates what Philip Pinkus means by the "satirist's vision." Pinkus overstates his case when he says that "every satire culminates in an image of evil. It is the climactic vision of the satirist's world" (emphasis added).[40] From Juvenal to the present, satirists have prophesied chaos, often employing the same images. The hack's vision recalls, if only vaguely, the "Universal darkness" that "buries all" at the conclusion of The Dunciad; but then many other satires conclude with the restoration of chaos and darkness. What is seen by the satirist as the death of civilization is, however, viewed by his characters as a victory: the hack in the Vindication embraces darkness, it is what he wishes for most; like the Goddess Dulness, and the rulers in Brave New World for that matter, he would joyfully extinguish all science and literature.

The Vindication has now been reviewed in enough detail to observe it as a whole. There are in the work three interconnected avenues of satire. The very character of the narrator constitutes an attack upon the ministry that produced the Licensing Act. The hack acts both as a

defender and representative of the ministry. In him Johnson portrays the cynicism and ruthlessness of a government that cares only for its own power and nothing at all for the rights of its citizens or the welfare of future generations. In part, too, the attack is conveyed through simple irony. It is impossible to miss that an opposite construction is to be put upon the narrator's ridicule of the patriots and his defense of the ministry. It is in many of these ironic passages that Johnson comes closest to achieving the tone of Swift (e.g., it is "the business of a judge to enlarge his authority," the purpose of legislation is to empower an authority "to do that without reason, which with reason he could do before"). Finally, the satire evolves out of the direction of the hack's argument. A fear expressed by all opponents of censorship is that once government is granted the power of regulating speech to any extent, it will not rest content until it holds that power totally. The hack unwittingly proves the validity of this fear through the shift in his argument from a defense of legislation passed to proposals for increasing the government's power of regulation. By degrees his proposed restrictions encompass ever-widening areas of expression. First the power of controlling the printing of new plays is defended; next the narrator suggests that all old plays be likewise regulated; he then implores that all writing be licensed; and he concludes with what he considers his most effective proposal, the regulation of the very ability to read.

One aspect of the organization of the work that is artistically impressive is the way in which the satire is inseparable from the

vehicle within which it is incorporated. The Vindication is two pamphlets, one of which is the work of the fictional narrator, and the other written by Johnson. The hack's pamphlet is a fictional defense made by a fictional author; while Johnson's work, no less a political pamphlet, is a real attack conveyed through irony. The irony itself acts as a kind of mirror which reflects an opposite image of what is presented before it. The concern for posterity which is ridiculed by the hack is reflected back through the agency of irony as the real value in the work, just as Walpole's ministry and its Licensing Act, both of which the hack defends, are cast back as objects of justifiable scorn and fear. It is, finally, the chief felicity of the structure of the fictional defense that the more the hack argues in favour of the Licensing Act the more he exposes its actual and potential dangers. Thus the ostensible and satirical structures merge into one another as the development of the hack's argument in support of ever-increasing regulation of speech ironically demonstrates the danger of permitting any degree of censorship.

A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage and Marmor Norfolciense must be viewed as works of Johnson's apprenticeship. They were written when he was unknown and struggling to establish a literary reputation and earn a living for his wife and himself. Indeed, for the next decade financial considerations determined much of what Johnson wrote. The works produced between 1739 and 1747 patently

reflect the influence of magazine editors and booksellers, and consist of dedications, translations, and minor biographies. A few pieces stand out, however, to prove that it is possible to write for money and still produce works of lasting interest. The most notable of these are the parliamentary debates written for the Gentleman's Magazine, the Life of Richard Savage, and Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth. Although none of these, nor any of the other works written during this period, can be properly called satires, this is not to say that Johnson had abandoned satire completely. There is, for example, a good deal of satire to be found in the biography of Savage, but the satire here, as in the other works written in these years, is incidental and in no way defines the dominant tone. With the signing of the contract for the Dictionary in 1747 Johnson finally acquired, for a time, a degree of financial security; and with this security came an equal degree of literary independence. Certainly he continued to write for money, but what he wrote was much more a matter of his own choice. Perhaps as much for relief from his lexicographical duties as for financial reasons Johnson began in 1750 to publish the Rambler, in which so many of his satires are found. There is, perhaps, nothing startlingly innovative in the satires that Johnson produced in the Rambler, and in the Idler and Adventurer which followed, but at the same time neither are any of these works as derivative as the Vindication or Marmor Norfolciense; for although he employed conventional forms in these satires, he imposed upon each piece those qualities of style that make all of his mature works unmistakably his own.

The original Idler 22, which Johnson suppressed in the collected edition of the essays, is, like Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication, invariably described as Swiftian. The Yale editors of the Idler take the similarities for granted, stating that the parallels between it and "the Fourth Voyage of Gulliver's Travels are obvious."[41] The only resemblance that is obvious is that each presents talking animals. This is certainly not enough to establish a conscious connection since to argue that because Johnson's work is a fable it is patterned after Gulliver's Travels requires, to be consistent, that the same relationship be admitted between Swift and Aesop. All that can be said with accuracy is that both Swift and Johnson employed a form that had been in existence at least since the first century A.D. and perhaps earlier.

One quality that immediately establishes Idler 22 as Johnson's own work, and not an attempt to benefit once again from Swift's popularity, is the simplicity of its structure. Swift was an inveterate complicater. A Tale of A Tub is an extreme example of the kind of complexity that Swift seemed to delight in, with the result that part of its pleasure is that of a puzzle--one is somewhat satisfied merely to disentangle its parts and to arrive, however tentatively, at its meanings. Johnson on the contrary, habitually chose the simplest structures for his fiction. The Vision of Theodore is a dream vision in which the action is minimal and the allegory transparent. The Fountains has the conciseness of what it purports to be, "A Fairy Tale," and Rasselas has suffered by being classed as a novel when in fact it is closer to what Donald Greene calls a "conte philosophique" "in the

genre of the 'Oriental tale.'"[42] In Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication Johnson attempted, without complete success, to imitate Swift's narrative complexity, but by the time he wrote Idler 22 there was no longer any need, either artistically or financially, to imitate another writer. The work which was supposedly the model for Idler 22, the Fourth Voyage of Gulliver's Travels, has all of the intricacy typical of Swift: Gulliver sees human beings as beasts and horses as totally and exclusively rational, while he himself stands between, a confused and confusing figure whose significance is still disputed. If this is a fable, it is a fable unlike anything ever written by Aesop. Idler 22, in contrast, like such other of Johnson's works as The Fountains, seems almost austere in its employment of only the unadorned essentials of the form which it assumes.

But simple as it might be, Idler 22 is not crude. Evidence of subtle control is seen in the manner in which the reader is maneuvered into accepting the plausibility of talking birds. The Idler begins by deferring to authority: "Many naturalists are of the opinion, that the animals which we commonly consider as mute, have the power of imparting their thoughts to one another." Birds, having "the greatest variety of notes," would seem to be the most likely animals to have a power of speech equal to man's. There are, the Idler continues, some people who have even "boasted that they understand their language." So far the Idler has only reported the conjectures and claims of other men, but in the paragraph which follows what was formerly entertained as a possibility is nearly presented as fact, albeit with a sly qualification:

"the most skillful or most confident interpreters of the silvan dialogues have been commonly found among the philosophers of the East."[43] Though he comes close, the Idler has not aligned himself irrevocably with the credulous, for there is an unmistakable note of irony in "most confident interpreters." This note is repeated as he continues:

> what may be done in one place . . . may be performed in another. . . . A Shepherd of Bohemia has, by long abode in the forests, enabled himself to understand the voice of birds, at least he relates with great confidence a story of which the credibility may be considered by the learned.[44]

The Idler thus establishes the possibility of the incredible without acquiescing in it himself. The credence given to the fable by the argument of authority is reinforced by placing those who claim to understand the language of birds in a far-off land where the strange is commonplace. Only then does the Idler identify the source of the story as a European, and even then he is a European distant from Johnson's English readers. After this brief preface the Idler withdraws completely from the story and merely transcribes the Bohemian's tale.

The function of this preliminary account might be said to add plausibility to the fiction, but its more important purpose is to place Johnson at a great distance from the attack. To get to the actual author we have to trace the speaker back from the vultures to the Bohemian shepherd and then to the Idler before arriving at Johnson himself. Johnson could have opened the work by having the vulture say

to her brood, "My children . . ." but instead we are led gradually to the dialogue as the narrative is passed on from hand to hand until finally the birds speak for themselves. And even while he is doing this Johnson has time to wink at the sceptic.

The dialogue itself is a simple matter. A mother vulture, while teaching her young the skills of survival, instructs them to be particularly watchful of the movements of men. For although men are too large and powerful to be killed or carried away, they will, so the mother has observed, often destroy one another and leave their dead "for the convenience of the vulture." With the natural inquisitiveness of youth the children enquire why men would kill one another for no apparent reason. The mother admits that although she is "reckoned the most subtile bird of the mountain" she does not know the answer.[45] What she offers are two explanations given by vultures older and wiser than herself. The first hypothesis is that men "have only the appearance of animal life, being really vegetables with a power of motion," and, as acorns are dashed to the ground in a storm, so are men "by some unaccountable power driven one against another, till they lose their motion, that vultures may be fed."[46] Like the narrators of Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication the mother vulture satirizes without knowing that she does so; but though she is an ironic narrator she is not the object of ridicule. What is obviously aimed at in this passage is man's moral homocentricity which Johnson attacks by ironically inverting the Cartesian doctrine (which he abhorred) that animals are mere machines and insensible to pain. Like the Cartesians, the vultures

believe that the universe was created for themselves alone. Even if man is more than a vegetable, claims the mother, his purpose is to provide carrion, for vultures would never feast on his flesh "had not nature, that devoted him to our uses, infused into him a strange ferocity."[47]

It is man's "strange ferocity" and not his homocentricity that is the principal target in Idler 22. A second hypothesis of the old vultures, the mother states, is that

> there is, in every herd, one that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with a wide carnage. What it is that entitles him to such pre-eminence we know not; he is seldom the biggest or the swiftest, but he shows by his eagerness and diligence that he is, more than any of the others, a friend to vultures.[48]

If there is anything in Idler 22 that recalls Gulliver's Travels it is this passage. Both works reduce man (or something similar to man) to a "herd"; and Johnson's vilification of the "one that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with a wide carnage," might seem to owe something to Gulliver's observation that

> in most Herds there was a Sort of ruling Yahoo . . . who was always more deformed in Body, and mischievous in Disposition, than any of the rest. (Swift's emphasis)[49]

The Yale editors of the Idler claim that Johnson suppressed this number "probably because of its misanthropic tone" and because of his "strong aversion to 'general satire.'"[50] These are plausible inferences

against which it is difficult to argue, but some qualification at least is necessary. Idler 22 does not attack man (if that is what the Yale editors mean to imply), but rather man's most irrational activity: war. And, although war is attacked in general, it was not satire of this sort that Johnson meant to condemn by his interdiction of general satire. By general satire Johnson means attacks on entire professions such as law or medicine. In other words, it is satire which does not isolate faults but rather defames the innocent with the guilty. In Idler 22, as shall be shown, Johnson does separate the guilty promoters of war from its more helpless victims.

Johnson evokes the horror of battle by concentrating on its effects: "When you hear the noise and see fire which flashes along the ground," says the vulture to her children, "hasten to the place . . . [and] you will then find the ground smoaking with blood and covered with carcasses."[51] In part the satire is achieved by the description of men as "carcasses" (which diminishes men to carrion just as "herd" suggests cattle) and in part by the contrast of this stark description with the equanimity of the vultures who view this scene with gratitude toward nature. But though he attacks war in general, Johnson's satire is directed more particularly against the leaders who delight in warfare and reap its dearly-purchased glory. These are the men who are described by the mother as the greatest "friend[s] to vultures." One of the rewards of being a successful military leader is historical immortality. A more intelligent standard for judging worth is offered in Rambler 31 where it is argued that the name of Hippocrates is "in

rational estimation greater than Caesar's."[52] But it is in Adventurer 99 that this idea is given its finest expression: "I cannot conceive," writes Johnson,

> why he that has burnt cities, and wasted nations, and filled the world with horror and desolation, should be . . . kindly regarded by mankind. . . . I would wish Caesar and Catiline, Xerxes and Alexander, Charles and Peter, huddled together in obscurity or detestation.[53]

It is not, then, war only that is attacked in Idler 22, but those men, who like Caesar and Alexander, seem "eminently delighted with a wide carnage."

Idler 22 is a particularly successful adaptation of the beast fable for the purposes of satire. Johnson's fable is very well chosen in that there is a devastatingly ironic inappropriateness in having blood-thirstiness exposed by vultures. The bird had in the eighteenth century all of the same unpleasant associations that it has today, with the addition that it was then considered to be a predator as well as a scavenger. To be taught morality by vultures is akin, then, to being taught self-reliance by sheep, or cleanliness by swine.

Another framework as simple as the fable that appears repeatedly in Johnson's writings is the dream vision. This structure is well-suited for didactic works since it allows for a mingling of human figures, supernatural beings, and personified abstractions. In The Vision of Theodore, Johnson's best known work of this kind, a human

narrator encounters Appetite, Habit, Education, Reason, Pride, and Religion, to name only a few of the abstractions given concrete existence. As might be expected The Vision of Theodore is transparently instructive, as are nearly all of Johnson's other dream vision pieces.

While The Vision of Theodore is not a satire, in Rambler 105 Johnson uses the dream vision as a framework for an attack on human faults. Rambler 105 begins with the central figure awake and obsessed with a single idea. He is lost in the contemplation of a "'universal register,'" a kind of advertising agency that would publicize the skills and needs of anyone desiring its services.[54] Upon falling asleep he imagines himself in a place where something similar to his scheme already exists. Guided by his patron, Curiosity, he is escorted into the presence of Justice and Truth, who together interview a number of applicants who wish to advertise their goods and services.

The first to appear is a man who wishes to set up as a patron. Justice enquires whether the applicant is able to distinguish "ostentation from knowledge, or vivacity from wit," to which questions the would-be patron "seemed not well provided with a reply." He does, however, have a clear idea of what he considers to be the ends of patronage: "the pleasure of reading dedications, holding multitudes in suspense, and enjoying their hopes, their fears, and their anxiety, flattering them to assiduity, and, at last, dismissing them for impatience." This passage was written in 1751, only three years after Johnson was left waiting in Lord Chesterfield's outer room. The resentment that finally resulted in his famous letter is evidenced here

in the advertisement finally provided for the fictional patron: Justice "ordered his name to be posted upon the gate among cheats, and robbers, and publick nuisances, which all were by that notice warned to avoid."

Another petitioner appears who claims to be able to teach languages and science without requiring effort from his students and without obstructing their progress "in dress, dancing, or cards." But Truth, finding the instructor's "address aukward, and his speech barbarous, ordered him to be registered as a tall fellow who wanted employment, and might serve in any post where the knowledge of reading and writing was not required."[55] The satire continues with a progression of projectors before the tribunal: one man claims to have invented a form of steam heat, and another insists that he has invented a submarine that can carry passengers "for no more than double the price at which they might sail above water."[56] These and other figures, deceived by their imaginations and suffering vain and foolish desires, parade before Truth and Justice until finally, in what in Johnson is a typical instance of self-directed irony, the narrator himself is asked his reason for appearing. At which point he awakes and the work concludes.

The simplicity of the plot in Rambler 105 allows Johnson to attack a number of targets, while the dream vision frees him from the limitations of everyday reality and permits the creation of absolute standards against which human folly can be judged. Truth is infallible and Justice perfectly fair, and together they see through the pretensions and mete out just punishments to the deluded applicants who appear

before them. The dream vision also enables Johnson to distance himself once again from the attack. The narrator, who in this case is the Rambler, is merely an observer, and is removed entirely from the act of judgement. His only participation is in relating what has appeared to him in a dream.

In fact, in neither Idler 22 nor Rambler 105 do the narrators reveal any awareness that their tales are satiric. In Idler 22 the mother vulture is the principal speaker, and she is an ironic character. The Bohemian shepherd is only a shadowy source for the story, and the Idler appears only to discuss the plausibility of talking animals. In Rambler 105 the Rambler offers no judgement on his vision. Indeed, if there is a source for this satire it must be Morpheus.

The satirist's need to distance himself from his attack has been mentioned a number of times. Before continuing, however, it might be helpful to review the kinds of personae and narrators employed by satirists to achieve this necessary distancing. There are many ways in which a satirist can remove himself from view, or, if he allows himself to be identified as the source of the attack, at least focus attention on the target rather than on himself. Simple irony, of the sort that is found in the "Review" of Soame Jenyns' Inquiry, at least suggests emotional control if not detachment. As Maynard Mack shows in "The Muse of Satire," another way in which the satirist can disarm criticism and direct attention to the target is either to impress the reader with his own honesty and goodness, as do Juvenal and Pope, or to turn himself into a comic figure, a technique used by Pope as well,

though more commonly associated with Horace and Chaucer.[57] The surest way to withdraw from sight completely, however, is to create an entirely fictional narrator and let him be identified as the source of exposure. In The Cankered Muse, Alvin Kernan notes that fictional narrators in satire tend to be of three general types: they are either honest or at least morally neutral characters who attack targets outside of themselves; or they are ironic characters notable for their own failings but who nevertheless expose others even more foolish and vice-ridden than themselves; or, finally, they are representatives and defenders of vice and folly and the victims of their own self-exposure.[58]

The editorial persona that Johnson creates for the Rambler is obviously that of the good, honest man. The Rambler's appearance of being a wise philosopher is not, however, allowed to grow out of proportion. With amusing regularity his correspondents mock his gravity. The Idler, on the other hand, is presented more as an ironic figure, though this role is maintained with little consistency. There is, for instance, nothing ironic, or amusing, about the narrative voices in Idler 17 and the original Idler 22. The primary satiric strategy in the Rambler and Idler is not, in any case, found in the editorial personae, but in the creation of wholly fictional narrators. All three narrator types identified by Kernan appear in Johnson's periodical works. The nature of periodical writing is conducive to the development of such narrators. The brevity of each issue, and the fact that each is complete and self-contained, make it a perfect form for fictional letters to the editor. And with each letter a new

character can be introduced. Of the forty-eight satires in the Rambler thirty-three are epistolary. Of these, fifteen are from correspondents who, with varying degrees of awareness, primarily expose themselves, and eighteen are from correspondents who expose others. Of the remaining satires in the Rambler most take the form of character sketches with Johnson (or the Rambler persona) as the identified author.[59]

The phrase 'character sketch' suggests a relationship to the Theophrastan Character, a relationship that is discussed by Delbert Earisman, who finds many similarities yet argues that "there is no evidence that . . . [Johnson] ever recognized that he was working in a classical genre when he drew a character."[60] This statement is somewhat surprising in view of Johnson's vast knowledge of classical literature, but what is important at present is the manner in which the Theophrastan Character can be used to point out certain features of Johnson's character sketches.

One of the first points made by Benjamin Boyce in The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642 is that Theophrastus appears in his works as "an impersonal observer; . . . he refrains from explicit statement . . . of what . . . [he] thinks of the character."[61] That Johnson does not refrain from judgement is apparent in the works in this form that have already been examined. Of Suspirius, the screech owl, he proposes by way of conclusion that he and his kind be confined "to some proper receptacle, where they may mingle sighs at leisure, and thicken the gloom of one another."[62] In his portrait of vivisectors in Idler 17

Johnson's attitude is equally evident: the experimenters are termed "wretches," their lives are described as being "only varied by varieties of cruelty," and they are accused of learning "the use of the lacteals at the expense of . . . [their] humanity."[63] Similarly straightforward expressions of feeling appear in many other of Johnson's portraits. Rambler 74 attacks, in the character of Tetrica, the disdainfulness of those who advertise their nicety by refusing to be pleased. Such "peevishness," Johnson writes, is "the child of vanity, and the nursling of ignorance."[64] And he says of Nugaculus, a man who from being an early student of human nature has degenerated into a mere gossip, that his is a "vicious waste of a life which might have been honourably passed in publick service, or domestic virtues. He has lost his original intention and given up his mind to employments that engross, but do not improve it."[65]

Johnson differs, then, from Theophrastus by openly voicing his disapproval of the actions of his characters. But while he strays from the classical model by refusing to be uninvolved, in many other respects it is the similarity between his portraits and the Theophrastan Character that is most striking. Professor Boyce points out that there is a "combination of generality and individuality" in the Theophrastan Character, a "representing of a class through a lively picturing of a man whom we can see."[66] This statement might almost be taken as a general description of the entire body of Johnson's fiction, but it is particularly applicable to the sketches in the Rambler and Idler. Each of the Rambler and Idler portraits deals with a specific

example of folly or vice, whether it be the malevolent envy of those who disparage a rising name (Rambler 144), the vanity of authors who blame the neglect of their writings on the ignorance of the public (Rambler 146), the baseness of a parasite who allows himself to be degraded in order to feast at the tables of the wealthy (Rambler 206), the blind devotion of political zealots (Idler 10), or the useless hurry of a man who is busy without purpose (Idler 48).

In all of his character sketches Johnson presents both an individual and a generalized fault. In fact, Johnson unites "generality and individuality" far more successfully than either Theophrastus or Sir Thomas Overbury, one of the best known of English character writers. Theophrastus and Overbury certainly achieve generality, but their characters are never identified more specifically than as "he." Of "The Toady, or Flatterer," for example, Theophrastus writes:

> The toady is the sort of person who will say to the man he is walking with, "do you notice how people look at you? You're the only man in Athens they study in that way." . . . When his patron makes a feeble joke he laughs. . . . If he goes with his patron to help him buy some shoes, he remarks that the foot is more shapely than the shoe.[67]

Of the same character, Overbury writes:

> Hee selleth himselfe with reckoning his great Friends, and teacheth the present how to win his praises by reciting the other's gifts: hee is ready for all employments. . . . Hee will play any part upon his countenance, and where hee cannot be admitted for a counseller, hee will serve as a fool.[68]

The features noted by Theophrastus and Overbury appear also in Johnson's portrait of the flatterer. Johnson's figure, however, is given a name (Captator) and a unique history. In Ramblers 197 and 198 Captator reviews the life he has wasted currying favour: in turn he attached himself to three relatives, and in turn he was disappointed by each. As Captator recalls the details of his life he gives substance to his own personality as well as dramatic and immediate existence to the character of a flatterer. Whereas Theophrastus and Overbury tell us the "sort of person" the flatterer is, Johnson gives us the man himself.

While his characters are individualized, very few of Johnson's character sketches were inspired by single individuals. Perhaps the most notable exception is the figure of Prospero in Rambler 200. Boswell asserts that David Garrick saw himself in Rambler 200 and "never forgave its pointed satire."[69] But here, as elsewhere, the satire is so faithful to type, that any number of people might see themselves reflected were they so inclined. The wide applicability of Johnson's portraits is confirmed by an episode recorded by Boswell. Johnson, he writes, related

> with much satisfaction, that several of the characters in the Rambler were drawn so naturally, that when it first circulated in numbers, a club in one of the towns in Essex imagined themselves to be severally exhibited in it, and were much incensed against a person who, they suspected, had thus made them objects of publick notice.[70]

The mistake of the Essex club-members is an amusing refutation of Swift's assertion that "Satyr is a sort of glass, wherein Beholders do

generally discover every body's Face but their Own."[71] But more importantly it demonstrates the fine balance in these portraits between generality and individuality. The Essex club-members saw themselves in the Rambler no doubt because the portraits were so generally true that they were also individually accurate. A similar claim might be made for those pieces which were, apparently, drawn from a single individual. Prospero is, as a fictional character, rendered with enough concreteness and particularity to bring him alive as an individual; but at the same time, the insensitivity and vanity that he displays are qualities that he shares with countless other individuals, among whom was numbered, by admission, David Garrick.

That Johnson intended his portraits not as delineations of specific individuals, but as representative, is indicated by the very names he gives to his characters. Edward A. Bloom, who has written in detail on the function of "Symbolic Names in Johnson's Periodical Essays," begins his discussion by arguing that "only by fixing an immaterial concept (such as a personality trait) into a concrete identifiable object could the writer hope to transmit his ideas to others."[72] The abstract concept, then, in the portrait, say, of Nugaculus, is the waste of a life spent in collecting useless gossip, while this concept is given concreteness by being manifest in a single individual. The body of Bloom's essay consists of an elucidation of the meanings of the Latin and Greek names given to the Rambler characters, and these names, it is argued, are usually "pertinent to types and not individuals."[73] In fact the names usually indicate qualities. Nugaculus,

for example, is "a coinage by Johnson based upon the adjective nugax 'jesting, trifling, frivolous.'" Nearly all of the Rambler characters are as aptly named. Gelidus, whose devotion to study makes him impervious to all human feelings, derives his name from a "literal translation of gelidus 'icy cold, icy, frosty, . . . [which] may also mean 'icy cold or still with death.'" And Suspirius is a "derivation from susperium and the meaning that is closest to Johnson's--'a sighing, a sigh.'"[74]

The names given to the Idler characters are a great deal more obvious. Tom Tempest, Jack Sneaker, Tom Restless, and Will Marvel, for example, are betrayed by their names at the outset. Johnson's reason for giving English names to the Idler characters is discussed by Bloom. In the Rambler, he argues, Johnson "aims at a relatively high intellectual level of readers and uses classical names widely; in the Idler he recognizes the more humble learning of his readers and, consequently, emphasizes English names."[75] Bloom's argument is convincing. Zosima and Betty Broom are in many respects similar. Both are servant girls and both are far more worthy than those whom they serve. But because of her name, Zosmia seems almost an exotic figure. Johnson exploits this by giving Zosima's oppressors, Ladies Lofty, Courtly, and Bluff, contrastingly plain English names which imply their characters and diminish them in relation to Zosima.

But whether the names are English or classical the purpose of naming is the same: to signify both an individual and the personality trait manifested in that individual. In other words, each name identi-

fies both a concrete figure and a generalized fault; and it is the fault that is the real target. It is possible to place Johnson's technique in greater relief by comparing the footnotes to the Rambler and Idler with those found in any annotated edition of Pope's works. The one volume Twickenham edition, for example, points out that the "furious" and "p[oxe]d" Sappho is Lady Mary Wortley Montague; that the "heartless" Cloe "seems to be derived from Henrietta Hobart"; that Shylock is a "reference to Edward Wortley Montague"; that Balaam is "perhaps modelled on Thomas Pitt" and, of course, that the catamite Sporus is meant as "a character of Lord Hervey."[76] These are only a few from scores of examples that might be cited. Of the names in the Rambler and Idler only Prospero can be assigned with any confidence to an actual historical figure, in this case David Garrick. Of course, Sporus et al. are more than names for actual persons; they are imaginative satiric creations that would suffer little diminishment were they left unconnected to any historical name. The point is, simply, that such connections seem, in fact, to have been intended and do exist. And as little as it matters for our appreciation of his poetry, some part of Pope's design was to ridicule Lord Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley Montague, for example, by drawing upon the associations of names such as Sporus and Sappho.

There is one other feature of Johnson's portraits that warrants comparison with the Theophrastan Character. Professor Boyce points out that a single structural pattern is found in all of the Theophrastan Characters:

> The method in each of these pieces is first to name the moral quality or habit and then very briefly to define it. . . . After the definition comes the main development, the list of actions and speeches that are typical of a victim of the quality under consideration. The picture is built up entirely of details of what the man does or says, usually in apparently random order.[77]

It must be admitted at once that not all of Johnson's portraits are as randomly structured out of details. The life of Leviculus, the fortune hunter, for example, is traced chronologically from his first hopeful assault on the fortune of Flavilla to his final unsuccessful proposal to Madam Prune, and his lapse thereafter into despondency and regret. But more typical of the structure of Johnson's sketches, and more like the Theophrastan Character, is Rambler 24. The principal figure in this piece is Gelidus, a bookish man whose studies have blinded him to life, human feelings, and ultimately to himself. The appearance of Gelidus is prepared for in a fashion which, though it does not follow Theophrastus' method exactly, is at least analogous to it. Theophrastus, as was mentioned, first names and then defines the traits that are finally materialized in his figures. Johnson, on the other hand, more often begins with a more leisurely and indirect discussion that leads gradually to the introduction of a representative individual. Rambler 24 begins with a patient examination of the ancient motto adopted by Socrates, "know thyself," or, as Johnson translates it, "be acquainted with thyself." This maxim, he writes,

> in the whole extent of its meaning, may be said to comprise all the speculation requisite to a

> moral agent. For what more can be necessary to the regulation of life, than the knowledge of our original, our end, our duties, and our relation to other beings?[78]

Johnson, obviously, gives a religious significance to the maxim though he admits that its original author probably did not intend it "to be understood in this unlimited and complicated sense; for the inquiries, which . . . it would seem to recommend . . . require light from above, which was not yet indulged to the heathen world." But if the ancients could not pursue the religious implications of this dictate they could see its moral applicability; for, as Johnson writes:

> The great praise of Socrates is, that he drew the wits of Greece, by his instruction and example, from the vain persuit of natural philosophy to moral inquiries, and turned their thoughts from stars and tides, and matter and motion, upon the various modes of virtue, and relations of life. All his lectures were but commentaries upon this saying.[79]

Clearly, for Johnson, as for Socrates, to "know thyself" is identified with knowing one's moral duty; and it is this, rather than external nature, that he feels should be the primary study of every human being.

So far this Rambler is a moral and philosophical essay only; there is as yet no trace of satire. But with the comparison of Socrates to the natural philosophers who preceded him Johnson begins to move toward the presentation of a character whose lack of self-knowledge makes him a perfect satiric target. "The great fault of men of learning," Johnson continues, "is still, that they . . . appear willing to study any thing rather than themselves."[80] The waste of life spent

on pointless studies is a common theme in Johnson's periodical essays, but, as has been noted, his projectors and collectors are usually treated rather gently as amusing figures, and their studies are often seen as not totally worthless. But when the researches of the antiquarian or experimenter blind him to himself, and therefore to his moral duty, a more serious concern is introduced. This concern is first expressed rather generally. "When," Johnson writes, "a man employs himself upon remote and unnecessary subjects, and wastes his life upon questions, which cannot be resolved . . . he may be very properly . . . reminded that there is a nearer being with which it is his duty to be more acquainted."[81] Having thus narrowed the focus to a particular class of beings who are prevented from knowing themselves by their obsession with less useful studies, Johnson is now ready to deal with a single figure.

Gelidus is first described as "a man of great penetration, and deep researches. . . . being of a temper naturally cool and equal, he is seldom interrupted by his passions in the persuit of the longest chain of unexpected consequences."[82] The objective researcher has become an admired ideal in the twentieth century, but as Johnson shows in Idler 17, there is a point at which the ideal becomes a perversion, and in Rambler 24, a context in which lack of feeling is a fault. Whereas the vivisectors sacrifice animals for science, Gelidus sacrifices his family, and like the vivisectors he loses his humanity. Gelidus's fault is, however, passive rather than active:

> He spends his time in the highest room of his

> house, into which none of his family are suffered to enter; and when he comes down to his dinner, or his rest, he walks about like a stranger that is there only for a day, without any tokens of regard or tenderness. He has totally divested himself of all human sensations.[83]

So single-minded is Gelidus that "he has neither eye for beauty, nor ear for complaint; he neither rejoices at the good fortune of his nearest friend, nor mourns for any publick or private calamity."[84]

Although he has moved from a broad examination of the motto "know thyself" to a description of a single individual, Johnson's account is still quite general and not yet satiric. There is a degree of specificity in the picture of a man isolated in his upper room and unknown to his family, but it is in the examples that reveal his unfeeling lack of concern for any "private or publick calamity" that Gelidus is delineated with satiric particularity:

> Having once received a letter, and given it to his servant to read, he was informed, that it was written by his brother, who, being shipwrecked, had swam naked to land, and was destitute of necessaries in a foreign country. Naked and destitute! says Gelidus, reach down the last volume of meteorological observations, extract an exact account of the wind, and note it carefully in the diary of the weather.[85]

The devices of rhetoric are employed nowhere more clearly than in satire. Irony, of course, is the most familiar rhetorical weapon, but bathos, of the sort that is found in Swift's lines, is almost as much used:

> "The Dean is dead, (and what is Trumps?)

> The Lord have mercy on his soul.
> (Ladies I'll venture for the Vole),
> (ll. 228-30)[86]

Johnson's employment of bathos is no less effective. Upon hearing of his brother's plight Gelidus exclaims "Naked and destitute!," and what we expect is some expression of pity. But this ejaculation is merely an involuntary repetition of two words from the letter, for Gelidus immediately turns his attention to what interests him most in his brother's letter: the description of the wind which wrecked his ship.

Where there is so little regard for a near relative there can be no expectation of more general compassion. The sanctity of Gelidus's study was once violated by his family who rushed in "to shew him that a town at a small distance was on fire." Moments later

> a servant came up to tell him, that the flame had caught so many houses on both sides, that the inhabitants were confounded, and began to think rather of escaping with their lives, than saving their dwellings. What you tell me, says Gelidus, is very probable, for fire naturally acts in a circle.[87]

Gelidus's cold and unfeeling nature is revealed by his regard for only the natural laws governing fire, and also by the fact that his servant must tell him that the fire had encircled the town, for if he had bothered to look out his window it seems he might have seen it for himself.

Much of what has been said about Johnson's character sketches is

true also of certain of his satires written in the form of letters to the Rambler or Idler. Again general faults are exposed by being displayed in specific individuals. There is, however, one crucial difference in the epistolary satires: the satirist is not the Rambler or Idler but, rather, a fictional correspondent. Some of the satires written in this form have already been discussed: specifically, the letters of Zosima and Ruricola. But whereas the discussion in Chapter Two concentrated on the tonal aspects of Johnson's satire, the focus here will be on how the structure of letters like those of Zosima and Ruricola constitutes part of the satiric strategy.

The most obvious effect of creating a fictional letter writer who complains of the errors of others is that it places the real author at a greater distance from the satire. Contrary to what might be expected, however, the interposing of a fictional speaker between Johnson and the satire is not a tactic dictated by the tone of the epistolary satires, since, in fact, the tone in these letters is on the whole no more severe than that found in most of the character sketches.

A notable advantage of the epistolary fiction, exploited often by Johnson, is that it allows the creation of characters who can respond to, and attack, the letters of one another. Thus, in effect, the real satirist can engage in a controversy with himself through the letters of his fictional correspondents. Such a battle is carried on in the letters of Hymenaeus and Tranquilla, each of whom attacks the character of the opposite sex. The quarrel begins in Rambler 113 in which Hymenaeus expresses fear that he is condemned to "everlasting

solitude, and excluded . . . from all hopes of connubial felicity," while all his hopes are "for the calm of domestick happiness."[88] The source of Hymenaeus' despair is his inability to find a truly virtuous woman. Although he has been, he says, "a hundred times on the brink of matrimony," he has discovered on each occasion some quality in his intended partner that has forced him to withdraw his attentions.[89] In recounting his history of disappointment Hymenaeus presents various small character studies much in the manner of the minor portraits just considered. Ferocula is discovered to be avaricious, Misothea disputatious, and Sophronia suspicious, while still others of the women he has courted turn out, upon nearer examination, to be opportunistic, deceitful, or greedy. This catalogue of feminine vice and folly is too lengthy for one number of the Rambler and so Hymenaeus renews his complaint in a second letter (Rambler 115) in which he describes a succession of manly, slovenly, prideful, and prodigal women.

The inevitable imputation of misogyny, which the Rambler (and Johnson) avoids through the epistolary fiction, is deflected to the invented correspondent. Hymenaeus, however, attempts to forestall the anticipated charge with a protestation at the end of his first letter that he would not have rejected so many women "had I not hoped to transfer my affection to higher merit,"[90] and by concluding his second letter with a statement of faith that such high merit exists even though he has not found it.[91] Despite this attempt to moderate the generality of his censure Hymenaeus' letters do tend toward an inclusive indictment of women, and as such invite response.

If not refuted Hymenaeus is certainly answered by Tranquilla who accuses him of "partial satire." Men too, she points out, "have their follies, and their vices."[92] Tranquilla's letter is in every way the counterpart of those of Hymenaeus, except that it is written from a woman's point of view. Like Hymenaeus, Tranquilla is eager to marry in order to escape "the hardships of antiquated virginity," and like him also, she has been unable to find a suitable partner.[93] While she has had many suitors she has had to reject each of them for being either cowardly, foppish, gluttonous, drunken, impious, lecherous, or avaricious.

Considered separately Ramblers 113, 115, and 119 are slight performances. The desire of each of the correspondents to find a mate provides the occasion for what appears to be a general attack on the failings of the opposite sex. But considered as a group these Ramblers, together with Rambler 167 (which will be discussed shortly), form a more complex, and less sexually discriminating satire.

To see what he is doing it is important to notice the balance Johnson achieves, not only by the obvious method of opposing the writers to one another, but also through his subtle ironic treatment of the two correspondents. To the extent that the correspondents attack actual faults (e.g., avarice, cowardice, pride) they speak for Johnson; but insofar as their attacks imply a wholesale censure of one or the other sex they speak for themselves and are the targets of a gentle irony which moderates their remarks without invalidating them. The protestation of Hymenaeus to the contrary draws attention to the fact

that while he might not be a misogynist his expectations of the opposite sex are indeed idealistic and the perfection that he demands does not exist in either man or woman. Tranquilla is shown to be equally demanding (and is treated with more obvious irony) when she laments that she has had to drive away two suitors because "they had no taste or knowledge in musick."[94] It should be emphasized again that only the expectations of the writers are mocked and not their attacks on particular faults.

A more obvious kind of balance is achieved by the opposition of the letters to one another. The epistolary format allows Johnson to present both male and female points of view and to show that if there is cause for complaint on one side there is equal cause on the other; that is, it is as difficult for a sensitive woman to find a partner as it is for a sensitive man. But what finally emerges from the playing off against one another of the letters is the recognition that the faults described are not the errors of either sex but rather are shared by all human beings. Each writer compiles a catalogue of figures dominated by pride, lust, avarice, gluttony and the like, but none of these vices belongs exclusively to one sex, despite the individual complaints of the correspondents. The problem, then, is not that either men or women are imperfect, but that both are imperfect. The search for a wife or a husband is thus relegated to the business of plot and serves only as an occasion for satiric portraits that have nothing to do with sex.

Although our attention in these letters is directed primarily at

the vices that each writer exposes, some concern develops for the writers themselves, and something approximating a plot emerges through the succession of letters: both correspondents are unhappily unmarried and searching for a partner, and a seeming antagonism is suggested as Tranquilla's letter is written in angry response to the remarks of Hymenaeus. After a brief flurry of writing (the three letters appear within seven numbers of the Rambler) Hymenaeus and Tranquilla disappear still discontentedly single. When they reappear in Rambler 167 it is to announce that they are married--to one another. A degree of verisimilitude is added by the spacing of the letters. The time between Hymenaeus' last letter and Tranquilla's response (four numbers) suggests the actual time it might take for her to read and compose a rebuttal; while the interval between her letter and the announcement of their marriage (forty eight numbers), likewise seems a plausible period in which they might meet and fall in love with one another. Most important, however, is the effect that their marriage has (in retrospect) on their censure. While the abuses that they attack in their letters remain abuses still, the marriage of the correspondents is an affirmation that virtue, like vice, is to be found in both sexes. As a final note on these letters it should be pointed out that the writers have formed more reasonable expectations of marriage. We have not, they write, "vitiated our fancies in the soft hours of courtship, with visions of felicity which human power cannot bestow, or of perfection which human virtue cannot attain."[95]

In Idlers 15 and 28 Johnson again opposes the satire of one letter

with an equally satiric reply, but the effect in this instance is quite different. In Idler 15 Johnson acts indeed as an editor since the number was written by Bonnell Thornton. Thornton's contribution, too, takes the form of an imagined letter. His invented correspondent, Zachary Treacle, complains at length about the hardships of being married to a tyrannical wife who annoys him throughout the day in his shop and who allows him no time to himself in those hours when he is not working. Because the satire is presented from Treacle's point of view and because his interfering and demanding wife is such a familiar satiric (and comic) figure it is only natural that his criticism is accepted unquestioningly. But in Idler 28, written by Johnson, the situation is presented from the perspective of Treacle's wife, and an entirely different light is thrown on the situation. In the first place, as she points out, her husband purchased his shop with the money that she brought to their marriage. But more to the point, she also complains that she is forced to watch over her husband during the day to prevent him from running off to a nearby tavern where he would gamble away all of his money at ninepins and let his shop go to ruin. Her husband is even less to be trusted when he is not working. "On a Sunday," she writes, "if he stays at home, he has six meals, and when he can eat no longer, has twenty stratagems to escape from me to the alehouse."[96]

Clearly, Idlers 15 and 28 work differently as a unit than Ramblers 113, 115, 119, and 167. For while the Rambler satires are moderated by being balanced to form a single satire, Idler 28 mitigates the

satire of Idler 15. Mrs. Treacle says little that contradicts her husband, but instead explains why she must constantly watch over him. We are forced now to accept her account and to view his remarks as partial and self-serving. Read by itself Idler 15 is a convincing, if conventional, satiric portrait; but read again after reading Idler 28 its attack is blunted, and instead of appearing as the oppressed husband of an ungovernable wife Mr. Treacle sounds like a whining wastrel bridling at the restraints made necessary by his foolishness.

There is a sense in which Idler 28 undermines, or at least questions, a standard feature of satire. In Idler 15 Mr. Treacle is seen as a victim and his wife as a tyrant; but as Johnson shows in Idler 28 we originally side with Mr. Treacle only because he presents just as much information as is convenient for his purposes. The focus of Johnson's suspicion, then, is on the satiric narrator. But once aroused suspicion is not easily checked. If one narrator is proven to be unreliable why should we trust the other? Why, for example, might not Mr. Treacle write in reply to his wife explaining how her shrewishness drives him into the taverns? It is easy to imagine this going on indefinitely. Not the least of the ironies of Idler 28, then, is the fact that Johnson creates suspicions about satire in a work that is itself a satire.

While the epistolary framework enables Johnson to dissociate himself from the satiric attack, at times even a fictional narrator does not provide distance enough. In Rambler 200 Johnson first attacks a species of pride and inconsiderateness through the letter of an

imagined correspondent and then, in his role as editor, chides his correspondent-satirist for too strongly resenting the injury done to him.

The target of Rambler 200 is Prospero, "a man lately raised to wealth by a lucky project." Asper, the writer, has a special regard for Prospero because of the past they have shared: "We set out in the world together; and for a long time mutually assisted each other in our exigencies, as either happened to have money or influence beyond his immediate necessities." Feeling only "an honest and disinterested joy" for his friend's good fortune, Asper called upon him expecting no alteration in their relationship.[97] He relates that he was, consequently, somewhat chagrined by the delay of a footman who left him waiting at the door while he inquired whether his master was at home, a delay which is ascribed to Prospero's deliberating whether he would be at home. Once inside Asper recalls that he was subjected to even more obvious tokens of his friend's pride and condescension as item by item Prospero showed objects and rooms that were reserved for his special guests. In each instance it was made humiliatingly clear to Asper that he was not of that select circle. He was requested to allow the footman to cover the chair upon which he sat for fear that he might soil the material; when he commended the tea he was told by Prospero that he had some even better which was reserved "for those whom he thought himself obliged to treat with particular respect"; and when Asper admired a piece of china he was asked to set it down since "they who were accustomed only to common dishes, seldom handled

china with much care." Asper recalls, not surprisingly, that his anger increased as the visit wore on, until when at last he found occasion to end his visit with Prospero it was "without any intention of seeing him again, unless some misfortune should restore his understanding."[98]

The situation described in Rambler 200 is such that Johnson's relationship with David Garrick comes immediately, and inevitably, to mind. The story of Johnson and Garrick arriving almost penniless in London in 1737 is well known, as is its sequel: while Garrick went on to early fame Johnson toiled for years in obscurity. That Johnson had Garrick in mind as a model for Prospero is asserted by Boswell who also reports that Garrick always resented the satire. Although there is no record of Garrick ever treating Johnson as condescendingly as Prospero treats the narrator, Garrick did not, Walter Johnson Bate argues, "bear success with negligence and grace."[99] Bate's suggestion can be confirmed by Boswell's remark (though Johnson opposed him as he always did when anyone other than himself spoke against Garrick) that he put on "the airs of a great man."[100]

If Garrick did serve as the model for Prospero then the possibility of envy as a motive for the portrait must be considered. The wild success of a man who had formerly been Johnson's pupil, and whose talents he held only in moderate regard, might naturally be expected to arouse envy in a man whose own vastly superior intellect and learning brought only a hard-earned reputation and little relief from poverty. Envy, however, was an emotion that Johnson very often

criticized. Less than two months before Rambler 200 he wrote in Rambler 183: "Let it . . . be constantly remembered, that whoever envies another, confesses his superiority, and let those be reformed by their pride who have lost their virtue."[101] Johnson was always the sort of man who at least attempted to follow his own dictates, and Bate argues that "disliking envy as he did, Johnson was able throughout most of his life not only to control it but also to plow it under." Still, Bate admits, in the single case of Garrick "it could sometimes emerge closer to the surface."[102] Bate has in mind, as his examples indicate, Johnson's many remarks disparaging the profession of acting (what merit is to be allowed to "a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a limp on his leg, and cries 'I am Richard the Third?'").[103] If the portrait of Prospero in Rambler 200 is, then, drawn from Garrick, it is unusual in that it deals with his personality and not his profession.

It is perhaps a suspicion of his own motives that accounts for the unusual note added at the end of Rambler 200, where, assuming the role of editor, Johnson adds an unexpected apology for Prospero and a few reproving remarks directed at the correspondent. While admitting that the writer was provoked, the Rambler nevertheless goes on to add that he "cannot altogether commend the keenness of his resentment, nor encourage him to persist in his resolution of breaking off all commerce with his old acquaintance." "'A friend,'" he continues, "'should not be hated for little faults,'" and Prospero has done nothing "that should exclude him from common degrees of kindness."[104] It is

significant that Johnson disapproves of his correspondent's bitterness in this instance, since he elsewhere attacks the incivility of the rich to the poor without feeling the need to apologize. Johnson emphasizes his reservations about Rambler 200 by the very name that he gives to his correspondent. Although Prospero, with its suggestion of prosperity and its allusion to Shakespeare's master of the revels in The Tempest, points strongly to Garrick (who, indeed, prospered through Shakespeare), there is no criticism implied in the name; but the correspondent's name, Asper, which denotes "rough," "sour," and has such associations as asperity, aspersion, and even asp, certainly implies a great deal of criticism. It seems certain that Johnson feared that the motives which inspired him to draw this portrait were best suggested by the connotations of the name Asper. Thus, though Garrick (or rather, faults embodied by Garrick) might be the target of Asper's letter, in his editor's reply Johnson turns the censure against himself. In a rather complicated manner, then, Johnson distances himself from the original satire by delivering it through the letter of a fictional correspondent; and then, paradoxically, distances himself even further with a cautionary note to the correspondent which may, in fact, be self-directed.

There are a number of strategic reasons for creating a speaker who suffers at the hands of the people who are themselves the satiric target. In Rambler 12 the dislike that is felt for the ladies who oppress and insult Zosima is increased by the sympathy that is felt for her. Were these ladies described by an uninvolved narrator we

would still dislike them, but probably not with the same intensity. In addition, in works where target and victim are described by a third party the victim is less clearly perceived since greater emphasis is naturally given to the target. Indeed, in many satires the victim, if there is one (since often the offense described harms only the offender), is only implied. In works such as Rambler 12, on the other hand, greater attention is given to the speaker as narrator and victim. The narrator in any work is always of interest. Even when there is only a disembodied voice readers will almost always imagine a tangible personality. How much more interesting, then, is someone like Zosima, who is both a narrator and a participant in the action she describes. Another aspect of the reader's attitude that Johnson exploits is the impulse to side with the narrator. Building on this natural disposition, Johnson increases our loyalty by showing the narrator cruelly abused. As a satirical tactician Johnson thus builds on our interest in, and loyalty toward, the narrator; villainy is shown by its consequences, and because someone we care about is harmed, we experience sympathy and anger more strongly.

There is, however, a danger that a work can lose its satiric focus if too much interest is centered on the speaker. Because of their helplessness against those who oppress them it would be easy for Johnson's narrators to degenerate into sentimental figures and for the work to decline simply into a pathetic tale. In effect, when the speaker becomes of primary interest our primary emotion is sympathy for him rather than anger at the target.

Perhaps as close as Johnson ever comes to sentimentality is in Rambler 149. Hyperdulus, the narrator, describes an almost Dickensian scene of innocence and oppression. Since the death of their parents while they were still children, Hyperdulus and his sister have been forced to live upon the charity of an uncle. Hyperdulus, however, admits to no feelings of "burning gratitude or tumultuous affection" for their benefactor, which is not surprising since, from their initial "frigid" reception into their uncle's family, he and his sister have been treated with contempt and relegated to the status of barely tolerated inferiors. The insults that Hyperdulus endures are aggravated by the torment of having to look on helplessly at the degradation of his sister who is made "a servant to her cousins in their apartments," and who, like Cinderella, because of her wit and beauty is never allowed to appear with her cousins "in any place where they solicit notice, or expect admiration." Worse still, the heir of the family has "begun to harass her with clownish jocularity" and with the "connivance" of the uncle "treats her with . . . licentious brutality."[105]

The technique of increasing anger by developing sympathy is taken to such an extreme in Rambler 149 that it threatens to turn the work into something other than a satire. The plight of Hyperdulus and his sister assumes such importance and absorbs so much attention that it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the piece is actually about the arrogance and cruelty of their uncle's family. It is important in a satiric work of this kind to keep the target as much in the foreground as are the victims. When this is not done characters such as

Hyperdulus' cousins become (like Cinderella's step-sisters) simply villains in the background of a romantic tale rather than targets in a satire. Only Hyperdulus' resentment prevents Rambler 149 from becoming a sentimental story of oppressed innocence. His anger, directed at his Uncle's family, helps direct the reader's attention also to the offenders.

In the letters just considered speaker and target are clearly distinguished. Johnson wrote a number of other satires, however, in which speaker, target, and victim are the same, as the writers unwittingly reveal their own vanity and foolishness and are the only ones to suffer through their folly. Of the seven satires in the Rambler and Idler which take the form of unconsciously ironic letters, one is from a proud collector of useless curiosities who boasts majestically of his assortment of maps, broken stones, butterflies, and (specious) artifacts of the ancient world.[106] Three other letters are from young girls (including Bellaria) whose interests and knowledge extends no further than fashions, beaux, masquerades, and card parties.[107]

Bellaria's letter has already been examined and the two other feminine epistles are in much the same vein. Much more interesting is a letter from Misellus, a would-be author, for, while Bellaria's letter (like the letters of the two other girls) is a rather conventional satiric exercise, Rambler 16 probes more deeply into the excesses of human vanity.

Before examining Rambler 16 it might be useful briefly to mention

another work with which it contrasts. In Idler 55 an unidentified correspondent complains of the public neglect of his work on natural history, blaming his failure to receive recognition not on the actual cause, the quality of his work, but on the arrogance and insensibility of patrons and other scholars. Rambler 16 offers a far more penetrating portrait of self-deception. Rather than neglected Misellus imagines himself "irreversibly condemned, to all the miseries of high reputation." The small pamphlet which is the source of his fancied celebrity is in fact so bad that even his friends are unable to read more than a page. Misellus, however, puts a more favourable construction on their reluctance, believing that they "were hindered, by their admiration, from reading further."[108] So great is his vanity that Misellus impoverishes himself feasting his acquaintances in order to hear himself praised, while blocking out, of course, the knowledge that their flattery is purchased. Slipping ever deeper into megalomania he interprets even the most direct insults as a kind of praise: "As soon as I enter the room, I see part of the company raging with envy, which they endeavour to conceal, sometimes with the appearance of laughter, and sometimes with that of contempt."[109] Misellus' self-absorption culminates ultimately in paranoia. He fears that his rooms will be ransacked for odd scraps of his writings and he insists that eleven painters are following him about, "for they know that he who can get my face first will make his fortune."[110]

James Clifford has said that in the Rambler, especially, "one can find penetrating studies of human frustration, of the devious effects

of blocked wills, and of complex human motivation."[111] Walter Jackson Bate adds that Johnson's

> clarivoyant sense of the complex "treachery of the human heart," and its capacity to destroy both its own peace and its own perception of reality, provides an anticipation of Freud that we are only beginning to recognize.[112]

The accuracy of Clifford's and Bate's remarks is well borne out by Rambler 16 which is both a psychological study of self-deception and a satiric exposure of vanity. By tracing Misellus' gradual descent into paranoia Johnson presents a case history of a certain kind of neurosis. At the same time Misellus is a satiric figure. His facility for finding in every attitude a testament to his genius exemplifies the self-ignorance that results from unchecked vanity. He serves as an example of what is to be avoided and he is presented (through his own words) in a manner that evokes laughter rather than sympathy.

Rambler 117, the last of the ironic letters to be considered, is one of the most conventional, and entertaining, of Johnson's satires. The correspondent in this letter, Hypertatus, derives from the tradition of learned fools, and his letter is an elaborate Scriblerian parody of a scholarly disquisition. With an ostentatious display of learning, the logical dexterity of a scholiast, and a command of circumlocution worthy of a twentieth-century sociologist, Hypertatus sets forth a "theory of a garret" that is as inventive as it is absurd.

Immediately following a perfunctory "Sir," Hypertatus dives into his argument. This resembles very little the more personal letters in

which the authors seem to speak directly to the Rambler. But then Hypertatus admits that his epistle is sent to the Rambler only as a "means of communicating to the public."[113] In his introductory remarks, however, Hypertatus censures the general public that he addresses. "Nothing," he says, "has more retarded the advancement of learning than the disposition of vulgar minds to ridicule and vilify what they cannot comprehend."[114] This is somewhat defensive and perhaps not very tactful, but it is, nevertheless, a reasonable and accurate observation. In fact there is little in his opening remarks that might arouse suspicion apart from his assertion that only the fear of ridicule has delayed the mechanist from arguing "the possibility of tearing down bulwarks with a silk-worm's thread; and the astronomer of relating the rapidity of light, the distance of the fixed stars, and the height of the lunar mountains."[115]

To first establish trust in an ironic narrator is a familiar satiric tactic, the object of which, Cary McIntosh argues, is to deceive "the reader into accepting a fiction which will not have succeeded unless it hurts."[116] We are not certain that Hypertatus is an ironic narrator until well into the third paragraph, but rather than pain the discovery produces laughter, for we learn that we have sided not with a man whose schemes are diabolical, but only with one whose theories are innocuously far-fetched. The joke may be on us but we are not forced into a sense of guilt.

The inspiration of Hypertatus' treatise is his observation "that the professors of literature generally reside in the highest stories,"

a circumstance which "has been immemorially observed."[117] Like a good scholar Hypertatus turns first to the ancients. The intellectual benefits of a lofty residence were well known to the Greeks, he argues: "why else were the Muses stationed on Olympus or Parnassus by those who could with equal right have raised them bowers in the vale of Tempe"; or why else "was Jove himself nursed upon a mountain?"[118] The Pre-Socratic philosopher Pythagoras is next dragged into the cause. His cryptic remark, "'when the wind blows, worship its echo,'" must, Hypertatus states, have been "understood by his disciples as an inviolable injunction to live in a garret, which I have found frequently visited by the echo and the wind."[119] The recognition that Hypertatus is an absurd figure comes not as a single shock but rather evolves by degrees. By now we have begun to wonder at him, and with the anachronistic mention of "garret" that wonder increases. The equation he seems to be driving at is that eminence is eminence and there is no difference in kind between Mount Olympus and the upper stories of a London rooming house. Hypertatus is not finished with his argument from authority, however; he goes on to quote Tibullus, Lucretius, and Ovid, all of whom, with the same imaginative deftness, he manages to enlist in support of his theory.

Leaping across centuries, Hypertatus next turns his attention to the question that his letter proposes to answer: what draws poets and philosophers to their aerial abodes? There are a number of possible answers, the most obvious of which is that poets being for the most part poor naturally gravitate upward to those apartments that are

cheapest to rent. This, of course, is too simple to satisfy Hypertatus. But while some explanations are rejected because of their simplicity the explanations themselves are not always simply expressed:

> Others suspect, that a garret is chiefly convenient, as it is remoter than any other part of the house from the outer door, which is often observed to be infested by visitants, who talk incessantly of beer, or linen, or a coat, and repeat the same sound every morning, and sometimes again in the afternoon, without any variation, except that they grow daily more importunate and clamorous, and raise their voices in time from mournful murmurs to raging vociferations.[120]

In a short discussion of this work Carey McIntosh makes a number of surprising remarks, one of which refers to this passage. Noting the "deliberate way" that Hypertatus "parades his allusions in paragraph six to 'duns,'" McIntosh asserts that the "stateliness of his exposition is authentic," and the "scholarly clothing in which Johnson dresses his [Hypertatus'] argument is comfortable and conservative."[121] McIntosh's suggestion might be supportable were it made in reference to Hypertatus' parading of classical precedents, but in this passage his surface stateliness degenerates into affectation in a manner so obvious that Johnson clearly intends to draw attention to it. In effect what McIntosh asserts is that Hypertatus writes as well as Johnson himself; but euphemism is not one of the normal elements of Johnson's prose style and when he employs it here it is only to invite the reader to laugh at his narrator's pomposity.

The inappropriateness of Hypertatus' inflated diction is even

more apparent once he settles down into an explanation of what actually draws literary men to garrets. "I have discovered," he writes,

> by a long series of observations, that invention and elocution suffer great impediments from dense and impure vapours, and that the tenuity of a defecated air at a proper distance from the surface of the earth, accelerates the fancy, and sets at liberty those intellectual powers which were before shackled by too strong attraction, and unable to expand themselves under the pressure of a gross atmosphere. I have found dulness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water, though not very hot, boils in a receiver partly exhausted; and heads in appearance empty have teemed with notions upon rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and extension.[122]

No doubt there are many readers who equate the "stateliness" of Johnson's prose with phrases such as the "tenuity of a defecated air." It is true that such language occasionally appears in Johnson's non-ironic prose, but only rarely and only appropriately (as in an authentic scientific discussion). He would never, writing in his own voice, use such a phrase to describe the air in a garret. Quite simply, then, the grandeur of Hypertatus' language is mocked by the meanness of his subject. Like many present-day writers Hypertatus wants to give a scientific air to his work but he succeeds only in being pretentious.

McIntosh also argues that because of the formality of his language Hypertatus' "jokes and sallies are a trifle stiff."[123] In the first place Hypertatus is wholly in earnest; the "jokes and sallies" are not his, but at his expense. Secondly, as I have just argued, much

of the humour depends upon the formality of the language. And finally, if the passage just quoted is examined at all closely it will be noticed that the humour is not at all "stiff" if what McIntosh means by stiff is laboured. In the passages quoted Hypertatus writes in very general terms about the "effects of the air" on the "faculties of the mind." He continues in this vein almost to the end of the paragraph, decorating his discussion with words and phrases such as "the mind," "the ambient element," "the body," "vapours."[124] There is a superficial kind of elegance sometimes associated with generality of this sort; but the dignified tone that Hypertatus tries so hard to establish is shattered when at the conclusion of this paragraph he condescends to illustrate his meaning with a concrete image. Suddenly he is writing not about such shapeless matters as "the faculties of the mind" or the "operations of the genius," but about boiling water and footballs. The humour arises only in part out of the abrupt shift from ethereal generality to mundane concreteness. The actual sense of the analogies is equally comic. We are first asked to consider how a man's head is like a chemist's receiver and his thoughts like boiling water, and secondly how his head resembles a football and how the notions that fill it are like so much empty air. To argue, then, as does McIntosh, that the "jokes and sallies are a trifle stiff" because the language is formal is to overlook the "lowness" of the images, and to miss seeing also that the comic impact of the final sentence depends upon the contrasting formality of the language that precedes.

Hypertatus, however, does not conclude his letter with this

imaginative tour de force. A second, equally ingenious, and equally absurd, explanation of the attraction of a garret is offered. Just as the rarified air expands a man's head with notions, so too does the height accelerate his motion and thus enliven his spirit. As Hypertatus elegantly puts it,

> Another cause of the gaiety and sprightliness of the dwellers in garrets is probably the increase of that vertiginous motion, with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. . . . nothing is plainer, than that he who towers to the fifth story, is whirled through more space by every circumrotation, than another that grovels upon the ground-floor.[125]

All of this is very good fun. We can marvel at Hypertatus' ingenuity while at the same time laughing at the absurdity of what he says and how he says it. It comes as something as a surprise, then, to find Johnson accused by McIntosh of insensitivity. Johnson, he writes, "is perfectly willing to ridicule poetasters and pedants, but this is one of the few cases on record where he laughs at poverty."[126] McIntosh clearly mistakes the target of Rambler 117. Johnson is not laughing at the poverty of those who are forced to live in a garret. Indeed, there is a wry awareness of Johnson's own poverty. Rambler 117 was written, in all probability, in the garret above the house he was then renting on Gough Square. The laughter, then, is directed not at poverty, but at the pedant Hypertatus, his pomposity, and his far-fetched theory. The key to McIntosh's error is found in his earlier reference to the "jokes and sallies" of Hypertatus. Hypertatus does

not joke; he is serious. And he, not the residents of garrets, is the target of the satire.

It would indeed be uncharacteristic of Johnson to laugh at poverty, but it is entirely typical of him to conclude this piece with an example of self-directed laughter. Intending only to praise the Rambler, Hypertatus unwittingly embarrasses him (since praise like blame is judged by the source). "As an elaborate performance," he writes,

> is commonly said to smell of the lamp, my commendation of a noble thought, a sprightly sally, or a bold figure, is to pronounce it fresh from the garret; an expression which would break from me upon the perusal of most of your papers, did I not believe, that you sometimes quit the garret, and ascend into the cock-loft.[127]

Two kinds of fictional correspondents have been examined so far: those who consciously expose other figures and thus take the direct burden of responsibility off the shoulders of the Rambler and Idler; and secondly, writers who, as ironic characters, unwittingly betray their own folly. Johnson, however, employed one other kind of correspondent for his epistolary satires: those writers who consciously expose errors of which they are, or have been, admittedly guilty. These confessional letters prove how difficult it is to define or limit satire. It is not unusual for a satiric narrator to expose faults in others, or, if he is an ironic figure, in himself; but for the speaker to knowingly make himself the target of satire is quite unconventional. It is almost tempting to dismiss these letters as simply confessional and leave it at that, but to do so is to ignore

the fact that they are satiric in two important respects: the letters are entirely fictional, and the focus in each is the exposure to ridicule and censure of a single fault.

That Johnson fixed on this unusual form as the means of attacking certain faults may, in part, be attributed to the faults themselves. As in the letters with ironic narrators, the errors that are exposed ultimately harm only the offending correspondents. At the same time, their actions have such serious consequences that the offending figures cannot remain long oblivious to their errors. Since the correspondents suffer for their actions it would be difficult for a second party to censure them without appearing hard-hearted; it would take a character, who, unlike Rasselas, is willing to "insult misery with reproof."[128] Therefore, by having his correspondents look back upon their misdirected efforts and misspent lives Johnson is able to attack errors by revealing their consequences and at the same time avoid the appearance of maliciousness.

Of the letters which take the form of confessional satires three are from writers who have suffered the humiliation of allowing themselves to become dependants on patrons (Ramblers 26, 27, 163); three others are from correspondents who have spent their lives unprofitably waiting for an inheritance or searching for a legacy (Ramblers 73, 197, 198); two more writers complain of the solitude to which they are condemned because of the delight they took in their own wit, exercised at the expense of the feelings of others (Ramblers 95, 174); one correspondent has gambled away all of his hopes (Rambler 181); and another

has idled away his life doing nothing (Idler 21); two more letters are from Tim Ranger whose wealth has enabled him to indulge in countless amusements, none of which have brought him happiness (Idlers 62, 64).

An important feature of many of the confessional letters is found in the conclusion of Tim Ranger's second letter. After describing the numerous activities that his wealth has enabled him to pursue, Ranger confesses that he remains unhappy, remarking pathetically:

> After all this, tell me, dear Idler, what must
> I do next; I have health, I have money, and hope
> that I have understanding, yet with all these,
> I have never yet been able to pass a single day
> which I did not wish at an end before sunset.
> Tell me, dear Idler, what shall I do.[129]

The emotion evoked by this plea is certainly not one normally associated with satire. Indeed, Ranger's letter is complicated by the fact that it inspires both disapproval and pity. It might understandably be argued that sympathy may be felt for those who are injured by the satirized figure, but it is an inappropriate emotion when inspired by the target. In Ranger's letter (and in the other confessional satires), however, the target and the victimized figure are the same person. Still, this does not necessarily negate the satire. What it does do is force us to separate the fault attacked from the person in whom it is embodied. In Ranger's case we disapprove of the folly of searching for happiness in transient pleasures while pitying the man who is made miserable by following such pleasures. It might even be argued that the more unhappy the narrator is made by his actions the more disapproving we are of his error and the more clearly we distinguish

between it and the person.

To see more clearly how a work can inspire such diverse emotions it is necessary to look at a single letter in some detail. Rambler 73 is typical of the confessional satires; and much of what might be said of it is true in general of the other satires of this kind.

Like all of the targets in this group of satires the narrator of Rambler 73, Cupidus, looks back with regret on a wasted life. While some of the writers owe their unhappiness to a misuse of talents, Cupidus's fault lies in his failure, due to the misplacing of his hopes, to develop any talents at all. Rather than following a trade or profession he has spent his life in a perpetual state of unanimated suspension, waiting upon an anticipated inheritance. Waiting is a tradition in Cupidus's family for his father, too, wore out his life in expectation. The source of the entire family's unhappiness is the will of Cupidus's grandfather, who, as the owner of a considerable estate, divided it into two shares, one of which he left to his son and the other to be divided among his three daughters. Not content with his part, Cupidus's father "pleased himself with foreseeing that the possessions of these ladies must revert at last to the hereditary estate."[130] And so he began the vigil which was later taken up by Cupidus.

Since the hopes of Cupidus and his father are dependent upon the deaths of the three sisters a ghastly atmosphere darkens the picture he paints of his family, waiting, impatient and motionless. Distanced in time from the events he records, Cupidus writes with objectivity

and a macabre sense of humour. His father, he remembers, "could not always restrain himself from exclaiming, that 'no creature had so many lives as a cat and an old maid.'" The hopes of the father rise and sink with the illness and health of his sisters until finally upon the recovery of the eldest "from an ague, . . . he began to lose his stomach, and four months afterwards sunk into the grave."[131]

Like a family curse the waiting then devolved to Cupidus who, as he recalls, bore it with as little patience as his father. Hope and disappointment alternate in his history also. Upon her death his eldest aunt left her part of the fortune to the second eldest, who in turn died (ten years later) and bequeathed everything to the youngest sister. Despite these frustrations Cupidus still waited, comforting himself "with considering, that all are mortal, and they who are continually decaying, must at last be destroyed."[132] The surviving aunt, however, proved the most tenacious. She lived, writes Cupidus, "through spring and fall, . . . till after near half a century I buried her on the fourteenth of last June, aged ninety-three years, five months, and six days." The exactness of Cupidus's computation is a comic illustration of his eagerness and frustration, for each day of his aunt's existence postponed his happiness.

But happiness, he discovers, shall never be his. Upon possession finally of the entire estate he pleased himself

> with that obsequiousness and reverence which wealth instantaneously procures. But this joy is now past, and I have returned again to my old habit of wishing. Being accustomed to give

> the future full power over my mind, and to start away from the scene before me to some expected enjoyment . . . the rest of my life must pass in craving solicitude, unless you can find some remedy for a mind, corrupted with an inveterate disease of wishing.[133]

As in Tim Ranger's letter this conclusion elicits only sympathy. At the same time in every part of the letter except the conclusion Cupidus appears to be a foolish man meriting ridicule. This is somewhat confusing in the abstract since these conflicting emotions seem to be inspired by the same man. This paradox is, however, easily resolved. In a sense, since this letter (like the other letters of its kind) is a recollection of past events, the narrator is divisible into two separate figures: viewed in the present (the time in which the letter is written) he is both satirist and victim and is a man with whom we sympathize; the narrator's other self exists in the past (the past recorded in the letter), and it is the actions of this figure that are held up to scorn. Important also to our divided feelings is the fact that in the present the narrator not only suffers the consequences but also recognizes the error of his former hopes, whereas the earlier self that he describes pursues his folly with single-minded dedication.

It was argued earlier that Johnson displays a great deal of compassion for those who are injured by his satirized figures. It is striking evidence of his compassion that he does not withhold his sympathy when the target and victim are the same person, but rather in truth attacks the fault and not the person. Ironically, by actually achieving that which satirists have traditionally paid lip service to,

Johnson comes close to crossing the hazy division between satire and the non-satiric. It is usually the case in satire that no real distinction is made between a fault and the person in whom it is incorporated. This simplifies matters for the reader whose only response is one of censure, uncomplicated by any other emotion, directed at a character who is depicted as inseparable from the fault he exhibits. Johnson, on the other hand, demands more from his readers. Cupidus cannot be dismissed simply as a figure of ridicule. His former error is certainly satirized but he emerges in the present as more pathetic than ridiculous, as do all of the narrators of Johnson's confessional satires.

It cannot have escaped attention that this chapter is far longer than those which precede it. The length of the present discussion is attributable to the wide variety of works that required inclusion. While the contrast between satiric and non-satiric humour can be adequately, if not completely, discussed on the basis of Johnson's remarks on Scotland and America; and while the controlling metaphor of a spectrum limits the number of works needed to illustrate the tonal range in Johnson's satires; in this chapter a much broader survey has been necessary. In all, sixteen works have been discussed at some length (in addition to many others which have been mentioned in passing). To "survey," is defined in part by Johnson as "to overlook." The unintentional pun of "not observing" is not amiss as I use the word since, in fact, many works have been passed over that might have been included.

What I have tried to do is to select representative pieces that typify the forms into which Johnson incorporated his satire. For this reason Johnson's character sketches and the variants he employed of the letter to the editor format have been dealt with somewhat extensively since these are the most common structures for his satires. Some attention, though less, has also been given to his use of the beast fable and dream vision as satiric vehicles; and while the greatest part of this discussion has dealt with Johnson's periodical writings, this chapter began with an analysis of his two early pamphlet satires, Marmor Norfolciense and A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage.

No attempt has been made in this chapter to argue any single thesis. I have endeavoured instead simply to examine the kinds of structures employed by Johnson to convey his satirical attacks. Still, a few points might be reviewed. Perhaps the most immediately apparent quality of Johnson's two early political satires is the lack of originality in design and content. The unusual derivativeness of Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication may, in part, be plausibly attributed to three factors: it might be that as an unknown and struggling writer Johnson sought to obtain sales by imitating the tone and style of Swift, or it could be that he had not yet completely found his own voice. A more flattering explanation is suggested by Johnson's conversation with Frances Burney in which he urged her to "fly at the eagle."[134] "When I was beginning the world," he said, "and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established

wits."[135] In Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication Johnson indeed flew at the eagle by competing with Swift on Swift's own ground, as he did also, in London, with Pope. Whatever the reason for the imitativeness of these works, and all of the explanations given may be true, in his later works Johnson employed structures notable for their far greater simplicity. The character sketch is perhaps the most common and least complex of all of the structures pressed into the service of satire by Johnson. It is also a form well-adapted to Johnson's principles of composition since it demands the unification of generality and concreteness (i.e., the "representing of a class through the lively picturing of a man whom we can see"). If any single conclusion can be drawn from an examination of Johnson's epistolary satires it is that he selects his narrators not haphazardly, but with a view to the tactical advantage of each. Reflected in his choice of narrators is Johnson's attitude toward his targets: thus, fools unwittingly expose themselves; the vicious are usually depicted from the point of view of those they oppress; and those whose faults are more than foolish, but harmful only to themselves, consciously expose their errors while enlisting our sympathy in confessional satires.

Finally, in any lengthy examination involving numerous works the incidental observations occasioned by single pieces are often as important, taken as a whole, as the fewer, more generalized points. I assume that this is true of the preceding discussion. Unfortunately, since they are numerous, these observations cannot be reviewed but only alluded to.

NOTES

Chapter Three

[1] Edward Rosenheim, Jr., Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 31.

[2] Marmor Norfolciense, in Political Writings, p. 22.

[3] Donald Greene, ed., Introduction, Marmor Norfolciense, p. 21.

[4] Greene, Introduction, p. 21; Donald Greene, The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 96.

[5] Greene, Introduction, p. 20.

[6] Marmor Norfolciense, p. 27.

[7] Marmor Norfolciense, p. 29.

[8] Marmor Norfolciense, p. 31.

[9] Greene, Politics, p. 97.

[10] Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939-68), 11 (1941), 44.

[12] Marmor Norfolciense, pp. 32-33.

[13] Paul Fussell, Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 21.

[14] Marmor Norfolciense, pp. 40-41.

[15] Letters, II, 386, #691 (8 Aug. 1780).

[16] Krutch, p. 66.

[17] Fussell, p. 21.

[18] Greene, Politics, p. 105.

[19] Fussell, p. 21.

[20] Poems, p. 356.

[21] Life, I, 164.

[22] For Johnson's mature considerations on freedom of the press see his Life of Milton, in Lives of the English Poets, ed. G.B. Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), I, 107-08; and Edward A. Bloom, "Johnson on a Free Press: A Study in Liberty and Subordination," ELH: A Journal of English Literary History, 16 (December 1949), 251-71.

[23] Fussell, p. 21.

[24] Greene, Politics, p. 101.

[25] Sir John Hawkins, The Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D., ed. Bertram Davis (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 44.

[26] Samuel Johnson, A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage, in Political Writings, p. 55; cited hereafter as Vindication.

[27] Vindication, p. 56.

[28] Vindication, p. 57.

[29] Vindication, p. 61.

[30] Vindication, p. 62.

[31] Vindication, p. 63.

[32] Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939-68), I (1939), 91.

[33] Vindication, pp. 65-67.

[34] Vindication, p. 69.

[35] Vindication, pp. 69-70.

[36] Vindication, p. 70.

[37] Vindication, p. 71.

[38] Vindication, p. 72.

[39] Vindication, p. 73.

[40] Philip Pinkus, Swift's Vision of Evil: A Comparative Study of A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels, 2 vols., English Literary Series No. 3 (Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1975), I, 11.

[41] W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, L.F. Powell, eds. The Idler and the Adventurer, p. 317, n. 1.

[42] Donald Greene, Samuel Johnson, Twayne's English Authors Series, 95 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), p. 133.

[43] Idler 22, p. 317.

[44] Idler 22, p. 318.

[45] Idler 22, p. 319.

[46] Idler 22, p. 320.

[47] Idler 22, p. 319.

[48] Idler 22, p. 320.

[49] Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, p. 246.

[50] Bate, Bullitt, Powell, eds., Idler 22, p. 317, n. 1.

[51] Idler 22, p. 319.

[52] Rambler 31, III, 173.

[53] Samuel Johnson, The Adventurer, in The Idler and the Adenturer, ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, L.F. Powell, vol. II of Yale Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), Adventurer 99, p. 433; hereafter cited as Adventurer.

[54] Rambler 105, IV, 195.

[55] Rambler 105, IV, 197.

[56] Rambler 105, IV, 198.

[57] Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," The Yale Review, 41, No. 1 (1951), pp. 88-92.

[58] Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 14-19.

[59] It is no easy matter to decide which of the Ramblers are satires. Delbert Earisman finds ninety-five satires in the Rambler ("Samuel Johnson's Satire," Diss. Indiana University, 1959, p. 19), while Arnold Tibbetts finds only forty-six ("The Satire of Samuel Johnson," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1964, p. 65). This disparity is accounted for by Earisman's inclusion of those Ramblers in which the satire occurs only in a paragraph. Like Tibbetts, obviously, I include as satires only those works in which satire forms the dominant tone. Unfortunately, since neither Earisman nor Tibbetts provides a complete list of the works judged to be satires (or satirical) a comparison with my own list is not possible. In any case, it is clear that the following tabulation of the Ramblers which I view as satires is open to debate: Ramblers 12, 16, 18, 24, 27, 34, 35, 40, 55, 59, 61, 62, 73, 74, 75, 82, 85, 91, 95, 103, 105, 109, 113, 115, 117, 132, 144, 146, 147, 149, 153, 161, 163, 177, 179, 181, 182, 191, 193, 194, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 206.

[60] Earisman, p. 50. It should be pointed out that although Earisman and I discuss Johnson's "characters," our examinations emphasize different features.

[61] Benjamin Boyce, The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 6.

[62] Rambler 59, III, 317.

[63] Idler 17, pp. 55-56.

[64] Rambler 74, IV, 27.

[65] Rambler 103, IV, 189.

[66] Boyce, p. 9.

[67] Theophrastus, The Characters, trans. Philip Vellacot (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 28.

[68] Sir Thomas Overbury, The Overburian Characters, ed. W.J. Paylor (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), p. 8.

[69] Life, I, 216.

[70] Life, I, 215-16.

[71] Jonathan Swift, The Battle of the Books, in The Prose Works, ed. Herbert Davis, I, 140.

[72] Edward A. Bloom, "Symbolic Names in Johnson's Periodical Essays," Modern Language Quarterly, 13 (Dec. 1952), 334.

[73] Bloom, p. 334.

[74] Bloom, pp. 342, 346, and 345.

[75] Bloom, p. 335.

[76] John Butt, ed., The Poems of Alexander Pope (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 616, n. to l. 83; p. 565, n. to ll. 157-80; p. 576, n. to l. 96; p. 584, n. to l. 342; p. 607, n. to l. 305.

[77] Boyce, pp. 5-6.

[78] Rambler 24, III, 130.

[79] Rambler 24, III, 131-32.

[80] Rambler 24, III, 132.

[81] Rambler 24, III, 131.

[82] Rambler 24, III, 132.

[83] Rambler 24, III, 132-33.

[84] Rambler 24, III, 133.

[85] Rambler 24, III, 133.

[86] Jonathan Swift, "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," Swift: Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 496-513.

[87] Rambler 24, III, 133.

[88] Rambler 113, IV, 237-38.

[89] Rambler 113, IV, 237.

[90] Rambler 113, IV, 241.

[91] Rambler 115, IV, 252.

[92] Rambler 119, IV, 274-75.

[93] Rambler 119, IV, 271

[94] Rambler 119, IV, 274.

[95] Rambler 167, V, 121.

[96] Idler 28, p. 88.

[97] Rambler 200, V, 278.

[98] Rambler 200, V, 279, 280.

[99] Walter Jackson Bate, Samuel Johnson (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 215.

[100] Life, III, 253.

[101] Rambler 183, V, 200.

[102] Bate, p. 215.

[103] Life, III, 184.

[104] Rambler 200, V, 280, 281.

[105] Rambler 149, V, 29, 31, 32.

[106] Rambler 82, IV, 64-70.

[107] Rambler 62, III, 329-34; 85, IV, 81-87; 191, V, 233-38. The remaining three letters are examined in the text.

[108] Rambler 16, III, 88.

[109] Rambler 16, III, 89.

[110] Rambler 16, III, 91.

[111] James L. Clifford, "A Survey of Johnsonian Studies," in Samuel Johnson: A Survey and Bibliography of Critical Studies, by James L. Clifford and Donald J. Greene (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), p. 24.

[112] Bate, Samuel Johnson, p. 306.

[113] Rambler 117, IV, 259.

[114] Rambler 117, IV, 258-59.

[115] Rambler 117, IV, 259.

[116] Carey McIntosh, The Choice of Life: Samuel Johnson and the World of Fiction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 75.

[117] Rambler 117, IV, 259.

[118] Rambler 117, IV, 259-60.

[119] Rambler 117, IV, 260.

[120] Rambler 117, IV, 261.

[121] McIntosh, pp. 72-73.

[122] Rambler 117, IV, 262.

[123] McIntosh, pp. 72-73.

[124] Rambler 117, IV, 262.

[125] Rambler 117, IV, 263.

[126] McIntosh, p. 72.

[127] Rambler 117, IV, 264.

[128] Samuel Johnson, Rasselas, ed. G.B. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), p. 84.

[129] Idler 64, p. 201.

[130] Rambler 73, IV, 18.

[131] Rambler 73, IV, 19.

[132] Rambler 73, IV, 20-21.

[133] Rambler 73, IV, 22.

[134] Fanny Burney, Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney: Being the Johnsonian Passages from the Works of Mme. D'Arblay, ed. Chauncy Brewster Tinker (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1911), p. 71.

[135] Burney, p. 68.

CHAPTER FOUR

Johnson as Critic of Satire

Samuel Johnson belongs to, or rather is at the head of, a select group of English writers (including Coleridge, Arnold and Eliot) who have achieved as much fame by their critical works as by their poetry. Indeed in our own time it is quite likely that Johnson's best-known work is his Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets, as his Lives of the Poets should properly be called. The renewal of interest in Johnson in the twentieth century has resulted in the revaluation of many of his works, and nowhere is the change in attitude reflected more clearly than in the current respect paid to his literary criticism. Except during his own lifetime Johnson's reputation as a critic has never been higher. F.R. Leavis has said of the critical writings that they "are living literature . . . they compel and repay a real and disinterested reading, that full attention of the judging mind which is so different an affair from the familiar kind of homage."[1] Certainly T.S. Eliot viewed Johnson's criticism as "living." Proof of its continued vitality is the widespread deference paid to Eliot's warning that "we must not reject the criticism of Johnson (a dangerous person to disagree with) without having mastered it."[2]

This discussion of Johnson would, therefore, be incomplete without an examination of what he said about satire. Unfortunately, determining

Johnson's critical positions is not a simple matter since he produced no single extended discussion of satire. Whatever can be concluded concerning his critical attitudes must be put together out of materials gathered piecemeal from a number of different sources including Boswell's Life, the accounts of other contemporaries, and most importantly Johnson's own writings. The Lives of Butler, Dryden, Swift, and Pope are particularly relevant, and, of course, his satires themselves are valuable sources of information from which much may be learned concerning his attitude toward satire. It is, in fact, because so much of what he felt about satire must be inferred from his practice as a satirist that this chapter has been delayed until now. The preceding examination of some of Johnson's satires provides many examples that are drawn upon here.

There are, admittedly, many dangers in attempting to form a single picture out of so many parts: inferences based on Johnson's practice as a satirist can end in wild speculation, and unwarranted emphasis might easily be given to remarks (conversational or written) made only in passing. But these are dangers that must be faced, and are made necessary by the absence of a definitive statement by Johnson on satire. In addition, these dangers can be lessened somewhat through a form of critical cross-referencing in which statements are compared to one another. Although it is still impossible to construct a Johnsonian "treatise" on satire out of these parts, it is possible to arrive at a broad and coherent summary of his views.

The first thing that is discovered in a search through Johnson's

remarks is that he formulated no very complex ideas concerning the structural variety possible in satire. Indeed, he does not even make the minimal distinction (well-known through Dryden's Discourse) between formal verse and Menippean (or as Dryden would have it, Varronian) satire.[3] That Johnson neglected such distinctions should not be attributed to ignorance, but rather to indifference. Though he often reflects on separate formal elements such as language, characterization, and action, Johnson nearly always relates such matters to what he considers to be satire's primary function: to induce reformation. In short, Johnson's approach to satire is primarily, though not exclusively, moralistic rather than aesthetic.

Evidence for this can be found in Johnson's Dictionary (the most natural place at which to begin this discussion) where satire is defined as:

> A poem in which wickedness or folly is censured. Proper satire is distinguished, by the generality of the reflections, from a lampoon which is aimed at a particular person; but they are too frequently confounded.

Although a lengthy formal analysis is not to be expected in a dictionary it is immediately noticeable how little Johnson says concerning the structure of satire: it is "a poem." The rest of the definition is given over to a description of what satire does, with even more emphasis on what it cannot do and remain, properly, satire. Lampoon, Johnson seems to suggest, is satire improperly applied. Johnson's hostility is far more explicit in his definition of lampoon itself: "A personal

satire; abuse; censure written not to reform but to vex." And under lampooner he writes: "A scribbler of personal satire."

While only a particular misapplication of satire is criticized in Johnson's Dictionary, in Rambler 22 he is far more sweeping in his condemnation, and less careful of distinctions. Rambler 22 is an allegorical tale in which Wit and Learning take the chief parts while Satire appears only in a small supporting role:

> Wit, cohabiting with Malice, had a son named Satyr, who followed him, carrying a quiver filled with poisoned arrows, which, where they once drew blood, could by no skill ever be extracted. These arrows he frequently shot at Learning, when she was most earnestly or usefully employed, engaged in abstruse inquiries, or giving instructions to her followers. Minerva [Learning's protectress], therefore, deputed Criticism to her aid, who generally broke the point of Satyr's arrows, turned them aside, or retorted them on himself.[4]

If this were all we had to go on we would certainly have to suppose that Johnson had a strong dislike of all satire. Nothing could be plainer than this condemnation: satire attacks and disrupts learning, and yet is so weak itself that critical attention to it easily uncovers its fallacies and turns its ridicule upon itself. Rambler 22 does not, in fact, reflect Johnson's complete view of satire, but at the same time it cannot, of course, be totally disregarded. The opposition of satire and learning (and wit and learning) occurs frequently in Johnson's writings, usually in a effort to indicate two very different kinds of response to human experience. While learning works by a laborious process of analysis, satire (and wit) only puts up a front

of understanding by means of clever and specious observations. Described in this manner satire has no connection at all with morality; and so, as in the case of lampoon, this is a special kind of satire that Johnson condemns.

Of some interest, also, is the connection in Johnson's allegory between satire and malice. Rambler 22 contains, to some degree, an echo of the English Renaissance attitude toward satire (implied even in the spelling of "Satyr"). By the eighteenth century satire had established itself as a respectable literary mode, and the traditional satirist's apology (in which the narrator claims a love of virtue rather than private rancour as his inspiration) had become a familiar part of rhetorical strategy. It was presented more as a matter of form than in self-defense. This is very much in contrast to the attitude commonly held in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when satire, in some of its forms at least, was looked upon as a mean-spirited kind of literature, written by perverse and embittered authors. Certain writers of the period, particularly Joseph Hall and John Marston, did much to foster this impression by adopting personae who purported to be motivated in part by spite and malice. Hall and Marston were, of course, simply following what they thought were the conventions of "satyr"; but nevertheless so far did satire fall in repute that for a time it was prohibited by law.[5] Certainly Johnson would not advise the prohibition of satire, and on other occasions he strongly defends its uses; but in Rambler 22 satire is treated as it might have been a century and a half earlier: it is condemned out of

hand as the offspring of Wit and Malice.

If it were ever in doubt that Rambler 22 does not reflect Johnson's complete view of satire it would be an easy matter to settle the uncertainty simply by referring to his own works. And yet, ironically, it is in many of his own satiric works that evidence is to be found for the reservations that Johnson had about certain aspects of satire. The most complete discussion of Johnson's ambivalent critical attitude toward satire based upon an examination of his satirical works is Walter Jackson Bate's article "Johnson And Satire Manqué."[6] Bate, however, does not allow Johnson's attitude to be ambivalent, but instead argues that "he had a hatred and fear of satire" (by "fear" Bate means, of course, Johnson's fear of his own satiric propensities). Bate is particularly insistent on his view of Johnson's attitude toward satire, to the extent that his argument is repeated in three separate works.[7] In each case the outline of the argument is the same. Quoting Mrs. Piozzi's opinion that Johnson had "'an aversion to general satire,'" Bate interprets and inflates this to "a hatred and fear of satire," which, he claims, "is what led him to be so antagonistic to Swift."[8] Bate then points to two aspects of Johnson's personality to account for this supposed hatred of satire. First he remarks that we must keep in mind "Johnson's life-long struggle for good-humor (a 'willingness to be pleased') and his efforts to check or suppress anger." Even more important to remember is "the charity and justice he is always bringing to 'helpless man.' He could not simply watch. He had to participate; and his own willing participation sets a bar to satire."

These factors, Bate continues, led Johnson to curb his own "alert satiric intelligence," and to produce works instead in which "ridicule, anger, satiric protest are always in the process of turning into something else." Bate sees this process as a kind of suppression which he terms "'satire manqué' or 'satire foiled.'"[9]

There are many important parts to Bate's argument which will be considered over the course of this, and the next, chapter. Certain of his assumptions must, however, be examined here. Bate is certainly right to emphasize Johnson's efforts to maintain good-humour. In view of his mental and physical suffering these efforts might well be described as heroic. What is less supportable is Bate's apparent equation of satire with bad-humour. He lists among the qualities in Johnson's temperament that might direct him to satire:

> pent up aggression that could leap out with astonishing readiness . . . irritability and impatience . . . eagerness to confute . . . large floating dissatisfactions . . . [and] physical suffering.[10]

These are characteristics that a Renaissance satyr-satirist might give to his persona, but an irascible narrator is rarely any longer confused with the actual writer. Bate recognizes that a satirist must possess other qualities. Chief among these, and possessed full-measure by Johnson, as Bate says, is "the uncanny ability to sense incongruity and pretense in every aspect of life," and a reductive tendency, the habit of "sifting things down to their lowest common denominator."[11] Bate's error lies in what seems to be his insistence that these abilities result in satire only when the writer is also ill-tempered. Much

more important, in fact, is the creative impulse which prompts the satirist to give imaginative expression to his perceptions. Although it is an obvious point, it must be added that a great many satires are eminently good-humoured. We need look no further than the portrait of Bellaria to find an example of such a satire by Johnson.

Bate is wrong not only in theory, but also in application. The fear of appearing fractious did not inhibit Johnson's critical or moral sense. There is little in his recorded conversation that suggests he would agree with an accepted view merely to avoid discord. In fact, there is ample evidence that in his attempts to force home a point he would use every means available, including satire. These conversational contests did not seem to render Johnson bad-humoured to those he was with; indeed, the company seemed to find him most entertaining when he was most willing to dispute (or "toss and gore," as Boswell would have it).[12] It is even more unthinkable that in his efforts to be good-humoured Johnson would curb his moral sense. When he saw cruelty about him he exposed it. There is nothing held back in his attacks on the cruel metaphysics of Soame Jenyns, the hypocrisy of colonial slave-drivers, the brutality of vivisectors, or the rapacious theft of Indian lands by the French and English. These satires do not, however, reflect bad-humour; they are products instead of another admirable characteristic: Johnson's profound compassion for the suffering of the weak and helpless.

This bring us to another important feature of Johnson's personality, which again Bate is right to emphasize. There is nothing more appealing

about Johnson than "the charity and justice he is always bringing to helpless man." Certainly Johnson was aware of the suffering of existence and the fallibility of all people including, especially, himself. His "charity," based on sympathy and self-knowledge, prevented him from standing apart to ridicule mankind. Nevertheless, it cannot be said, without extensive qualification, that he viewed mankind as "helpless." Perhaps more to the point is the "charity and justice" that Johnson habitually extends to "helpless men"; and this, rather than setting a bar to satire, actually prompts Johnson's more severe attacks. Hyperdulus' uncle is not helpless, nor are the ladies who oppress Zosima. The European invaders who "propagate by desolation and slaughter the true worship of the God of peace"[13] do not receive much sympathy, nor, as I argue in the next chapter, do Charles XII of Sweden or Xerxes. Johnson extends his sympathy instead to the victims of these figures. Bate, it would seem, feels that Johnson always identifies with human frailty in all its forms, but such is simply not the case. Certainly Johnson was aware of his own failings, and when, for example, he mocks those who idle away their time in trivial projects, his own self-doubts may enter and cause him to soften his censure. But that he distances himself completely from the targets of his more severe satires is evidenced by the forcefulness with which he sometimes isolates these figures from all other human beings:

> a race of mortals whom . . . no man wishes to resemble.
>
> a race of men that have practised tortures

> without pity, . . . and are yet suffered to erect their heads among human beings.[14]

Johnson no more "participates" in the evil of the slave owners, the cruelty of the vivisectors, or the indifference of Soame Jenyns, than he does in the folly of John Lade.

Serious attention must be given to Bate's claim that Johnson's attitude toward satire caused him to always turn his potentially satiric works into something else. My central objection is that Bate fails to qualify his remarks. Johnson's "deeply ingrained . . . habit," he writes, "involves a kind of double action in which a strong satiric blow is about to strike home unerringly when another arm at once reaches out and deflects or rather lifts it."[15] That this is sometimes true might well be argued, but that it is always true is contradicted by the many works in which Johnson fully delivers the "satiric blow." Some examples have already been given (the "Review" of Soame Jenyns' Inquiry, Taxation No Tyranny, Marmor Norfolciense), and others are easy to find: Frolic certainly leaves the stage smarting; Gelidus is not let off, nor is Suspirius; Johnson's ridicule of Hypertatus is good-humoured but unmitigated, and he is equally thorough and far more severe in Idler 22 with those who lead men to slaughter.

Nevertheless, Bate cannot simply be dismissed. There are instances, as in the portrait of the astronomer in Rasselas, where Johnson seems to approach and then draw back from satire. Here, indeed, is an example of potential satire transformed into something else as the threat of ridicule is suppressed and replaced by charity and compassion. There

are still other works in which the blow is softened if not deflected entirely. In the Life of Savage, for instance, Johnson says that Savage "contented himself with the applause of men of judgement, and was somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgement who did not applaud him."[16] In the next paragraph, however, Bate argues, "the whole tone changes as the satiric premises, the half-completed exposure, are swept up and put within another frame":[17]

> By arts like these, arts which every man practices in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquility of life is to be ascribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himself.[18]

Johnson unquestionably softens his censure of Savage by suggesting that all men indulge in self-deception. It might be questioned, however, whether the apparent shift in tone is as radical as Bate suggests, and whether it is due to Johnson's feelings ("hatred and fear") about satire or his regard for Savage.

It might also be questioned whether Johnson actually "foils" the satire by extending Savage's fault to the whole of mankind. Bate seems to feel that satire exists only when an individual is attacked, but this, of course, is to confuse satire with lampoon. That Bate, in fact, equates satire with lampoon is suggested by his comments elsewhere. In Rambler 6 Johnson mocks Abraham Cowley for thinking that he could at last find happiness by burying "himself in some obscure retreat."[19] Bate claims that this ridicule "comes as close to satire as Johnson generally permitted himself."[20] Why Bate should find this work (rather than, say, Idler 22) to be Johnson's nearest approach to satire is

perhaps explained by the fact that Cowley is named and the attack, in Bate's view, is limited to him. If this is Bate's opinion of satire then at least part of my disagreement with him is reducible to a matter of terms. That is, if Bate, indeed, limits satire to personal attacks and means, not "satire," but "lampoon manqué," then I object to his definition but agree with his conclusion. Lampoon is nearly always "foiled" whenever it threatens to appear in Johnson's writings.

While he produced too many indisputable satires to argue that Johnson "hated" satire outright and always withdrew the blow on the point of striking, it is an easy enough matter to find examples where he repents a blow after it has been delivered. Bate observes that in some of his portraits "Johnson tends to put the character sharply and reductively [i.e., satirically] and only afterwards, usually in another essay, seek[s] . . . to palliate or explain."[21] Ramblers 82 and 83 may be used to illustrate Bate's point. In Rambler 82 Johnson satirizes Quisquilius, a collector of useless and often fake artifacts and oddities. In Rambler 83, however, Johnson contrasts the labour and intentions of collectors with "those who spend their time . . . filling the world with wrong and danger." And then, as if apologizing for his ridicule of Quisquilius, he writes

> No man can perform so little as not to have reason to congratulate himself on his merits, when he beholds the multitudes that live in total idleness, and have never yet endeavoured to be useful.[22]

Ramblers 82 and 83 provide, however, examples more of satire regretted than satire foiled since the blow is struck and forgiveness sought

later. The distinction is simple, but essential. "Satire manqué" implies that the satire within a work is somehow frustrated and turned into something else. Satire regretted means only that the writer repents, or is uneasy about, an attack that has been made, and in a separate work apologizes, or in some other way makes amends for his earlier attack. In effect, to argue that Rambler 83 "foils" Rambler 82 is to deny the autonomy of the earlier piece. But to satirize a thing in one work, and upon second thoughts to deal with it sympathetically in another, does not negate the original satire. If Johnson had followed London with another poem praising the beauty of the city, the honest industriousness of its citizens, and the nobility of its leaders, the Poem in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal would remain a satire still, just as Rambler 82 remains a satire.

While a hatred of satire cannot be inferred from Johnson's works there are moments in some of his satires which hint at more limited reservations about certain aspects of satire. The most fundamental of these centers on the role of the satiric speaker. In many works the narrator assumes a stance of moral superiority. By presuming to attack another figure (or the fault exemplified in that figure) the speaker seems to claim (and sometimes does so overtly) that he is less criminal or less foolish--that he is unblemished. In two of the works discussed in the preceding chapter Johnson goes beyond the information provided by his correspondents, and looks behind their masks of injured virtue, to discover faults as great as those that are attacked and

motives other than "the strong antipathy of Good to Bad."[23] In Idler 28, it will be remembered, it is revealed that the outraged husband who in Idler 15 attacks his wife for interfering in his affairs is himself gluttonous, slothful, and very much in need of supervision; and in Rambler 200 Johnson, as editor, chides his satirist-correspondent, Asper, for his lack of charity and exaggerated resentment. It would be wrong to make too much of these examples; Idler 28 restores (as Johnson habitually does) the balance in a quarrel between the sexes, and the reasons for the chastisement of Asper have already been examined in detail. Nevertheless, Johnson achieves his ends in both works by exposing the unreliableness of his satirist-correspondents, and to that extent he casts suspicion on a fundamental convention of satire: it is the satiric narrator that does the exposing and who is allowed to hide behind his own mask of assumed virtue. The virtue and veracity of the satiric speaker have to be taken on trust, but in Idler 28 and Rambler 200 Johnson draws attention to the possibility that the satirist who strips away appearances may be himself a source of deception.

Consistent with Johnson's suspicions in general of the pretensions of moral superiority conventionally adopted by satirists is the fact that he rarely assumes such a posture himself. Although Boswell enshrined him as such, Johnson at times seems very uncomfortable in the role of moral paragon, a role he commonly deflates through self-directed irony. Among Johnson's many comic talents none is more frequently exercised than self-mockery. There are many anecdotes to illustrate this, one of which is particularly amusing: Mrs. Thrale was on one

occasion totally absorbed in looking at a small engraving of a portrait of Johnson given to her by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Johnson walked over to see what occupied her attention, and looking over her shoulder, exclaimed, "'Ah ha! -- Sam Johnson! I see thee! -- and an ugly dog thou art!'"[24] Just as he laughed at his portrait (and physiognomy) Johnson sometimes laughed at the literary personalities that he created for himself in the guise of the Rambler and the Idler. It should not be necessary to argue that these personae are distinct from one another (and from Johnson), or that the Rambler is the more grave of the two. The very gravity of the Rambler is, however, often a target of self-directed laughter. For example, the correspondent in Rambler 42 begins: "I am no great admirer of grave writings, and therefore very frequently lay your papers aside before I have read them through."[25] Here it might be argued that the irony strikes both the Rambler and his unperservering correspondent, but in another passage the Rambler only is mocked. The correspondent of Rambler 109 promises a novel tale of woe, and then continues:

> I cannot but imagine the start of attention awakened by this welcome hint; and at this instant see the Rambler snuffing his candle, rubbing his spectacles, stirring his fire, locking out interruption, and settling himself in his easy chair, that he may enjoy a new calamity without disturbance.[26]

By mocking his persona Johnson lessens the distance between his speaker and the audience. The laughter directed at the Rambler prevents him from standing apart; through laughter he is revealed to be fallible

though without a derogation to his dignity as a moralist.

Unlike the Rambler, who presents himself (however ironically) as a philosopher ("I, who have long studied the severest and most abstracted philosophy"),[27] the Idler introduces himself as a satirist:

> He that delights in obloquy and satire, and wishes to see clouds gathering over any reputation that dazzles him with its brightness, will snatch up the Idler's essays with a beating heart. The Idler is naturally censorious; those who attempt nothing themselves think every thing easily performed, and consider the unsuccessful always as criminal.[28]

While it is true that the Idler is often satiric he nowhere attacks reputations notable for their brightness; the characters that are satirized (such as Tim Ranger and Dick Minim), are fictionalized types brilliant only in their folly. More to the point, however, is the ironic manner in which the editor is described. Indeed, he describes himself and seems fully conscious of the irony. From the very beginning, then, the Idler makes himself part of the satiric scene.

An important aspect of the irony in the preceding passage is the fact that while the Idler presents himself primarily as a satirist, he does so in a manner that suggests certain reservations about satire. These reservations are made clearer in a later passage which emphasizes the satirist's vulnerability to criticism. The unidentified correspondent of Idler 18 makes an essential point that is a minor theme in the Idler and clearly represents Johnson's own view:

> Sir,
>
> It commonly happens to him who endeavours to

> obtain distinction by ridicule, or censure, that he teaches others to practise his own art against himself, and that . . . he is doomed to suffer the same severities of scrutiny, to hear inquiry detecting his faults, and exaggeration sporting with his failings.
>
> The natural discontent of inferiority will seldom fail to operate in some degree of malice against him, who professes to superintend the conduct of others, especially if he seats himself uncalled on the chair of judicature, and exercises authority by his own commission.[29]

Bate, it will be recalled, argued that Johnson "could not simply watch, he had to participate; and his own willing participation sets a bar to satire." To some extent I may seem to have been arguing Bate's case. Certainly Johnson "participates" to the degree that he refuses to place his personae beyond the reach of criticism. I do not believe, however, that Johnson's unwillingness to play the moral paragon "sets a bar to satire." A man need not pretend to be perfect to censure faults. Johnson only argues that if a writer chooses to expose others he must be willing to be exposed himself. The most complete statement of this belief is found in Idler 28 where a correspondent chides the Idler for a previous attack:

> "Sir,
>
> "It is very easy for a man who sits idle at home, and has no body to please but himself, to ridicule or to censure the common practices of mankind; and those who have no present temptation to break the rules of propriety, may applaud his judgement, and join in his merriment; but let the author or his readers mingle with common life, they will find themselves irresistibly born away by the stream of custom, and must submit, after they have laughed at others, to give others the same opportunity of laughing at them."[30]

Admittedly this passage represents less than a whole-hearted endorsement of satire, but neither is it a total rejection; it functions principally as a self-reminder to Johnson, and as a warning to his readers, that when a man is once finished with censuring others if he looks within he will find much there to censure also.

For the satirist to admit his own imperfection does not preclude the possibility of satire, but it does preclude the conventional strategy in which the satirist plays the role of virtue's faultless (and usually solitary) defender. There are many satires, of course, in which the personality (and imperfection) of the speaker is of little significance. In the attack on vivisectors, for example, the Idler appears simply as an angry voice protesting cruelty. It would be tedious if Johnson always felt compelled to admit his own faults when attacking the crimes of others. It is, in fact, only in the overall reading of the Rambler and Idler that we sense the self-criticism of the editorial personae; but rather than preventing satire, this self-criticism instead widens the satiric scene with the unusual result that in a non-ironic narrative structure the moral norm exists as an ideal which both speaker and target fall short of achieving, and both are mocked for their failure.

What Johnson refused to pretend about himself he was unwilling to believe in others. His hostility toward pretensions of moral superiority surfaces in certain of his remarks on Pope and Swift. He accused, indeed, all of the Scriblerians of being too prone to protestations of their own singular virtue, and too full of complaints about the

total depravity of the rest of the world. Johnson bases much of his criticism on the letters of Pope and Swift which suggest, in his view, that these writers mistook their satirists' masks, of beleaguered virtue standing firm in a turmoil of vice, for their actual characters and situation. As Johnson puts it:

> From the letters that pass between him [Swift] and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind, that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They shew the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.[31]

This criticism, made in the Life of Swift, is repeated in the Life of Pope:

> whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.[32]

Obviously, there are two parts to this criticism: not only does Johnson mock the immodest self-portraits that he felt the Scriblerians drew, but he also (perhaps primarily) questions what he takes to be their view of the total degeneracy of the rest of mankind. This second thrust of Johnson's criticism will be examined later in this chapter, but for the moment I am concerned only with emphasizing Johnson's unwillingness to allow the satirist, whether it be himself, or Pope, or Swift, to pretend to be faultless while finding fault in others.

Johnson's view of the satirist (or as we would more cautiously put it, the satiric narrator) is obviously coloured by his concern that literature faithfully mirror reality. No man is wholly good and therefore it is a distortion for the satirist to set himself apart as infinitely superior to other human beings. In the same way, Johnson's remarks concerning the targets of satire conform to what he holds to be proper for all imaginative literature. No work, Johnson argues, will be long remembered if it does not in some way express general truth. In the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare he writes:

> Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied.[33]

Johnson then explains the continued appeal of Shakespeare's works:

> In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.[34]

This idea is restated often by Johnson. In Rambler 36, for example, he writes: "poetry has to do rather with the passions of men, which are uniform, than their customs, which are changeable";[35] and in the Life Boswell records Johnson's preference for Richardson's "characters of nature" over Fielding's "characters of manners."[36]

What Johnson means by "general" and "nature," and "accident" and "manners," has often been misunderstood, and is, of course, material for an entire chapter, or book, by itself. One of the best brief

explanations of part of what he intends is given by Johnson himself. Homer, he writes, is in some respects an easy poet to translate because

> his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by . . . crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books.[37]

Unfortunately, some readers of Johnson confuse "general" with "abstract." But clearly, the terms are not synonymous; the opposite of "general" is "particular," and the opposite of "abstract" is "concrete." In fact, then, a work can be both general and concrete, as Johnson's writing usually is. The term "particular" needs further clarification. Johnson does not object to particularity in the sense of vivid precise concrete detail (of the sort that is abundant in the work of Homer and Richardson), since such details give life to scenes and characters. Johnson does, however, criticize particularity in the sense of that which is "local" or "temporary" in scenes and manners, or idiosyncratic in characters. Johnson's reasons for rejecting this kind of particularity are easy to understand. Images that describe customs unique to a particular time lose their force when, with the passing of time, customs change. In the same manner readers are incapable of responding to, or understanding, a character who is drawn with such particularity that what is said is true of that character only and of no other man. More importantly for Johnson,

literature that deals only with what is unique in an individual, or to a time, loses its moral force. The moral function of literature is a primary concern in Johnson's criticism. As Jean Hagstrum explains Johnson's position: "art instructs . . . by representing, or at least implying, moral and psychological truth which is general, rational, or normative"; and

> a character of nature was always preferable to a character of manners, since only that character drawn upon the lines of fundamental humanity could instruct and please over a long period of time and under various historical and cultural circumstances.[38]

To put the matter another way, descriptions of what is temporary will no longer please when they are no longer understood, and truths (whether psychological or moral) which have no general application are incapable of instructing.

Johnson's insistence that only those works that transcend their own time remain intelligible and continue to give pleasure is as true of satire as it is of any other kind or mode of literature. In some respects this might seem doubtful since so much of satire is aimed, outwardly at least, at particular people and specific events. Nevertheless, it is apparent that those works which still entertain do so not because the reader is acquainted with Shadwell or Cibber, or with the particulars relating to the quarrels between the "Moderns" and the "Ancients" in the Restoration and the eighteenth century, but rather because these historical figures have been transformed into great imaginative creations, and because the conflict between modernity and

classicism still rages (just as the antithetical views of human nature reflected in The Battle of the Books continue to be disputed). Of all the great satires none is less limited by time and place than Don Quixote; and of all the satires still read few require more study to be understood and enjoyed than Samuel Butler's Hudibras, a work modeled on Don Quixote. The pleasures of Hudibras are acquired pleasures precisely because the work does not always transcend the particulars which inspired it. It is a topical satire that to a large extent remains topical. Such at least is Johnson's criticism, as he singles out this work to illustrate the kind of particularity that condemns a work to obscurity. Of Hudibras, he writes: "the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day less intelligible and less striking."[39] Johnson then develops this argument in detail:

> Much therefore of that humour which transported the last century with merriment is lost to us, who do not know the sour solemnity, the sullen superstition, the gloomy moroseness, and the stubborn scruples of ancient Puritans; or, if we know them, derive our information only from books or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and study understand the lines in which they are satirised. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.[40]

The most topical of all satire is the lampoon. While Butler ridicules a single religious sect, the lampooner satirizes a single individual. Johnson's antagonism toward lampoon is apparent in his definition of the term; and much more evidence of his antipathy is

found in the Lives of the Poets. Johnson's most extended discussion of personal satire is found in the Life of Dryden where, paradoxically, he praises Dryden for restraining any impulse to name individuals in his satires. Dryden, Johnson writes, "seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name."[41] But while Dryden is credited with showing this much restraint, he is also censured for allowing himself, on one occasion, to become embroiled in a controversy that resulted in much naming and a great deal of reciprocated abuse. Johnson's comments on the insults that flew between Dryden and Elkanah Settle are interesting not so much for anything specifically said but for their general tone of disapproval.

The battle between Dryden and Settle was one that was typical of the period: a contest carried on in pamphlets between two authors, each attempting to convict the other of ignorance and absurdity. Dryden, in Johnson's view, was the aggressor in the dispute: "he perhaps may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling."[42] His motives also are questioned: Settle had achieved some success with his play, The Empress of Morocco, and Dryden, as a dramatist, felt "his supremacy of reputation in some danger."[43] Johnson, however, is not so much concerned with showing who was right or wrong in the quarrel as he is in exposing the folly of all personal attacks. Both writers are culpable for resorting and responding to invective, and Johnson exposes both simply by quoting at length the insults that they traded with one another. What little commentary Johnson offers is brief and heavily ironic. He breaks into an extensive diatribe by Dryden, for instance, to note: "Settle's is said to have been the first play embellished

with sculptures; those ornaments seem to have given poor Dryden great disturbance. He tries however to ease his pain by venting his malice in a parody."[44] At the conclusion of another quotation from Dryden, Johnson is more direct in his criticism. "Such," he says, "was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage with little provocation and terrour with little danger."[45]

After quoting a great deal of Dryden's assault, Johnson next allows Settle to expose himself. In making the transition from Dryden to Settle, Johnson continues, however, to direct his own irony at the greater writer: "After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited."[46] Settle for the most part is dismissed as beneath criticism. After providing sufficient specimens of his writing, Johnson simply breaks off contemptuously: "Enough of Settle."[47] Why Johnson should concentrate his disapproval more on Dryden than Settle is easily explained. Settle, it seems, is on his own natural level in such a contest; but Dryden was a much better writer, and a writer whom Johnson greatly admired. Dryden, he feels, "degrades his own dignity" by stooping to name-calling.[48] It is an illustration, Johnson says, of how "the highest minds . . . [may be] levelled with the meanest."[49]

It should be noted that Dryden's personal dislike of Settle plays a small part in Johnson's objections, for as he says elsewhere, "Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles."[50] The key phrase in this statement is,

of course, "general principles." Though a writer may be prompted by personal resentment as much as by a love of virtue to attack, say, the arrogance of the wealthy, Johnson implies that he could still view the import of his work with approval insofar as it exposes a general fault. Dryden, however, aims at no fault that Settle shares with other men (or at least Dryden does not suggest any extension of this sort) and so no attempt is made to reform a general abuse. In other words, Dryden is unconcerned with principles; his only intention is to make Settle appear ridiculous and thus lose favour with the public. In this regard the assault on Settle fulfils the chief requirement of a lampoon: it is written "not to reform but to vex." By attacking Settle only, Dryden's invectives fail to serve the ends not only of "proper satire" but of all literature. Since the attack is limited to Settle's faults, or more precisely, his person, there is no instruction to be derived from it. Whatever psychological insights Dryden might provide, and whatever truths he might state, are true of Settle and no other man. That satire should exhibit only general faults is implied in a conversation that Johnson had with Boswell. Boswell claimed on one occasion that Samuel Foote had "'a singular talent of exhibiting character.'" Johnson's response reveals a consistency between his views on satire and his general theory of literature: "'Sir, it is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not a comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers: it is a farce, which exhibits individuals.'"[51]

If lampoons lack moral purpose, they also (like Hudibras) become

unintelligible once their targets are no longer familiarly known. The figure of Bayes, in The Rehearsal, Johnson said to Boswell, "'is a mighty silly character. If it was intended to be like a particular man, it could only be diverting while that man was remembered.'"[52] Dryden, who was the model for Bayes, is, of course, still remembered, but this does not negate Johnson's criticism; for the only personality of Dryden's that we recognize is the one recorded in biographical accounts and the one which filters through his works. The connection between that personality and the figure depicted in The Rehearsal is no longer apparent. For most readers Bayes is now merely an absurd fictional character. Dryden's characterization of Settle, Johnson argues, is doomed to similar obscurity. "Since Settle is sunk into oblivion," he writes, Dryden's ". . . libel remains injurious only to himself."[53] Since Settle is no longer known, Dryden's attack is directed at a name without substance. All that remains with clarity, Johnson suggests, is Dryden's virulence. Not knowing Settle, the reader's initial response is to condemn Dryden for the meanness of his spirit and to wonder what prompted such calumny.

As a critical term, then, "particularity" presents no great difficulty. Johnson's objections to the local and the temporary are no different with regard to satire than to any other form of imaginative literature. On the other hand, what he means by "general" in reference to satire is less simple. In view of its usual positive significance for Johnson, it is somewhat confusing to find "general," in one instance at least, to be a term of reproach when applied to satire. The

solution to what might seem an obvious exception lies simply in differentiating between the various meanings of the term.

Walter Jackson Bate seems to mistake, or to ignore, the precise significance of "general" in one account of Johnson's views, and by doing so he distorts Johnson's meaning. As was noted, Bate attaches much importance to Hester Piozzi's comment that Johnson had "'an aversion to general satire.'" Indeed, he goes on to say that "We could put it more strongly and say that he had a hatred and fear of satire."[54] All of this is quite misleading, for by his exclusive concentration on, and intensification of, "aversion" Bate seems to suggest not that Johnson had "an aversion to general satire" but rather a "general aversion to satire," which is not at all the same thing. Bate encourages this misreading by quoting only a small part of what Hester Piozzi actually said. The intended meaning is unmistakable when Johnson's remark is read in context:

> Though no man perhaps made such rough replies as Dr. Johnson, yet nobody had a more just aversion to general satire; he always hated and censured Swift for his unprovoked bitterness against the professors of medicine. . . . When an acquaintance too was one day exclaiming against the tediousness of the law and its partiality; 'Let us hear, Sir (said Johnson), no general abuse; the law is the last result of human wisdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public.'[55]

By the examples that are given it is obvious that by "general satire" Johnson means not satire generally but rather attacks on entire professions. It is also evident that "general" here has a meaning quite

distinct from what Johnson intends when he has Imlac say that it is "the business of the poet . . . to remark general properties."[56] As it relates to the business of the poet "general" denotes that which is always true, that which is not restricted in its application to a single instance or limited by time or place. In contrast to "general" as the equivalent of the essential and enduring truth of a representation, Johnson uses "general" in connection with satire simply to designate the indiscriminate breadth of attack.

The distinction is clarified in Johnson's Dictionary. His third and fourth definitions of "general" suggest the different meanings that I intend: "3. Not restrained by narrow or distinctive limitations. 4. Relating to a whole class or body of men, or whole kind of any being." The quotations that Johnson uses to illustrate his definitions are especially helpful:

> (3.) A general idea is an idea in the mind, considered there as separated from time and place, and so capable to represent any particular being that is comformable to it.
>
> Locke
>
> (4.) They, because some have been admitted without trial, make that fault general which is particular. Whitgiste.

It should be noted that the word "particular" appears in both illustrative quotations. Locke explains how a "general idea" encompasses "particular" instances, while Whitgiste shows how "particular" ideas are sometimes falsely inflated to "general" truths.

Clearly, in Johnson's view, satire is justified only when it is

"general" in the Lockean sense. Lampoon is rejected for attacking too narrowly, and general satire is denounced for attacking too widely, for making "that fault general which is particular."

Although the two are, in this obvious sense, opposite extremes, they share certain features. It might be argued that both are too particular in their focus; lampoon in the obvious sense, and general satire in the sense that groups are isolated, as if human nature were not the same in doctors as in the rest of mankind. Moreover, both are assaults not against vice or folly, but against individuals themselves or professions as such. To see more clearly how this relates to Johnson's antagonism it is useful to consider his own practice as a satirist. Whether he exposes the hypocrisy of slave owners canting about liberty or the foolishness of a young fop, Johnson always aims at specific faults that are capable (paradoxically?) of a generalized formulation (e.g., the viciousness of slavery and the folly of fashion). It is important to note also that these are faults that can be reformed; slave owners can free their slaves, and fops can shed fashion for things of more permanent value. But what general truth is expressed by an attack on the profession of law or by Dryden's lampoon of Settle, and what reformation can be expected?--that the practice of law is evil and Settle corrupt, and that the first should be prohibited and the other driven from society? Little, if any, reformation is intended. Dryden wishes simply to vex one man by making him appear ridiculous, just as the satirist who ridicules the practice of lawyers desires only to degrade that profession. With this we arrive at the fundamental

source of Johnson's opposition to lampoon and general satire: both are rejected for their failure to serve any moral purpose. Satire fulfills its moral function only when it exposes mankind's familiar failings and only when these failings are capable of reformation. But when the purpose of attack is only to give vent to the satirist's malice the function of satire is perverted; and it is such attacks that Johnson distinguishes from "proper satire."

Johnson's dislike of general satire is perhaps the primary cause of his unfeigned hostility toward the writings and person of Swift. There can be little doubt that Swift is foremost in his mind when, in Idler 45, Johnson disparages the "general lampooner of mankind." And certainly Swift is included in the company of those who, from a "desire to be praised for superior acuteness," are accused of "the degradation of their species."[57] Boswell and others provide many illustrations of Johnson's "prejudice against that extraordinary man," and Johnson betrays his antagonism on almost every page of the Life of Swift.[58] It should be pointed out, however, that not every reference to Swift is unfavourable: the Argument Against Abolishing Christianity is called a "happy and judicious irony," the Tale of a Tub is praised for having "so much of nature, and art, and life," and Swift himself is said to have been "'the instrument of much good to his country.'"[59] Still, it must be admitted that Johnson rarely applauds Swift without letting fall some damaging remark. His praise of the Argument is left unqualified, but while commending the Tale of a Tub Johnson expresses

some suspicion whether Swift was its author, so superior it seemed to all of his other works. Even Swift's service to Ireland is slighted, for while he admits that the Drapier's Letters "delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression," Johnson also says that Swift became through them the "oracle of the traders and the idol of the rabble."[60] It is indicative of his hostility that Johnson's habitual balancing of good and bad, which usually suggests objectivity, in the Life of Swift takes on an appearance almost of malevolence. In his account of Savage, or of Pope, Johnson tends to pair his observations of faults with either positive or extenuating reflections. But in the Life of Swift his praise is, at best, begrudging, and he seems eager to follow each approving remark with some disparaging comment to weight the scale against Swift.

A number of explanations for Johnson's hostility have been offered. Boswell writes that "Mr. Thomas Sheridan imputed it to a supposed apprehension in Johnson, that Swift had not been sufficiently active in obtaining for him an Irish degree when it was solicited."[61] Such resentment would be uncharacteristic of Johnson, and Boswell rightly dismisses the idea. Even more unlikely is Thomas Percy's claim that Johnson learned to hate Swift from Dr. Samuel Madden, a man who extended an early and much needed act of friendship to Johnson, and whose ideas he therefore uncritically "adopted."[62] Present hypotheses run more toward the psychoanalytical. Walter Watkins writes that when it is considered that "men who are too much alike find it difficult to live together in amity . . . we begin to understand more clearly why Johnson

is at once repelled by Swift and drawn to him."[63] Walter Jackson Bate argues along somewhat the same lines. Mentioning the "strength" of Johnson's "satiric impulse," and his "fear" of it, Bate goes on to state that it was this "fear that led him to be notoriously unfair in his critical estimate of Swift."[64]

Objections may be raised to each of these explanations. Johnson was not a vengeful man who bore long grudges, nor did he ever accept an opinion simply because it was held by another man, no matter how much he cared for, or admired, that man. To Watkins it might be replied that the argument that like entities repel (or attract) can easily be disputed on either side (as any reader of Plato knows). One also wonders what is meant by the statement that Johnson was "drawn" to Swift. Certainly Johnson imitated Swift in Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication, but that was very early in his career when he was trying to establish himself, and Swift was one of the foremost writers of the time. He was "drawn" in the same sense to Pope. Could it not also be argued, on the basis of Irene, that he was drawn to Addison as well? In addition it might be asked that if Johnson's "fear" of satire led him to be unfair to Swift, why is he not unfair to Pope also, or to Dryden, or Samuel Butler?

The explanations given by Sheridan and Percy are based on the belief that Johnson (for one or another reason) hated Swift and that this hatred led him to disparage his works. While Watkins also reduces Johnson's hostility to a matter of personalities, Bate, for the most part, traces the source of Johnson's antagonism to Swift's works. His

attribution to Johnson of a supposed fear and hatred of satire is, however, too sweeping. It is certainly true that Johnson disliked Swift's satires, but the task is to determine what specifically disturbed him. Unfortunately, Johnson's comments on Swift's satires are few and more suggestive than explicit; nevertheless, it is clear from what he writes that what Johnson objects to is not satire as such but rather certain aspects of Swift's satires.

Although Johnson's disparagement of Swift's satires is based, in large measure, on moral concerns, he also holds no very high opinion of their literary merit. Swift is not allowed to have even major comic talents. In conversation with Boswell, Johnson argued that Swift

> "is clear, but he is shallow. In coarse humour he is inferior to Arbuthnot; in delicate humour he is inferior to Addison. So he is inferior to his contemporaries, without putting him against the whole world."[65]

Always, the Tale of a Tub is excepted, but Johnson argued that since even "'the best'" of Swift's "'other performances were of a very inferior merit, he should have hanged himself after he had written it.'"[66]

Undoubtedly Johnson's most unfair remark is his belittling assertion that Gulliver's Travels neither required nor displays any great imagination: "'When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest.'"[67] It is unforunate that this curt dismissal is the best known of Johnson's references to Gulliver's Travels since it reveals all of his antagonism but suggests none of

his reasons for disliking the work. While Gulliver's Travels is nowhere discussed by Johnson at any length, in his other comments he at least employs the language of criticism rather than that of ridicule. In the Life of Gay Johnson says of that writer's works that "those that please least are the pieces to which Gulliver gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?"[68] This statement is not quite as vague as it might at first appear. "Unnatural" is defined by Johnson as "forced; not agreeable to the real state of persons or things; not representing nature." When it is remembered what "nature" signifies in Johnson's criticism it becomes more apparent how heavily weighted "unnatural" is as a term of disapprobation. We might use the word to denote that which deviates from what is usual, but for Johnson it indicates a departure from truth itself.

As might be expected, Johnson's longest comment on Gulliver's Travels is found in the Life of Swift:

> This important year [1726] sent likewise into the world Gulliver's Travels, a production so new and strange that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with such avidity that the price of the first edition was raised before the second could be made. . . . Criticism was for a while lost in wonder: no rules of judgement were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made the part which gave least pleasure was that which describes the Flying Island, and that which gave most disgust must be the history of the Houyhnhnms.[69]

One of the most striking features of this passage is the manner in which its development suggests dramatic movement and confrontation.

The progress of Gulliver's Travels is traced from its first publication, to its initial effect on readers, to its final reception. Criticism (nearly if not fully personified) is at first overwhelmed, but when it awakens from wonder it discovers that the pleasures of the work are temporary. As part of the rhetorical strategy the opening remarks seem to suggest praise; but upon the recovery of Criticism from its paralysis the tone reverses and the final verdict is sharply disparaging. This reversal, by its unexpectedness, intensifies the final assessment, just as with certain kinds of irony the discovery that we have sided with the wrong party gives added vehemence to our altered opinion.

There is more to Johnson's criticism than rhetoric, however. Compressed within this brief drama is an implied distinction between the work itself ("new and strange") and its effect on readers ("merriment and amazement"). There is an implicit criticism also of the fiction of the work and some concern with the relation of that fiction to truth. Johnson's criticism, then, is in part aesthetic and in part moral. While the two aspects are to some extent separable, ultimately they merge. What is found objectionable by Johnson in the episodes and characters of Gulliver's Travels is not only that they are incredible, but also that they reflect a distorted view of human nature.

Johnson begins his review by remarking that Gulliver's Travels is (or was) both "new and strange." Johnson has often been accused of redundancy and the coupling of these terms might seem to substantiate such a charge. But there is a tonal and denotative difference between "new and strange" just as there is a difference in the response they

evoke: "merriment and amazement." Novelty is for Johnson neither wholly good nor wholly bad. In the Life of Prior it is described as a "great source of pleasure," and it is said elsewhere to be "always grateful where it gives no pain."[70] But while admitting its value, Johnson just as often stresses the limitations of novelty, not the least of these being that nothing can remain new for long: "The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight a-while, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted."[71]

It is of more serious concern that in pursuit of novelty the writer may "depart wholly from all resemblance; a fault which writers deservedly celebrated frequently commit."[72] When the writer strays too far from resemblance, when conceits are too far-fetched, characters too unusual, or events too bizarre, what is produced is more than new, it is "strange." And the response excited by strangeness is not "merriment" but perplexity. There is, then, a mixed judgement implied in Johnson's precise balancing of terms. While in some respects Gulliver's Travels is "new" and begets pleasure, in others it is "strange" and produces confusion.

Johnson was no less aware than we are that characters, settings, and events in satire usually have a metaphoric rather than literal relation to truth. "Some enlargement," he writes, "may be allowed to declamation, and some exaggeration to burlesque." Immediately, however, a qualification is introduced:

> but as they [satires] deviate farther from

> reality, they become less useful, because their lessons will fail of application. The mind of the reader is carried away from the contemplation of his own manners; he finds in himself no likeness to the phantom before him; and though he laughs or rages, is not reformed.[73]

Admittedly, Johnson does not say so directly, but when his comments on the strangeness and irregularity of Gulliver's Travels are read in light of the above passage it is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that he feels that Swift strays too far from resemblance, or "nature," to be effective, that no man would see himself reflected in his characters and thus no man would be made better by reading his book.

Novelty for Johnson applies to the themes of a work as well as to such matters as characterization, imagery, and events. Were Gulliver's Travels novel only in characters and events Johnson's comments would probably be no more critical than his remark on Tristram Shandy: "'Nothing odd will do long. Tristram Shandy did not last.'"[74] But whereas Tristram Shandy is only "odd," Gulliver's Travels is said to have been written in "open defiance of truth and regularity." "Irregularity" is defined by Johnson as "deviating from rule, custom, or nature" and as "not being according to the laws of virtue." The term can, then, and does, perform double duty in the service of both aesthetic and moral criticism. In fact, at this point moral and aesthetic criticism are inseparable, for it is Johnson's view that Gulliver's Travels, and especially Book IV, reflects a view of human nature that is not merely novel, but false.

An important clue to what Johnson finds morally disturbing about

Gulliver's Travels is provided by Mrs. Piozzi. Johnson, she writes, did not "encourage general satire, and for the most part professed himself to feel directly contrary to Dr. Swift 'who (says he) hates the world, though he loves John and Robert, and certain individuals.'"[75] Again Johnson's disapproval of general satire is seen. And in his view Swift reaches the utmost extreme of generality since he attacks the whole of humanity. It is not only what he sees as Swift's indiscriminateness that Johnson finds repugnant, however, but also what he takes to be his unreasoning hatred. Sir David Dalrymple contrasted Johnson with Swift in a letter to Boswell:

> 'In Rasselas you will see a tender-hearted operator, who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift, on the contrary, mangles human nature. He cuts and slashes, as if he took pleasure in the operation.'[76]

Johnson, who saw the letter, was gratified by the compliment to himself and said nothing to contradict Dalrymple's charge against Swift. Of course our own view of Swift and of Gulliver's Travels is quite different. Gulliver is not Swift, and it is his and not Swift's misanthropy that colours Book IV.

In contrast to what he felt was Swift's hatred of mankind, Johnson believed, as Mrs. Piozzi records, "'that the world was well constructed, but that particular people disgraced the elegance and beauty of the general fabric.'"[77] It should not be inferred from this that Johnson shared the facile optimism, popular in some circles at the time, concerning the innate goodness of human nature. When he was asked by Lady MacLeod "'if no man was naturally good,'" he answered, "'No, madam, no

more than a wolf.'"--to which Lady Macleod whispered, "'This is worse than Swift.'"[78] Lady MacLeod's comment is unfair to both Johnson and Swift, but had she questioned Johnson further she might have been less shocked. In conversation with a different company Johnson again maintained that human beings are initially guided only by self-interest; he went on, however, to add an important qualification (one with which Swift would probably have agreed):

> 'we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what it wants, the nearest way; by good instruction and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it.'[79]

Johnson's belief that virtue can be, and is, acquired differs sharply from what he takes to be Swift's more pessimistic opinion. Swift, he implies in Rambler 4, holds to principles that suppose "man to act from . . . brute impulse."[80] Johnson admits that this is true of children, but they are "cured" by the time they are adults. While he is not explicit in his comments on Book IV of Gulliver's Travels, it may well be that Johnson's "disgust" is occasioned not only by the depiction of the Yahoos, but also by the notion (Gulliver's) that man is incapable of rising much above his appetites.

Johnson recoiled from Swift's works, and in particular Gulliver's Travels, primarily, it would seem, because of what he took to be Swift's misanthropy. Indeed none of Swift's satires hold out much hope for the amelioration of the ills that they expose. The world he describes is overrun with fools and criminals: men can be gross, petty, and even

cannibalistic; learning is reduced to pedantry, and all scientists are mad; politics is a carnival side-show; and religion is disgraced by fanatics, practised by hypocrites, and torn by sectarian squabbles. This picture is only faintly relieved by the representatives of rationality. Further, the picture is static: vice and folly are never defeated and rarely opposed (except by the satirist). Each work ends with the forces of darkness untouched. In short, Swift's writings reflect an unrelenting and pervasive satiric vision.

The difference beteween Johnson and Swift can best be seen in Johnson's approach to satire; this may help to account for Johnson's hostility since it is easy to understand why men of different characters might "find it difficult to live together in amity." Illustrative of these differences is the greater prominence that Johnson often gives to those figures whose virtues stand in contrast to the faults which his satires expose. In fact, as we have seen, these virtuous figures at times dominate the work and tend to blur the satiric focus. Further, while in Swift's works the din of chaos is only occasionally and momentarily quieted by the voices of reason, in Johnson's satires virtue not only stands out, but often frustrates the worst effects of wickedness. In Rambler 12, for example, Zosima, after being insulted by a number of prospective employers, is finally taken in and cared for by Euphemia, who has no need of her services but is too kind to drive her away. Something of the same sort occurs in Rambler 75, where the narrator, Melissa, with the loss of a fortune loses also a train of suitors, most of whom, as she discovers, courted her only for her money. One man,

however, remains faithful, and as Melissa closes her letter we are certain that she will marry her one honest admirer. Alvin Kernan describes the "normal 'plot' of satire" as being essentially static: "Whatever movement there is," he argues, is only an "intensification of the unpleasant situation with which the satire opens." In contrast, he continues, in comic plots "things somehow do 'turn out all right.'"[81] Ramblers 12 and 75 are resolved, then, by this definition, along comic rather than satiric lines. More than simply virtuous counterparts to the satirized figures, Euphemia and Melissa's loyal suitor are the agents by which cruelty is frustrated. While this does give each satire a "comic" plot, it does not provide support for Bate's theory of satire manqué since it is not the targets that are spared, but the victims of the targets.

Here, then, is the greatest difference between the satires of Swift and Johnson: whereas Swift's satires conclude "without any possibility of either dialectical movement or the simple triumph of good over evil," in Johnson's satires things often "do 'turn out all right.'" In part, these differences reflect different views of the function of satire. Swift, more often than not, discounts the value of satire in reforming error. His primary motivation seems, rather, to have been creative: satire is a way of expressing a perception of the dark side of human nature and existence. Johnson, on the other hand, places much more emphasis on satire as a form of moral suasion; it either laughs us or shames us to amend our faults. "The sense of ridicule is given us," he once said to Boswell, "and may be lawfully used."[82] What is lawful

for Johnson is ridicule used to persuade rather than vex. "Satirical criticism," he writes in the Life of Pope, "may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgement."[83] Because of what he takes to be Swift's misanthropy, Johnson seems to feel that Swift's satires are punitive only. When composing Gulliver's Travels Swift indeed wrote to Pope: "The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it."[84] This remark is, of course, ironically disingenuous, and Swift's denial of any intent to "divert" must be viewed sceptically. If the world were not entertained by the work it would soon put it down, and no man writes with the intention of being ignored. Swift, we may be certain, knew perfectly well how diverting the book is. Johnson, however, seems to have taken Swift completely at his word. Rather than being "drawn" to such an attitude, Johnson was repelled by it, as he was repelled by the content and manner of Gulliver's Travels, by what he took to be Swift's conception of human nature, and by Swift's satiric vision.

While Johnson's disagreement with Swift's view prevents him from appreciating any feature of Gulliver's Travels, he does, in his comments on Pope's satires, acknowledge a distinction between satire as imaginative literature and satire as a moral statement. Of all of Pope's works The Rape of the Lock receives Johnson's most whole-hearted commendation, since, in his view, it best combines morality and art. It is, Johnson writes, "the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all of his [Pope's] compositions."[85] Not only is it Pope's most pleasing work, but The Rape of the Lock is "universally

allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions."[86] All major aspects of the poem are praised equally as Johnson pays tribute to Pope's artistry and morality: "with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he . . . exhibited boundless fertility of invention." Johnson's only complaint is that Pope "could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence."[87] It is not suggested, however, that Pope should have hanged himself upon its completion.

Elaborating on Pope's "elegance of description and . . . fertility of invention," Johnson says that "In this work are exhibited in a very high degree the two most engaging powers of an author: new things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new."[88] Of "familiar things made new" Johnson states:

> The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration that, though nothing is disguised, every thing is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.[89]

It is, however, the Rosicrucian machinery that Johnson finds most captivating. Pope is first of all praised for not having settled for more conventional gods: "the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana."[90] Instead Pope happily conceived "A race of aerial people never heard of before," and who are presented

> in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph and detests a gnome.[91]

The only criticism that Johnson can find of Pope's "machinery" is that the "sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose" the action, but he is so enamoured of them that he is little concerned with their failure to hasten or retard the main event in the poem. This and other flaws are peremptorily dismissed: "what are such faults to so much excellence!"[92]

It is reasonable to wonder why Johnson extols Pope's "boundless fertility of invention," and looks with disfavour on the novelty of Gulliver's Travels. Part of the answer is implicit in what has already been said. Gulliver's Travels is novel both in form and content. Swift's characters are not only physically strange but also constitute, Johnson feels, a false representation of human nature. The Rape of the Lock, in contrast, is honoured for the "justness" of its precepts. There is, however, an additional, admittedly conjectural, explanation for Johnson's different responses. While Pope's aerial beings exist on a plane separate from the human action in the poem, in Gulliver's Travels the bizarre and the commonplace are intermixed. The fusion of the ordinary and fantastic in Gulliver's Travels is seen in the Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians, and Yahoos who are at once grotesque and uncomfortably human. Though distorted, they call to mind, and are measured against, normal humanity. In addition, they exist in what is represented as the natural world, although it too is sometimes

strangely transformed. The effect of this is that we are repeatedly shocked by unnatural appearances in an otherwise seemingly natural world. Pope's fantastic beings, on the other hand, are not human figures but rarified distillations of various temperaments. They are more than abstractions but less than substantial. They are given, as Johnson states, "powers and passions proportionate to their operation."[93] Further the sylphs and gnomes exist in a totally imaginary realm, a kind of faery world that is created for them. Because the realm is self-contained and independent of quotidian reality our credulity is unstrained. While the human characters of the poem pursue their activities unaware of the agents that flit about them, the reader perceives both orders of beings, accepting one as real and the other as imaginary.

Perhaps most important to Johnson's appreciation of The Rape of the Lock is his agreement with the lesson that it teaches. The poem had been charged, Johnson mentions, "with the want of a moral," and set below "The Lutrin, which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy." Johnson counters this charge with the assertion that Pope's satire on "'the little unguarded follies of the female sex'" serves a more useful purpose. The idea that repeated minor irritations produce more unhappiness than major public catastrophes is a familiar theme in Johnson's writings, and he repeats it here: "The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries."[94]

It is important to note that Johnson clearly sees The Rape of the Lock as having an application that goes beyond the immediate circumstances and individuals with which it deals. That is, it is not Arabella Fermor that is the target but the "vanity of women." In contrast to his remarks here, Johnson is sometimes surprisingly literal-minded in what he sees as the target of a satire. He describes The Beggar's Opera, for example, as a work "written only to divert," and as "a play, written in ridicule of musical Italian Drama."[95] This seeming failure to perceive the target of a satire as anything more than what is literally denoted reappears in his comments on The Dunciad.

The Dunciad is the only other of Pope's major satires examined at any length by Johnson. It is referred to as one of Pope's "greatest and most elaborate performances."[96] But unlike The Rape of the Lock, which is accorded unbroken applause, The Dunciad is praised with reservation. There is a tension in much of Johnson's discussion occasioned by his high regard for the artistry of the poem and his dislike of what he takes to be its moral emptiness. Johnson admits, however, that it is the finest example of its kind, even though it is a kind of satire of which he disapproves. The Dunciad, he writes, is "perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous."[97]

It is indicative of Johnson's admiration of the poem that he is able to dispassionately separate its virtues from what he sees as its faults. "The beauties of the poem are well known," he writes, pointing to passages "such as the formation and dissolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the misfortune of the Florist, and the crowded thoughts

and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph." Nevertheless, Johnson's enjoyment is clouded by his perception of a number of faults. While he says that some things "may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages," he does not fail to specify what disturbs him. One such detail is the "unnatural delight" that Pope shared with Swift "in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention."[98] Of more general concern is the purpose of the satire: "That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his Shakespeare." Johnson's attitude toward personal satire has already been discussed; he is never willing to approve of it, but in this case his fondness for the work sends him in search of extenuating considerations:

> In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. . . . If bad writers were to pass without reprehension what should restrain them?[99]

That Johnson saw bad writing as fair game for satire is evidenced in Rambler 93 where he argues that a writer "may be considered as a kind of general challenger, whom every one has a right to attack; since he quits the common rank of life, steps forward beyond the lists, and offers his merit to the publick judgement."[100]

It would, then, be wrong to judge Johnson's defence of The Dunciad as a rationalization offered in an attempt to give the status of "proper

satire" to the work. As much as he admires the work, Johnson does not hesitate to point out what he sees as its flaws. Johnson is always severe in his censure of laughter directed at suffering, and Pope is accused of such laughter. It is made as a general observation but it is certain that Johnson has The Dunciad partly in mind when he states that "The great topick" of Pope's

> ridicule is poverty: the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion, not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.[101]

Edward Bloom writes that Johnson's "association with such men as Moses Browne, John Duick, Richard Savage, William Collins, and even Cave . . . imbued him with a permanent sympathy. . . . He always evinced the deepest regret for their kind of existence."[102] While this accounts in part for Johnson's sympathy, the sympathy itself is of a piece with his general regard for the victims of poverty. It is this compassion that accounts for the tension that is felt in his comments on The Dunciad. Johnson cannot help but respond to it as an imaginative work (though he could remain impervious to Gulliver's Travels), but always in the background one feels his concern for the victims of Pope's laughter.

Perhaps because we have learned to look at satire differently, though also because of the distance in time, we do not share Johnson's concern for the targets of The Dunciad. For us the poem is solely a literary and not a biographical document. Certainly Johnson realized that Pope was inspired by more than vindictiveness. He mentioned to

Boswell that Pope "wrote his '<u>Dunciad</u>' for fame. That was his primary motive. . . . He delighted to vex them [the Dunces], no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."[103] But as much as he was drawn to the poem Johnson still regarded it as a lampoon with little meaning beyond the ridicule of certain individuals. The difference between our own and Johnson's view of the poem can be seen in his criticism of Pope's revision. Johnson admits that since revisions were made ("not always for the better") the poem should be published "with all its variations" and that the final version is authoritative.[104] This is said begrudgingly, however, since Johnson felt that the replacement of Theobald by Cibber as the chief dunce was a serious mistake. Pope, he writes "depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry and sluggish pertinacity of Theobald."[105] For us Theobald and Cibber are characters in a poem (or different poems) more than historical figures. It is of less importance what name a character goes by than how well he is rendered, and since the Cibberian <u>Dunciad</u> is the greater imaginative work, we prefer it to the 1728 version. To paraphrase what Johnson said elsewhere, we know the man through the poem rather than from life, and so it is beside the point whether the faults exposed are more appropriate to Theobald than Cibber.

We have arrived at what is probably the major difference between our own and Johnson's view of satire. It is customary nowadays to look at individual satires simply as imaginative rhetorical structures and to base our judgements on how well the satirist achieves his aim, and, more generally, expresses his satiric vision. The satiric vision

itself is regarded as an imaginative framework rather than a statement about existence that is either true or false. Of course it is false, just as the pastoralist's vision of rural life is false, but the distortion is accepted as a convention. Satire is for us a particular perspective, a view of the dark side of life and human nature; but it is only one of many perspectives and is in no sense a literal rendering of total reality.[106] Johnson, on the other hand, demands that literature reflect not perspectives but truth. For this reason he reacts against certain satiric conventions such as the satirist's presentation of himself as a solitary defender of virtue; nor could he accept the corollary of that convention: the general depravity of mankind. Further, Johnson particularly stresses the moral function of satire, and in this he reflects an attitude typical of an earlier period: satire, because of its virulence, must serve a moral purpose to be justified. Some pieces, indeed, are accepted as mere entertainments (Gay's The Beggar's Opera and Phillips' The Splendid Shilling are two such works) and a few satires like The Dunciad overpower Johnson's moral reservations; but those satires are best which not only entertain but also reprehend that which is truly vicious or foolish. Because lampoons attack only individuals and have no general application, and because general satire condemns the innocent with the guilty, Johnson sets both beyond the pale of "proper satire." Neither, he feels, serves any end other than the vexing of its targets. There is, obviously, much that Johnson objects to in satire, but not so much as to force an admission that he hated all satire. Johnson limits satire but he does not exclude it.

NOTES

Chapter Four

[1] F.R. Leavis, "Johnson as Critic," Scrutiny 12: 3 (1944), 187.

[2] T.S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in his Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1932), p. 250.

[3] John Dryden, Discourse, I, 64.

[4] Rambler 22, I, 123-24.

[5] Robert Elliott, "Satire," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 379.

[6] Eighteenth Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde, ed. W.H. Bond (New York: Grolier Club, 1970), pp. 145-60.

[7] Introduction, The Rambler, III, xxviii-xxx; "Samuel Johnson and Satire Manqué; Samuel Johnson (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 493-97.

[8] Bate, "Satire Manqué," p. 150.

[9] Bate, "Satire Manqué," pp. 150-51.

[10] Bate, Samuel Johnson, pp. 489-90. Although I disagree somewhat with Bate on Johnson and satire, this work is unquestionably the finest biographical study of Johnson since Boswell's Life.

[11] Bate, Samuel Johnson, pp. 489, 490.

[12] Life, II, 66.

[13] Preface to the Translation of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, in Works (1806), II, 323.

[14] Letters, I, 188, #184 (13 Aug. 1766); Johnson on Shakespeare, VIII, 881, note to Cymbeline, I, v. 23.

[15] Bate, Samuel Johnson, p. 494.

[16] Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), II, 379; cited hereafter as Lives.

[17] Bate, Samuel Johnson, p. 494.

[18] Lives, II, 379.

[19] Rambler 6, I, 33.

[20] Walter Jackson Bate, The Achievement of Samuel Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 80.

[21] Bate, "Satire Manqué," p. 152.

[22] Rambler 83, IV, 72.

[23] Alexander Pope, "Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II," in Poems, ed. John Butt, pp. 694-703, l. 197.

[24] Burney, p. 217.

[25] Rambler 28, III, 227.

[26] Rambler 109, IV, 215.

[27] Rambler 18, III, 99.

[28] Idler 1, p. 5.

[29] Idler 18, p. 56.

[30] Idler 28, p. 86.

[31] Lives, III, 61-62.

[32] Lives, III, 212.

[33] Samuel Johnson, Preface 1765, in Johnson on Shakespeare, VII, 61; cited hereafter as Preface.

[34] Preface, VII, 62.

[35] Rambler 36, III, 199-200.

[36] Life, II, 48-49.

[37] Lives, III, 114.

[38] Jean Hagstrum, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), pp. 81, 86.

[39] Lives, I, 213.

[40] Lives, I, 214.

[41] Lives, I, 400-01.

[42] Lives, I, 401.

[43] Lives, I, 342.

[44] Lives, I, 345.

[45] Lives, I, 346.

[46] Lives, I, 351.

[47] Lives, I, 354.

[48] Lives, I, 400.

[49] Lives, I, 346.

[50] Lives, I, 437.

[51] Life, II, 95.

[52] Life, II, 168.

[53] Lives, I, 401.

[54] Bate, "Satire Manqué," p. 150.

[55] Miscellanies, I, 223.

[56] Rasselas, p. 62.

[57] Idler 45, pp. 139-40.

[58] Life, IV, 61.

[59] Lives III, 12; Life II, 319 and 132.

[60] Lives, III, 50, 36.

[61] Life, IV, 61.

[62] Miscellanies, II, 211-12.

[63] Walter Watkins, Perilous Balance (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 31.

[64] Bate, Introduction, Rambler, III, xxix.

[65] Journal, p. 27.

[66] Miscellanies, II, 331.

[67] Life, II, 319.

[68] Lives, II, 284.

[69] Lives, III, 38.

[70] Lives, II, 206 and I, 317.

[71] Preface, VII, 61-62.

[72] Rambler, 208, V, 319.

[73] Rambler 208, V, 320.

[74] Life, II, 449.

[75] Miscellanies, I, 327.

[76] Life, I, 433.

[77] Miscellanies, I, 327.

[78] Journal, p. 170.

[79] Journal, p. 170; Life, III, 271.

[80] Rambler 4, III, 23.

[81] Kernan, The Cankered Muse, pp. 31-32.

[82] Life, III, 379-80.

[83] Lives, III, 242.

[84] Jonathan Swift, The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. Harold Williams, 5 vols. (1963; rpt. "with corrections," New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), III, 102, "Swift to Alexander Pope," Sept. 29 1725.

[85] Lives, III, 101.

[86] Lives, III, 232.

[87] Lives, III, 104.

[88] Lives, III, 233.

[89] Lives, III, 234.

[90] Lives, III, 233.

[91] Lives, III, 233-34.

[92] Lives, III, 235.

[93] Lives, III, 233.

[94] Lives, III, 234.

[95] Lives, II, 278, 275.

[96] Lives, III, 145.

[97] Lives, 241.

[98] Lives, III, 242.

[99] Lives, III, 241.

[100] Rambler 93, IV, 133-34.

[101] Lives, III, 204.

[102] Edward Bloom, Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1957), p. 69.

[103] Life, II, 334.

[104] Lives, III, 242.

[105] Lives, III, 186.

[106] For a more complete discussion of the differences between traditional and modern views of satire see W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr., The Art of the Satirist (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1965), pp. 9-22. Sutherland argues that "a general recognition of the fundamentally aesthetic nature of satire is a first step in releasing it from the bondage of its origins and milieu" (p. 10); and, "the constantly reiterated statement that the purpose of satire is reform is one of the great shibboleths of English literature" (p. 17).

CHAPTER FIVE

London and The Vanity of Human Wishes

On May 12, 1738 Johnson published London, the first of his two formal verse satires, and on January 9, 1749 the second appeared, The Vanity of Human Wishes.[1] For a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it is a more topical poem, London was far more popular during Johnson's lifetime. The reception of The Vanity of Human Wishes must have been a disappointment to him since it did not achieve a second edition in his lifetime while London reached a second edition within a week, and, as E.L. McAdam writes, was "reprinted at least twenty-three times" before Johnson's death.[2] David Garrick expressed what was probably the common view at the time: "London," he said, "is lively and easy," but when Johnson "became more retired, he gave us his 'Vanity of Human Wishes' which is as hard as Greek. Had he gone on to imitate another satire, it would have been as hard as Hebrew."[3] Boswell, while agreeing that "more readers . . . will be delighted with the pointed spirit of 'London' than with the profound reflection" of the later satire, seems not to share the preference of his contemporaries. He chides Garrick for his lack of judgement, accusing him of exhibiting "more vivacity than regard to just discrimination, as is usual with wits."[4]

Modern critics agree with Boswell. Joseph Wood Krutch states that "From Johnson's own time to the present the tendency has been pretty

consistently to regard The Vanity of Human Wishes as superior to its predecessor."[5] Krutch obviously fails to consider the early printing history of the poems; but though he might be guilty of historical inaccuracy, he is correct in arguing that The Vanity of Human Wishes is now held in higher regard.

The question of which is the better poem might be expected to lead to an examination of their differences, but such has not been the case. Krutch's only attempt at comparison focuses on the intensity of Johnson's feelings. It is not, he argues, "that London is consciously insincere, but simply that there is little of Johnson's real temper revealed in it." As much as he tries to avoid a direct statement, Krutch finally comes very close to accusing London of insincerity when he argues that "the one poem [the Vanity] is fundamentally sincere, the other fundamentally artificial."[6] A more recent critic, Paul Fussell, is far less cautious. Johnson, he writes, only "affected" to find London "nauseating." Actually he "adored London and was exhilarated no end by its racy surface, enormities included."[7]

Walter Jackson Bate also takes up the question of sincerity in his discussion of London, arguing that "the poem (in its conception, not its skill of execution) is quite far from all we associate with Johnson, especially in his later years." Bate obviously leaves room for the argument that Johnson's opinion of London might have changed, as he does in a reiteration of his point: the poem "often expresses sentiments that are the reverse of the Johnson we know, especially the later Johnson." As he continues, however, Bate forgoes all qualifica-

tion and bluntly assumes that Johnson only pretended to be repelled by London:

> But of course London was never really conceived as a "satire"--as a strongly impassioned sense of outrage (or indeed of an impassioned sense of anything else). Instead it was an exercise of talent, understandably designed to make an immediate appeal--to compensate for the failure of Irene and to make money for himself and even more for Tetty.[8]

Certainly the poem was an "exercise of talent," and Johnson's chief motives may have been money and reputation, but surely this does not compel a redefinition of the work, or have any bearing on its worth. Perhaps part of what Bate is reacting to is the very conventional kind of satire that London represents, since, as is apparent, he is committed to the position that Johnson wrote no satires. By insisting that the poem "seems breezy, as if written off the top of the head" -- that Johnson was not emotionally involved with the scene he presents -- Bate seems to feel that London can be classified as something other than a satire.[9] This is at least puzzling. One could just as well argue that Juvenal's sixth satire would be a satire no more could it be proven that Juvenal was no misogynist.

If it were necessary to establish the genuineness of Johnson's attitude, to reclaim London as a satire, and defend its worth, it could be plausibly done. Donald Greene, paying attention to the date of composition, outlines a convincing hypothetical scenario:

> One must imagine the young Johnson newly arrived in London, sore at the neglect of the world, repelled by the ugliness of city life, and home-

> sick for the gentler scenes of the Midlands. Through the instrumentality of Savage, or Hervey or Guthrie, or the Craftsman, there is revealed to Johnson the appalling wickedness of Walpole's regime. . . . The young man's eyes are opened. He eagerly seizes on the Walpolian iniquities and uses them as pegs on which to hang his own griefs: bribery and castrati and masquerades become projections and symbols of the Johnsonian dissatisfaction with the world.[10]

Greene's reconstruction is a reasonable answer to those who insist that Johnson did not mean what he wrote, and at least one other critic shares his view. Mary Lascelles argues that just prior to writing London Johnson had spent "the best part of thirty years" in or near Lichfield. And while "they had not been happy years, . . . the beginning of his struggle to establish himself in London may well have been worse. The poem as a whole suggests that he was suffering from revulsion against his new surroundings."[11]

William Vesterman points out that due to Boswell it has become common to suppose "that Johnson sprang into the world fully armed with his opinions and style." Greene and Lascelles clearly avoid this tendency. Krutch and Fussell, on the other hand, seem to share what Vesterman describes as "Boswell's assumption that the nature of Johnson's imagination was essentially fixed and timeless and that what Johnson really believed is therefore easily separable from what he did not believe, without regard to time."[12] Bate, too, is uneasy in dealing with the discrepancy between the attitude that appears in London and the attitude we more familiarly associate with "the Johnson we know, especially the later Johnson."

As a consequence of their insistence on viewing Johnson's thought and style as static, critics have tended, as Vesterman notes, to ignore the chronology of his works. Bate at least mentions that London and the Vanity are separated by ten years though he draws no conclusion from this to account for differences in technique in the poems. He does, however, argue that it is a mistake "to bracket together London and The Vanity of Human Wishes," and though it may be usual to view them "as sister poems, . . . they really are not." Unfortunately, Bate does not stay to examine the features that distinguish Johnson's earlier from his later verse satire. He does mention in passing that London "has little of the unique condensation of phrase of the later poems," and he states also that, in contrast to London, in the Vanity "much of Johnson's thought--as well as mastery of poetic expression--is contained in solution."[13] What Bate means by "mastery of poetic expression" is, however, left largely undeveloped.

By concentrating almost exclusively on the question of Johnson's sincerity, critics have avoided or ignored much else that is of interest in a comparison of London and The Vanity of Human Wishes. It is indeed true, as Bate notes, that the poems are very different: for example, the personalities of the two speakers are quite distinct; imagery is developed far more subtly in the Vanity, and the later poem relies more on representative illustrative figures; the targets attacked are of course not the same: London is a far more political satire. In addition, the poems reflect different visions: London is permeated by what I have described as the satiric vision, while the Vanity concludes

with a Christian vision of hope. If the two poems are to be compared, then, attention should be given to these features rather than to which satire reflects Johnson's "real" feelings.

Few critics would disagree that London is a conventional satire wholly within the eighteenth-century tradition of political attacks. This should not be surprising when it is remembered that it was written one year before the publication of Marmor Norfolciense and A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage. If Johnson's pamphlet satires reveal the influence of Swift, London calls to mind Pope's Imitations of Horace, which quite probably influenced Johnson to also try his hand at this kind of "Imitation." It would be difficult to trace any specific influence, but there are certain features of London that bear a general similarity to what we normally associate with Pope. Most significantly, Thales closely resembles the narrative personality that Pope often employs in his Horatian poems. Thales, the principal speaker in London, is a plain, outspoken, honest man. He is out of favour at court because he cannot bring himself to bow to power or laugh at poverty; he is outraged at the crimes which procure wealth, and mocks the reverence it commands; finally, he honours virtue, and longs for a simpler life. This is, of course, a sketch of the satiric persona described by Maynard Mack as the "vir bonus, the plain good man."[14] And it is the persona adopted by Juvenal. It is difficult, then, to ascribe a definite Popean influence. Juvenal lay before Johnson (or in his head), and the personality of Thales existed in tradition. Nevertheless, Pope was the most recent satirist to employ

the vir bonus, and Johnson would have been minutely familiar with his work, and acutely aware of its popularity.

Regardless of whence Johnson drew his inspiration, Thales is an entirely conventional figure. Not only does he embody all of the virtues whose general absence he deplores, he stands alone as seemingly the only honest man of his time--or nearly the only. The actual narrator of the satire is a second voice who introduces us to, and transcribes the words of, Thales. But before he steps back to record Thales' speech, the narrator makes it clear that he shares his friend's anger. He too equates London with vice (l. 5), and commends Thales' decision "To breathe in distant fields a purer air" (l. 6). As a preface to Thales' attack, the narrator presents his own catalogue of the evils of London:

> Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
> And now a rabble rages, now a fire;
> Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay,
> And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
> Here falling houses thunder on your head,
> And here a female atheist talks you dead.
> (ll. 13-18)

In addition to opening the attack and setting the tone of the satire, the narrator introduces Thales, "injur'd Thales" (l. 2), "Indignant Thales" (l. 34). Reference is made in this introduction to Thales' "dissipated wealth" (l. 20), which seems an important part of his being "injur'd." Johnson defines "dissipate" as "to spend," "to disperse," and "to scatter," but Thales is no prodigal. Rather, from what follows, it must be imagined that because in his time only dis-

honesty and sycophancy are rewarded, he has been forced to live upon, and thus diminish, an inherited capital. "Indignant Thales" needs little explanation. His anger throughout is an emotion that rises from his love of virtue and hatred of vice. Dramatic (or melodramatic) evidence is provided by the narrator of Thales' (and his own) deep regard for the values absent in their own age, as together they recall Britain's past glory and ". . . kneel and kiss the consecrated earth" (1. 24).

From the beginning Thales has two topics: the moral decay of his age, and his own spotless virtue. Often he manages to convey both notions simultaneously. As he recounts why he is forced to leave London, Thales attacks the city, alludes to his own better character, and explains the loss of his fortune:

> Since worth . . . in these degen'rate days,
> Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise;
> In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
> Since unrewarded science toils in vain;
> . . . . . .
> Grant me, kind heaven, to find some happier place,
> Where honesty and sense are no disgrace.
> (11. 35-44)

Autobiography and satiric attack are equally mixed in this passage. It is clearly Thales' worth that has gone unrewarded by an immoral society. And when heaven's assistance is requested in finding a more virtuous place, it is difficult to say which is more stressed, the absence of honesty and sense in London, or the implied presence of these qualities in Thales.

There is an even more pronounced tone of self-satisfaction in

Thales' next autobiographical statement. Again he complains that there is no place in London for a virtuous man:

> But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
> Who start at theft, and blush at perjury?
> . . . . . .
> A statesman's logick unconvinc'd can hear,
> And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;
> Despise a fool in half his pension dress'd,
> And strive in vain to laugh at H--y's jest.
> (11. 67-74)

There are a number of targets in this passage all of which are in some way related to the governing Whig party; but the lines seem to focus as much on Thales: he will not steal or perjure himself, he sees through the cant of politicians and is unmoved by the Whig journal, he cannot refrain from laughing at what is ridiculous nor bring himself to laugh when it is expected.

At times Thales' self-praise is somewhat more subtle. Later in his speech, in an attack on the deference paid to wealth and the scorn directed at poverty, Thales applauds himself only by implication:

> All crimes are safe, but hated poverty.
> This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
> This, only this, provokes the snarling muse.
> (11. 159-61)

In this periphrastic reference to satire ("the snarling muse") Thales invites a comparison between his present speech which attacks vice, and the usual satire of his time which is aimed at the helpless.

While Thales may be a familiar speaker of the <u>vir bonus</u> type, he is unique in the satires of Samuel Johnson. Nowhere else does Johnson

create a speaker who combines such anger and moral self-assuredness. A few of Johnson's epistolary narrators (such as Zosima and Hyperdulus) have good reason to be resentful, but none (apart from those that are treated ironically) are as bitter or as self-righteous as Thales. Unfortunately, his frequent references to his lost fortune and the failure of society to reward his merit cast suspicion on his reliability. D.V. Boyd, in fact, argues that "Thales is . . . tainted, a most unconvincing Jeremiah. . . . He is the satirist as loser. . . . His sole concern . . . is not with social evil but with his personal failure."[15] Boyd overstates his case (Thales' argument is that social evil condemns honesty to failure), but he does point to a very real consequence of Thales' emphasis on the injuries he has suffered: as his complaints accumulate he tends to be seen with less compassion and more suspicion.

As was argued in the preceding chapter, Johnson himself usually scoffs at satirists who set up themselves, or their personae, as types of moral rectitude, alone and beleagured in a corrupt world. But while this satiric convention (and ultimately vision) is deprecated in his later criticism, in <u>London</u> it is exploited in full measure as Thales assumes the roles of moral judge, moral norm, and victim. He condemns the depravity of his age, holds himself up as an example of virtue, and suffers exile for his goodness. As Boyd suggests, however, these roles are not easily combined. A passage of eight lines in which Thales functions in all three capacities may help to illustrate this point:

> Others with softer smiles, and subtler art,

> Can sap the principles, or taint the heart;
> With more address a lover's note convey,
> Or bribe a virgin's innocence away.
> Well may they rise, while I, whose rustick tongue
> Ne'er knew to puzzle right, or varnish wrong,
> Spurn'd as a beggar, dreaded as a spy,
> Live unregarded, unlamented die.
> (ll. 75-82)

While this passage begins as an attack on panderers, the focus shifts midway to Thales' contrasting honesty, and concludes on a note of self-pity. It is tempting at first to agree with Boyd and simply attribute the anger in these lines to the resentment of a man who has failed. But then Thales does not complain that he is an unsuccessful panderer. To argue consistently along Boyd's lines is to transform the speaker into an ironic character, and the poem will not support such an interpretation. The difficulty arises not because we doubt the veracity of Thales' testimony, but because we are uncertain which pains him more, the crimes he describes or the failure of society to recognize, honour, and reward his merits. As was noted, social corruption and neglected virtue are inseparable aspects of a single malaise, but by repeatedly emphasizing his own loss, Thales ultimately weakens his argument by making his speech as much a personal lament as it is an attack on his age.

Just as Thales presents himself as a model of honesty at odds with his society, the age in which he lives is repeatedly compared to earlier, more happy times when Britain was better governed. The recollection of a past golden age is as conventional in satire as it is

in pastoral literature, but whereas in pastorals the scene is usually set in a more perfect world of an earlier time, in satire this distant perfection is only a memory produced to remind the present age of how far it has fallen. In London, past and present are linked together in the figure of Thales, whose respect for the values of the past reduces him to an anachronism and an outcast. Past and self merge and are glorified as Thales recounts his early education:

> . . . from slav'ry far,
> I drew the breath of life in English air;
> Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
> And lisp the tale of Henry's victories.
> (ll. 117-20)

Henry V is only one of four monarchs mentioned in London. The reigns of Alfred, Edward III, and Elizabeth are also recalled, thus extending England's golden age from the ninth to the seventeenth century, and thus increasing the guilt of those who have betrayed a greatness so long maintained.

By honouring these monarchs Thales gives dignity to his own character and to his complaints. To some degree these backward glances lessen the suspicion that he is motivated purely by spleen. Thales is driven, it is implied, not by a misanthropic desire to find fault, but by his high regard for Britain's former greatness, and his anguish over the lowly position to which his country has sunk. By linking himself with these royal figures, Thales shares the burden with them of being the conscience of the nation, and at the same time appropriates their virtues to himself.

Spaced as they are throughout London at irregular intervals, the references to Britain's more heroic monarchs help to separate the sections of the poem: Elizabeth dominates the first part of the work where the corruptness of the town is exposed; Edward and Henry are recalled in the middle section where Thales deplores the French influence on English morals and manners; and Alfred is mentioned in the conclusion where Thales complains of the lawlessness of London. But while these references help to separate and focus the broad areas of attack in London, a clear sense of order obtains only if the poem is observed at a distance. Upon nearer examination the outlines of the poem soon become obscured by a welter of detail. Throughout his speech Thales attacks so many subsidiary ills that it is easy to lose sight of the principal target. Fault after fault is held up to ridicule, and at times each seems to follow the other almost at random. In this respect London resembles Marmor Norfolciense. In both works there is an accumulation of targets rather than a thorough examination of a single offense. Among the many objects of censure are: the excise tax, lawyers, lotteries, masquerades, operas, the Licensing Act, the Gazetteer, the sinking fund, pensions, the French, sycophants, panderers, England's military impotence, English defenders of England's enemies, George II's lasciviousness, and Walpole's administration. It could, I suppose, be argued that this appearance of chaos is meant to reflect the confusion of London--that Thales strikes out in so many different directions because there are so many ills affecting the city. This argument necessarily assumes that London itself is the target, and that

the poem exposes numerous blemishes on a single body. Such an argument would be accurate if Johnson had followed his model more closely. The targets in Juvenal's poem are indeed held together by being faults that are peculiar to, or at least more prevalent in, Rome. Johnson, however, diverges from Juvenal by giving almost equal emphasis to three categories of targets: faults of the city, diseases of the age, and political abuses. Only one of these is limited to, or necessarily produced by, London.

James L. Clifford points to what is perhaps the most significant way in which Johnson transformed Juvenal's satire and made the poem his own. Johnson, he writes, used

> Juvenal merely as a basis for his own special pleading. What had been in Juvenal preeminently an exposure of city life and an exaltation by contrast of supposedly better conditions in the country developed in Johnson's hand into a political attack on Walpole's administration.[16]

It need hardly be stressed that London is an Imitation and not a translation, and Johnson was, therefore, under no obligation to follow his model slavishly. Johnson defines Imitation as "a kind of middle composition between translation and original design," in which an author "accommodate[s] . . . the sentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images." Imitations "please," he states, "when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and the parallels lucky."[17] At times Johnson's parallels are considerably stretched. For example, where Juvenal satirizes greedy contractors:

> . . . So farewell Rome, I leave you
> To sanitary engineers and municipal architects, men
> Who by swearing black is white land all the juicy contracts,[18]

Johnson aims his barbs at politicians:

> Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
> To vote a patriot black, a courtier white.
> (ll. 51-52)

It should be noted that some of Johnson's political taunts, such as his reflection on George II (ll. 244-47), have no parallel at all in Juvenal. Political satire is not wholly absent in Juvenal's poem, but it is not nearly as prominent as it is in London. As William Kupersmith observes, "Political satirists did not flourish under the Roman Empire, and Juvenal . . . wisely confined his attacks to those who were either dead or in disgrace and harmless."[19]

The political attacks in London on such things as the standing army and the excise tax provide topical interest, as does the allusion to George II, but at a price. In the first place it dates the poem; and Johnson, in his later criticism, often shows his disapproval of the merely topical. But more importantly, the more the poem is a political satire the less it is a satire on London, thus blurring the focus of attack. Political satire attacks personalities, and more precisely in this instance policies which affect the whole of England. It will not do to argue that London and the government are synonymous. The usual metonymy works in the opposite direction: a poet may write Rome or London when he means the senate or parliament, but never the senate or parliament when he means to attack Rome or London. In short, to sati-

rize the government is to attack something other, or rather more than, the capital. The legislation for a standing army may have been passed in London but it is not one of London's crimes, nor are its effects felt only in that city.

It could be argued that London is too narrow a title for Johnson's poem since so many of the criticisms seem directed more at the age than at the city. Throughout Thales complains that courage, honesty, patriotism, and worth are obsolete--that treachery and flattery are now more esteemed and rewarded. To emphasize the degeneracy of his age, Thales time and again recalls the past when England's heroes were men of virtue. Here again Johnson strays from his model. Juvenal's first reference to the past is not to a golden age but to a lecherous king.[20] Johnson's parallel in this case is highly ironic since he substitutes the virgin queen, Elizabeth, for the amorous King Numa. Of course not all of Juvenal's backward glances are ironic and in fact the past is for the most part golden. The principal contrast in his poem remains, however, between the city and the country, while in London the contrasts are equally divided between country and city and past and present. Thales' repeated invocations of the past make it clear that he feels that he must journey in time if he is to find virtue. While the pastoral world to which he flees has its attractions, a better society is not one of them. Thales does not suppose that worth rises more quickly in the country or that he will be embraced by villagers who share his values. Indeed the "happier place" to which he flies, "where honesty and sense are no disgrace" (ll. 43-44), is perhaps happy only because it is a

"deserted seat" (l. 213). If the country is more receptive to virtue it is only because it lacks people. The narrator signals the loneliness of Thales' future when he refers to him as a "hermit" (l. 4). Thales' retreat into the country is, then, a general withdrawal from all society and an escape, if not into the past, at least to a timeless realm.

Although the profusion of targets that appear creates uncertainty as to what Johnson means most to attack, this is not to say that the poem is structureless. Indeed, the lines of division in the poem are easily discernible. At the most general level the poem separates into two parts: the narrator's introduction and Thales' speech. The narrator's introduction functions to introduce Thales, provide necessary background information, and set the tone of the satire. The narrator's own list of London's defects in no sense prefigures or defines the structure of Thales' attack. His complaint parallels Thales' only in its multifariousness (nine dangers to life and limb are identified in six lines). As brief as it is (ll. 1-34) the narrator's preface is separable into three parts: an opening statement which informs us that Thales is leaving London, a description of some of the evils and perils from which he is fleeing, and a pastoral sketch which serves as a transition to Thales' speech. Thales' speech is much longer (ll. 35-263) and is in turn divisible into six distinct sections: the first of these (ll. 35-90) is least reducible to short paraphrase but centers on the bartering of rights and honour for gold. Thales next (ll. 91-157)

attacks foreign influence; and from there goes on (ll. 158-209) to describe the reverence that wealth commands while the poor suffer unregarded; a pastoral interlude then follows (ll. 210-223); it is succeeded by a description of the lawlessness of London's inhabitants (ll. 224-253); and the poem concludes with Thales' farewell to the narrator (ll. 254-263).

Although the remainder of this discussion will proceed through these divisions consecutively, it is not my intention to subject each to exhaustive analysis. By following the poem in sequence some notice will be paid, if only incidentally, to the way in which the parts are related to one another; but most attention, by far, will be given to an examination of the poem's imagery and Johnson's use (admittedly limited) of illustrative figures.

The figure of Elizabeth is the source of much of the imagery in the first part of Thales' attack. One of the principal literary roles given to Elizabeth, especially by Spenser and Drayton, is that of pastoral queen. Johnson revives the pastoral Elizabeth by placing her in a familiar landscape. Indeed, it is the landscape that calls her to mind:

> On Thames's banks, in silent thought we stood,
> Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
> Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth.
> (ll. 21-23)

Johnson would later, in the Life of Savage, employ alliteration and periphrasis to draw attention to, and mock, the imaginary delights of rural life, but here the language of pastoral poetry is intended not to

burlesque, but to recall, the pastoral vision. Johnson's critics may base part of their argument that London is insincere on his later criticism of the puerility of pastoral conventions, but there is no evidence that the use of these conventions here is anything but sincere. Johnson not only employs the commonplaces of pastoral diction but also follows tradition by contrasting the simple joys and virtue of country life to the corruptness of the city. Convention is, as it were, piled on convention: the pastoral vision has been used as a foil by satirists dating back at least to Horace.

The pastoral scene associated with Elizabeth appears twice more in London. Late in the poem Thales prefaces his account of the dangers that lurk on every London street with a description of the safety of the country. Thales recommends rural life to his friend and recites the activities and pleasures of a day:

> There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flowr's
> Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs;
> . . . . . .
> There ev'ry bush with nature's musick rings,
> There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings.
> (ll. 216-221)

One cannot help but be reminded again of Johnson's laughter directed at Savage for imagining that among the "scenes of flowery felicity" the "melody of a nightingale . . . was to be heard from every bramble."[21] Only twenty lines after the mention of Elizabeth, Thales sketches another Arcadian landscape that would have warmed the heart of Savage:

> Grant me, kind heaven, to find some happier place,
> Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;

> Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
> Some peaceful vale with nature's paintings gay.
> (ll. 43-46)

Insofar as the poem attacks London, the moral norm is represented in these rural scenes. City and country are sharply contrasted, with only vice on one side and only virtue on the other. These pastoral descriptions are, in a sense, set apart; in both instances Thales first extols the merits of rural life and then goes on to expose the faults of the city. One of the subtlest effects achieved in London occurs, however, when city crimes are pictured in images that echo the country. The peaceful labour of tending one's garden finds its city equivalent in the work of those villains who "farm a lottery" (l. 58), and while country bushes resound with the melody of nightingales, in London ". . . warbling eunuchs fill a licens'd stage" (l. 59). Thales typically associates himself with rural virtue, contrasting the honesty of his own "rustick tongue" (l. 79) with the glib deceitfulness of city-dwellers, who with ". . . subtler art, / Can sap the principles, or taint the heart" (ll. 75-76).

Just as Elizabeth provides the initial stimulus for these pastoral images, so too does the contemplation of her reign result in another, different, cluster of images. In a reconstruction of the Elizabethan age no less idealized than the preceding pastoral vision, the narrator and Thales

> . . . call Britannia's glories back to view;
> Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
> The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain.
> (ll. 26-28)

The might of Elizabeth's armada serves as a foil to the current state of England's army, which is punningly alluded to as a "standing jest" (1. 30); and the specific reference to Spain terminates in an attack on those who, for their pensions, ". . . plead for pirates in the face of day" (1. 54). Lest the point be missed, Johnson states in a footnote that "The invasions of the Spaniards were defended in the houses of Parliament."

It is, however, the allusion to Elizabethan commerce that provides the point of reference for the dominant imagery in this section. Although Thales at first seems to flail about indiscriminately, a single theme does emerge from the profusion of targets: while those who are productive and honest are driven to poverty, those who are willing to betray their country and barter in vice grow wealthy. In short, the villains here are those who engage in unwholesome commerce. The reference to commerce in the time of Elizabeth evokes scenes of intrepid merchant-sailors opening new trade routes, and returning from exotic lands with rich cargoes. In contrast, the present age presents a spectacle of corrupt trade. London is a city "devote to vice and gain" (1. 37), and her merchants deal in debased goods. Allusions to buying and selling abound in this section and combine to form a picture of a wicked market-place. For pay England's statesmen "Explain their country's dear-bought rights away" (1. 53). With wealth, and for it, panderers ". . . bribe a virgin's innocence away" (1. 78). Private and public life alike are infested with agents who trade in corruption, and it is "To such, a groaning nation's spoils are given" (1. 65). The images of buying and

selling here reach back to give a second, ironic meaning to the pastoral scene in which Elizabeth is recalled. The pastoral language remains sincere insofar as it is associated with Elizabeth, but, in retrospect, it also has an ironic significance. Christopher Ricks points out that "'Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood,' not simply because this is a pastoral moment of 'transient calm,' but because silver grimly refuses to stay put as just a pastoral word--in London 'smiles are sold.'"[22] Even friendship is a commodity for exchange--it is a payment for silence:

> For what but social guilt the friend endears?
> Who shares Orgilio's crimes, his fortune shares.
> (ll. 83-84)

Thales, of course, will not soil himself in such business, which, as he complains, accounts for his present circumstances:

> But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
> Who start at theft, and blush at perjury?
> (ll. 67-68)

The narrator shares Thales' honesty and it is this quality, praised by Thales, that binds the two in friendship:

> But thou, should tempting villainy present
> All Marlb'rough hoarded, or all Villiers spent,
> Turn from the glitt'ring bribe thy scornful eye,
> Nor sell for gold, what gold could never buy.
> (ll. 85-88)

This passage, which immediately follows the mention of Orgilio's guilty compacts, is clearly intended as a contrasting example of friendship

based on shared virtue. In these lines, also, the reference to Marlborough and Villiers illustrates the pointlessness of bartering honesty for wealth, which itself is either heaped unused in a closet, or scattered to the winds.

The second part of Thales' monologue (ll. 91-157) concentrates more narrowly on a single target: the transformation of London into a "French metropolis" (l. 98). As a background to this section, Thales recalls Edward III and Henry V, who are remembered for their triumphs over the French. Now, however, "the gull'd conqueror" willingly "receives the chain" (l. 21), as Londoners ape the manners of their traditional enemy. In describing England's decline from master to mimic of France, Thales accentuates the soldierly personalities of Edward and Henry. He emphasizes "Henry's victories" (l. 120), and imagines Edward viewing the present scene from his seat in "The land of heroes and of saints . . . " (l. 100). These monarchs are, above all, warrior kings, and they embody the masculine virtues of a military age. The men of the present age are, in contrast, servile fops who conquer with, and are defeated by, flattery. The history of England's decline is summed up in Thales' invocation to Edward: "Behold the warrior dwindled to a beau" (l. 104).

As Thales continues his attack on the fawning invaders and their English imitators he divides his attention unequally. While the English are scorned for welcoming their models of degeneracy, the French themselves bear the brunt of his abuse. The English, in fact, though they

would willingly adopt French manners, are not very successful:

> These arts in vain our rugged natives try,
> Strain out with fault'ring diffidence a lye,
> And get a kick for aukward flattery.
> (ll. 129-31)

Unlike the English who are incompetent, though eager, students of the art, the French are natural sycophants:

> Studious to please, and ready to submit,
> The supple Gaul was born a parasite.
> (ll. 123-24)

Repeatedly Thales refashions the taunt: the French are "Practis'd their master's notions to embrace" (l. 136); they are "Slaves that with serious impudence beguile, / And lye without a blush, without a smile" (ll. 146-47); no task is too low for them, "They sing, they dance, clean shoes, or cure a clap" (l. 114); and whatever the command, they are certain to obey: "And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes" (l. 116).

All of this helps to create a general impression of the character of the French, but at the same time there is an element of vagueness in the descriptions. We see actions but there are no faces behind the actions. It would not be accurate to say that there is an absence of details, but these details somehow fail to produce the definite outlines of an individual that we can see. What is missing is the individualized figure who represents the general type. It has been shown that Johnson's periodical writings are full of such characters, and we shall shortly find them again in The Vanity of Human Wishes. In London, however,

what illustrative detail there is, is predicated of all Frenchmen. There is no single, moving, speaking figure on which we can focus. Instead we must struggle to envision a rather indistinct "they": "Their air, their dress, their politicks . . . " (l. 110); "They sing, they dance . . . " (l. 114); "Well may they venture on the mimick's art" (l. 134); "Practis'd their master's notions to embrace" (l. 136); "They first invade your table . . . " (l. 153). How different this is from The Vanity of Human Wishes is apparent when it is remembered how almost every species of folly dealt with in that poem is brought to life in figures such as Wolsey, Charles, and Xerxes.

While no individuals appear in this section of London (indeed, apart from Thales and Orgilio there are few elsewhere) on which we can fix our attention, there is a conventional kind of concreteness in some of the illustrative imagery. The French are said, for example, to have migrated to London because they ". . . like a gibbet better than a wheel" (l. 108). Even more vividly they are observed

> . . . as their patron hints the cold or heat,
> To shake in dog-days, in December sweat.
> (ll. 142-43)

There is nothing particularly remarkable about these lines, and in fact they stand out only because of the general absence of pictorial vividness in the poem. At times the satire consists only of generalized invective: the French are "Obsequious, artful, voluble and gay" (l. 111); and in another instance abstraction and generality are mixed equally;

> Still to his int'rest true, where'er he goes,
> Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;
> In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,
> From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.
> (ll. 125-28)

It is dangerous to dwell too long, or argue too insistently, on the absence of concreteness in Johnson's poetry, for often the imagery lies beneath the surface of the lines and is sometimes difficult to perceive. In the description of Frenchmen shivering and perspiring the picture is given directly; but in the line ridiculing English beaux, "Sense, freedom, piety, refined away" (l. 105), there is both a surface meaning, and what might be called a submerged image. The surface meaning here is that beaux are too elegant to be wise or pious. It is clear, however, that the line also draws upon the original meaning of "refine": "To purify or separate (metals) from dross, alloy, or other extraneous matter." This second meaning of "refine" not only produces a far more concrete image, but also extends the irony, since in this instance, what is valuable is discarded, while the dross is retained.

Other examples of this same kind of imagery may be found in this section of <u>London</u>. There is, for instance, a submerged image in the following passage:

> For arts like these preferr'd, admir'd, caress'd,
> They first invade your table, then your breast;
> Explore your secrets with insidious art,
> Watch the weak hour, and ransack all the heart.
> (ll. 152-55)

In these lines the French are depicted as housebreakers who ingratiate themselves with their victims in order to learn their habits and re-

connoitre the lay of their property. Again the purpose of the image is more than simply to present a picture to the mind. There is an intensification of the contempt heaped upon the French, as they are not only overtly accused of treachery, but also subliminally depicted as thieves.

One final example is interesting, not so much because the image is submerged, but because one image evaporates, as it were, to be replaced by a related image. As he begins his attack on the French, Thales states that London,

> The common shore of Paris and of Rome;
> With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
> Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
> (ll. 94-96)

The first line seems to describe the Thames simply as an anchorage for French and Italian immigrants. The verb "sucks," however, implies that these immigrants travel not by sail but rather are dragged in by the tide. What the verb does, in effect, is to begin a process of metamorphosis that is completed by the description of what is sucked in, ". . . the dregs of each corrupted state." At the conclusion the original suggestion of an anchorage has devolved into a second, far more unsavory, image. Johnson defines shore as: "1 The coast of the sea. 2 The bank of a river . . . . 3 A drain; properly sewer." There is nothing original in the identification of the Thames with a sewer. Peter Green translates the corresponding passage in Juvenal as ". . . Syrian/Orontes has poured its sewerage into our native Tiber," and the Yale editors of <u>London</u> point out that "Oldham's translation has: 'the

common shore, / Where France does all her filth and ordure pour.'"[23] What makes this passage distinctively Johnson's is that the sewer image is slightly delayed, producing an effect similar to that of irony. Thales at first seems to be describing an anchorage; the second picture emerges more subtly, and is more effective for coming as a surprise.

I have dwelled at length on these passages not only because they are interesting in themselves as examples of often undetected concreteness, but also because they provide embryonic examples of the kind of imagery that pervades Johnson's mature poetry, and especially The Vanity of Human Wishes. At the same time there is much else in London that suggests more conventional artifice, such as the conspicuousness of chiastically structured couplets:

> Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay,
> And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
> (ll. 15-16)

or the equal prevalence of rigidly parallel constructions:

> Here falling houses thunder on your head,
> And here a female atheist talks you dead.
> (ll. 17-18)

There is, of course, a purpose to such artifice. In the first couplet structure and image make equals of the street thief and lawyer, while in the second, as Rachel Trickett notes, an "unsuspected resemblance" is found "between a physical danger and a social menace."[24] There seems, however, less point to the zeugma of

> . . . now a rabble rages, now a fire. (l. 14)

which intensifies the fury of the mob, but lacks the obvious irony of Pope's reference to Anna, who,

> Dost sometimes Counsel take--and sometimes Tea.
> (III, 8).[25]

This sort of artifice is not characteristically Johnsonian. This is not to say that balanced structures and rhetorical figures are shunned in The Vanity of Human Wishes, but merely that such elements call less attention to themselves, or rather serve a more organic function in the later poem. In the Vanity parallelisms and other deliberate structural patterns suggest impassioned, but controlled, declamation; in London, on the other hand, such elements seem to be poetic affectations. A more distinctively Johnsonian technique found in London and the Vanity is the way in which he revivifies the latent metaphorical energy in language and imparts concreteness to passages that at first seem largely abstract. It is this aspect of Johnson's mature style that is anticipated in London. That it is found only occasionally, and is less finely developed as a technique, is proof once again of the importance of considering the chronology of Johnson's writings. While Johnson's views may have changed there is no disputing that his art evolved.

After venting his loathing of the French, Thales returns once again to the complaint that wealth, invariably the reward of immorality, is worshipped; while poverty, the curse of virtue, is held in contempt:

> The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak,

> Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;
> With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,
> And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
> (ll. 162-65)

As in the preceding section there is no attempt to individualize the figures that appear here. "Silken," a stock epithet for courtiers, indicates scorn but does not impart a distinct personality; and although the description of the "sober trader" labouring "for a joke" is full of verbal wit, the shopkeeper himself remains faceless. There is in the second couplet, however, something like the submerged imagery just considered. The preening self-absorption of the fops who shape and reshape their taunts suggests the same narcissistic delight that they undoubtedly take in turning before a mirror as they shape and reshape their appearance.

It is not pictorial vividness, however, but conciseness that characterizes this section's, and the poem's, most memorable line:

> SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPRESS'D (l. 177)

Here we find once again a quality that is typical of Johnson's later writing. Lord Macaulay notwithstanding, both Johnson's poetry and his prose are marked by the volume of meaning that is compacted within a sentence or line. Whoever tries to paraphrase Johnson soon learns how impossible it is to express his ideas in fewer words than the original. This particular line, as John Butt points out, "is the distillation of a line and a half in Juvenal." Butt compares Oldham's and Dryden's treatment of the same passage, both of whom, as he argues, "come off

poorly":

> 'Tis hard for any man to rise, that feels
> His virtue clogg'd with poverty at heels;
> [Oldham]

> Rarely they rise by Virtues aid, who lie
> Plung'd in the depth of helpless Poverty.
> [Dryden][26]

Since this section of the poem develops an earlier theme it is not surprising that there is a recurrence also of mercantile imagery:

> But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
> Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold;
> Where won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
> The groom retails the favours of his lord.
> (ll. 178-81)

Many of Johnson's critics seem to have been misled by the profusion of images of, and references to, money and rewards in London. They feel that Thales is a hypocrite who attacks venality only because he has been denied his share of the city's wealth. D.V. Boyd, for example, argues that Thales' "sole concern . . . is not with social evil, but with his personal failure. His 'Hope' and 'distress' . . . are for the rewards of the city and his inability to gain them."[27] William Vesterman takes up this argument. Referring to "SLOW RISES WORTH . . . " Vesterman states that "the only rising it [worth] can do is in terms of money which it affects to despise." Vesterman then states that "'Worth' strains toward an economic meaning and unsettles our sense of the meaning of the line." There is much to contend with here. First, as Vesterman recognizes, if "worth" is taken in its economic sense "the

line would be at best tautological."[28] Surely, then, worth is synonymous with virtue, merit, and ability, the very terms which Vesterman feels are avoided precisely because Thales' concern is monetary. In fact "worth" is an excellent word in this passage because of its ironic potential. Line 177 develops what is very close to a paradox: things of real worth (virtue and ability) are counted as valueless if their possessor happens to be poor. Within the context of the entire passage (ll. 177-81) these things of real value contrast with the goods that are more profitable ("looks," "smiles," "the favours of [a] lord"). Certainly worth "strains toward an economic meaning" and that meaning is that virtue and talent are worthless commodities on London's exchange.

Vesterman's other assertion, that worth can only rise by being rewarded "in terms of money," is oversimple. Virtue and ability are properly rewarded by being recognized and honoured as well as by being remunerated. Admittedly Thales emphasizes the poverty to which he has been driven, but this does not conflict with his moral concern. In a just society true worth would rise (as much in esteem as in wealth) while wealth unaccompanied by virtue or merit would languish in obscurity. What Boyd and Vesterman seem to overlook is that money itself is not the target, but rather that the love of it has supplanted all other values. Only wealth is reverenced, and for it men are willing to trade freedom and honour. Finally, Boyd is particularly mistaken in arguing that Thales' only concern is with the "rewards of the city." The entire point of Thales' criticism is that there are many things that are of more value (of more worth) than money. Freedom and honour are,

for him, beyond price. If Boyd were correct, Thales would simply adopt the manners of those around him and grow rich. That he refuses to do so is proof of his own moral stature, and that he condemns the values of his age is evidence of his moral concern.

To this point Thales' speech has taken the form of a reflective argument supported with examples recalled from past experience. But as he goes on to illustrate the obeisance commanded by wealth, he turns dramatist, and presents a scene that has the immediacy of an event taking place in the present:

> But hark! Th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
> Roll thro' the streets, and thunder to the skies;
> Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and pow'r,
> Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r,
> Aghast you start, and scarce with aking sight
> Sustain th' approaching fire's tremendous light;
> Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,
> And leave your little all to flames a prey.
> (ll. 182-89)

It will be remembered that the zeugma in line 14 ("And now a rabble rages, now a fire") was described as "seemingly" pointless. In fact the line is ironic, but the irony is dramatic. In this passage the immediate danger seems to be that of the maddened crowd. It is not revealed until the sixth line that the raging mob is fleeing a fire, and even then one senses that the greatest danger is that of being trampled underfoot. What seems, then, in line 14, simply a play on words is made literal here as the undefined "you" runs first from the mob, and then from the fire.

The sense of urgency established in these lines soon dissipates,

however, as Thales goes on to reflect on the fate of the poor, who losing all to the fire become the objects of neglect and scorn; while the wealthy Orgilio, who is burned out of a palace, soon has his losses more than repaired. Indeed, so generous are his benefactors that,

> Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,
> And hopes from angry heav'n another fire.
> (ll. 208-9)

There is a note of bitter despair in the irony of this couplet, for if heaven is angry it is with men like Orgilio, and yet he is able to frustrate even God's wrath and benefit from what should be his punishment.

This section of the poem is followed by one of the pastoral interludes discussed earlier. In this instance the pastoral lines (ll. 210-23) form a bridge between the satire which precedes and that which follows. In contrast to Orgilio's "golden pile," Thales describes the inexpensive luxury of country life where an "elegant retreat" (l. 212) may be had "For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand" (l. 215). Another virtue of rural life is its safety:

> On all thy hours security shall smile,
> And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.
> (ll. 222-23)

Here the lines anticipate the description that follows of the violence of London's streets. There is, it seems, no escape from London's ruffians: ". . . sign your will before you sup from home" (l. 225)

warns Thales, for you are likely to be murdered by a newly commissioned officer "Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man" (l. 227), or by some "frolick drunkard" who will stab you "for a jest" (ll. 228-29). Even to stay at home is no insurance of safety. The housebreaker ". . . bursts the faithless bar" (l. 239), "And leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast" (l. 241). Again, as in the previous section, the wealthy are immune from danger. London's bullies

> Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
> Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
> And shun the shining train, and golden coach.
> (ll. 333-35)

If London's criminals fear wealth and power, Thales does not. Members of parliament are boldly accused of being no better than common thieves, though they put a different name to their robbery:

> Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
> With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
> Propose your schemes, ye Senatorian band,
> Whose Ways and Means support the sinking land;
> Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
> To rig another convoy for the k--g.
> (ll. 242-47)

The ease of the transition from the description of street criminals to parliament, and then to the king, implies how little the difference is between them. All are thieves, high and low. The verbal nearness of the "schemes" of the "Senatorian band" to the plots of a gang of robbers is intensified by the transparent sarcasm of Johnson's footnote on "Ways and Means": "A cant term in the House of Commons for methods of raising money." In other words a euphemism for theft.

The attack does not end here, however. Line 243 not only yokes together the "gallows and the fleet," but also incriminates the king. It is for his convoy that parliament prosecutes its "schemes," making him, as it were, a receiver of stolen goods. His victims, of course, are the citizens of England. Indeed the land sinks to float his ships. Just as the logic of this passage condemns the king, so also is he degraded by an implied comparison. The reference to the fleet recalls the allusion to Elizabeth's navy: "The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain" (l. 28). The present navy, however, is outfitted only to carry the king to his Hanoverian mistress. Even nature is corrupted by this monarch. Spring, the eternal season of pastorals, is made "tempting" by the King's lechery, and the fields blossom not with flowers, but with hemp. The compression of meaning typical of Johnson is well evidenced by the associations drawn upon here. Spring brings to mind the rebirth of life and, conventionally, innocent love. But the reference to hemp, which suggests both the hangman's rope and the King's amorous journey, transforms Spring into a season of death and guilt.

I referred in the previous chapter to the satiric vision. What this term is intended to denote is an all-encompassing, pessimistic view of man and society. Such a vision results in almost indiscriminate condemnation, since wherever the satirist turns his gaze he sees corruption. Individuals and institutions, those who lead and those who follow, are equally tainted. Only the satirist and, at most, a small

group of his friends are free of guilt, and at times (as in the Satyricon) not even these vestiges of virtue survive. Obviously, not every satire reflects a satiric vision. Horace may write satires, but his view of civilization is, on the whole, more sanguine than morbid. The fools that appear in his verses are on the outside; they are the exception rather than the norm. It should also hardly be necessary to caution against equating this vision with the actual attitude of the author. Whether a writer really believes that life is tragic or comic is beside the point. What is important is that he chooses to represent it as such. The tone of anger, the attitude of loathing, the stance of total rejection, are, then, simply parts of the imaginative structure of certain kinds of satire.

The satiric vision is present in only two of Johnson's works other than London. Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication, are, however, political satires of more limited scope; only a part of society is attacked, albeit that part that wields power. Nevertheless, the fault is isolated, and may be cured merely by changing governments. In London, on the other hand, the decay pervades all levels, and has rotted away all elements, of society. Fools and villains appear everywhere, and define the norm, while virtue is "rebellious" (l. 63). Evidence of Thales' isolation may be inferred from the audience addressed. Marmor Norfolciense and the Vindication are directed at a general audience that is expected to see through the ironic narrators, and that is presumed to share the moral views of the satirist. In London, Thales speaks directly to the narrator who, it seems, may be the only

other honest man of his time.

II

If London is an expression of the satiric vision, The Vanity of Human Wishes, many have argued, is hardly a satire at all. Ian Jack set the prevailing direction of later criticism when he described the poem (borrowing Dryden's phrase) as "'Tragical Satire.'"[29] Since Jack's essay it has been common to emphasize the supposed tragical features of the poem and sometimes to deny altogether any satirical intent. John Hardy, for example, calls the work "a great tragic poem"; Doris Powers speaks of "the tragic despair of Dr. Johnson's Juvenalian imitation"; Henry Gifford states that "It is the tragic sense of life that informs Johnson's poem"; Mary Lascelles argues that "The awe and pity with which Johnson contemplates the spectacle of human unfulfillment makes of The Vanity of Human Wishes a great tragic poem." Douglas Grant joins in the chorus: "Johnson's profound sense of the tragedy of the human predicament prevents The Vanity of Human Wishes from being classed properly as a satire." Walter Jackson Bate, as might be expected, agrees wholeheartedly. The poem in his words "articulates a vision more essentially tragic than comic."[30] Unfortunately, few of these critics define what they mean by tragic. It would seem, however, that the term is widely applied and is meant to define the characters within the poem, to indicate the lesson that is supposedly taught of the futility of all hope and fear, and to suggest Johnson's supposed pessimistic view of existence. It is repeatedly argued that the figures

in the poem (Wolsey, Charles XII, the scholar, and others) are in many ways admirable, sometimes awe-inspiring, and always pitiable. Further, it is claimed that they are often the victims of a fate against which they are helpless; and even when their fall is the result of a flaw in their own character (usually pride) there is still something noble in that flaw. What is argued, then, is that the poem presents a despairing view of human existence, and that rather than selectively attacking folly Johnson expresses sympathy for human suffering.

An assumption shared by many critics, and particularly apparent in Bate's comment, is that vice and folly must be made to appear ridiculous for a work to be satiric; or, in other words, that the satirist must make us laugh. The absence of laughter in The Vanity of Human Wishes led T.S. Eliot, in 1944, to

> doubt, whether Johnson was the right man for satire. Johnson was a moralist, and he lacked a certain divine levity which makes sparkle the lines of the two great English verse satirists [Dryden and Pope].[31]

Strangely enough, in an earlier essay (1930) Eliot had argued that both of Johnson's imitations

> are purer satire than anything of Dryden or Pope, nearer in spirit to the Latin. For the satirist is in theory a stern moralist castigating the vices of his time or place; and Johnson has a better claim to this seriousness than either Pope or Dryden.[32]

Eliot does not, in this earlier statement, exclude laughter from the satirist's arsenal, but at the same time the defining characteristic of

a satirist is seen to be his moral seriousness, not whether he makes us laugh. Clearly more than "moral seriousness" is required to make a work satiric, but it may well be a more necessary quality than "divine levity." In any work which attacks vice or folly there is at least an assumption of moral intent.

If there is anything in Eliot's earlier view that might be questioned it is his failure to differentiate between London and The Vanity of Human Wishes. While Johnson does attack "the vices of his time or place" in London, the targets in The Vanity of Human Wishes are in no sense topical. The faults attacked are, instead, universal failings. This is only one of many differences between the poems. Eliot's main argument is well-taken, folly is castigated in both poems, but in ways so different that the only thing that the works appear to have in common is that they are both Imitations of Juvenal. The tone in The Vanity of Human Wishes has none of the acerbity found in London, though, as it will be argued, it is hardly accurate to describe the work as tragic. The difference in tone is attributable, to some extent, to differences in the narrators. While Thales' saeva indignatio makes him an obvious type of angry satirist, the narrator in The Vanity of Human Wishes is far more in control of his emotions. This, in turn, is reflected in the methods of attack. In London moral censure is often indicated through direct invective. In The Vanity of Human Wishes moral faults are dramatized in illustrative figures, and the reader, rather than being told what to feel, has a greater responsibility for forming the appropriate moral attitude. Perhaps the major reason for the general failure

to see that faults are indeed attacked in The Vanity of Human Wishes lies in the subtlety of much of the poem's imagery; it is frequently through submerged images that moral censure is revealed, and many of these images have passed undetected. There is much else that separates the two poems. The Vanity of Human Wishes is a more closely organized work and follows more precisely the conventional development of a formal verse satire as outlined by Mary Claire Randolph. Most importantly the poems are expressions of very different visions. The view in London is totally and unremittingly satiric. In The Vanity of Human Wishes the satiric vision gives way ultimately to a more hopeful view of existence. As I have argued, however, a stance of extreme pessimism is a feature of some, but not of all, satires. It is in no sense the single quality that defines a work as satiric. By examining the features that have been mentioned it will be possible to show not only the ways in which The Vanity of Human Wishes differs from London, but also to establish that the work is a satire, even though its final vision is other than satiric.

The parody of the opening lines of The Vanity of Human Wishes by Tennyson following Coleridge is no longer taken as serious criticism: "Let observation, with extended observation, observe extensively."[33] Frederick Hilles, indeed, uses these lines to make an important point about the narrative perspective in Johnson's poem. Johnson's lines, he argues, establish

> at the outset a point of view. The reader, endowed by the poet with extraordinary farsightedness, looks eastward all the way to China, where the sun rises. As his gaze follows the path of the sun, he discovers in the remote West, where the sun sets, Peru. . . . Between the two countries lies the inhabited globe. But if we are to observe men so widely separated we must be above the world, looking down. . . . And what happens when we look down on the world from high altitudes? Even the greatest of men dwindle. We have a new perspective on what we observe; and farsightedness has long been equated with good judgement.[34]

How different this is from London is immediately apparent. Thales is totally immersed in the satiric scene that he describes. He writes from within the bustle, or rather chaos, of activity as one who has been a victim of the society that he criticizes. The narrator of The Vanity of Human Wishes, on the other hand, takes up a vantage point far removed from the satiric scene, where he is able to look about, as Mary Lascelles puts it, "unconfined by bounds of space or time."[35] This distancing of the narrator produces a sense of objectivity that is maintained even when he focuses more narrowly on specific targets and figures. When, for example, Wolsey is held up to view there is no evidence of personal rancour in the portrait. One imagines instead that in searching for an example of a manifestation of a particular folly Johnson recalled Wolsey as a close parallel for Juvenal's Sejanus and used him to illustrate the consequences of one kind of misdirected desire.

The freedom with which he moves about in space and time to select examples of the folly that he satirizes increases the sense of the narrator's removal from actual involvement in the satiric scene. Wolsey, Charles, and Xerxes are the major figures brought into view;

and Alexander, Galileo, Lydiat, Laud, Villiers, Harley, Wentworth, Swift, and Marlborough are among those who are mentioned more briefly (though not all are dealt with satirically). Thales, in contrast, is limited to reporting what he sees about him, the vices of his own age and, ostensibly, of a single city. And he does report. There is a strong sense throughout London that he has seen each of the abuses and dangers that he describes, that he has turned into a sidestreet to avoid a drunken bully, that he has observed French dandies and their English mimics bowing and scraping to one another. There is an equally strong sense that the narrator of The Vanity of Human Wishes has observed the lives of men, but much more widely. He has observed, it seems, not so much a single society, as mankind through all time. As F.R. Leavis puts it, "it is as if Johnson were bringing to bear on his verse an irresistible weight of experience--of representative human experience."[36] Because the narrator's view is more extensive, he is unconcerned with the changing fashions or local colourings of vice and folly. Whereas Thales attacks the influence of French manners on English society or exposes a particular government, the narrator of The Vanity of Human Wishes deals with timeless human faults. All of history is surveyed to find examples of the folly of placing trust in wealth, power, fame, military glory, long life, and beauty. The resulting picture is not that of a particular society. What emerges instead is a view of the manner in which man has perpetually courted misery.

Because he is so much the observer, and because he presents so little of himself, it is difficult to discuss the personality of the

speaker in The Vanity of Human Wishes. His relative self-effacement can be seen more clearly when contrasted to the involvement of Thales. The details given of Thales' life, together with his frequent descriptions of his own virtues, make him the most prominent figure in London. At times, in fact, he interferes with, or comes between, the reader and the satiric targets. The French, for example, are presented from the point of view of a man so hostile that he verges on loss of control, as he admits: "Forgive my transports on a theme like this" (l. 97). Because he is so angry Thales seems less than reliable, and even if his honesty is accepted, what remains foremost is his anger. That is, the reader first perceives Thales' anger, and then moves to a contemplation of the objects of his rage. Rarely does Thales step back and let his descriptions speak for themselves; and often the satire consists only of the kind of invective that draws attention primarily to the speaker. The tone in The Vanity of Human Wishes, on the other hand, attaches more to the various portraits and results hardly at all in the development of a narrative personality. That is, when Xerxes is described one senses that the description is based on history. The scorn that his portrait inspires is not an attitude that the narrator imposes upon Xerxes and asks the reader to share, but rather is inspired by the facts of Xerxes' life. This is not to say that the narrator never indicates his feelings. It can, however, certainly be said that the satire is less dependent on direct expression of censure. In fact, the speaker is so removed that for long stretches the poem seems almost written from a third person point of view. And even when the narrator

does emerge it is in the form of the first person plural pronoun. All of this suggests the degree to which the narrator maintains the distance discovered by Hilles in the opening lines of the poem. As a result of this distancing it is better to talk simply about the tone in most of the passages, rather than to attempt to create a personality to account for the tone.

In opposition to this position, and much else that has just been said, Howard Weinbrot argues that far from being a distanced observer, or simply a narrative voice, Johnson immerses himself in the satiric scene and offers himself up as one of the targets: "Johnson's tone throughout is one of inclusion in universal folly, for he refers to man, fate, destiny, and the human condition."[37] It would almost seem from this that Weinbrot believes that the human condition condemns man to live in ignorance, that he is fated to folly, and thus no man is exempt. The only mention of "destiny" in the poem is in reference to Charles, and his is a destiny that he foolishly courts. Describing the life of a scholar Johnson indeed refers to the "doom of man" but this doom defeats only those who expect from the world what the world is unwilling to give. Fate may ". . . wing . . . with every wish the afflictive dart," but as the poem later makes clear, this is true only of those wishes that are misguided in the first place. The most significant reference to man and fate occurs in the conclusion of the poem where it is asked:

> Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
> Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
> (ll. 345-46)

The question is quickly answered in the negative, thus excluding some men (including, presumably, the speaker) from a fate which man is not helpless to avoid. Weinbrot seems to assume that whenever a charge is laid against man, or the fate of man is mentioned, no man can escape. The term is, in fact, general, but not all-inclusive. When Democritus's scorn is said to be "Renew'd at every glance on humankind" (l. 70), at least one man is spared that scorn: Democritus himself. There is no reason, then, to believe the narrator includes himself in the attack simply because he refers to man.

Weinbrot then argues that the narrator's

> castigation includes pity and understanding, and so, when the opportunity arises, he suggests that he shares man's weakness. When describing the reaction to a statesman out of office, he says: "Now no more <u>we</u> trace in ev'ry line / Heroic worth, benevolence divine" (ll. 87-88).[38]

There is no doubt at all that Johnson recognized (and elsewhere exaggerated) his own human failings. This awareness does not, however, emerge as strongly as Weinbrot suggests as a feature of the narrator's personality. The narrator does not set himself up as a type of virtue, but neither does he degrade himself as a figure of scorn. As I have argued, he observes and, less frequently, comments. There is no denying that the "we" in the lines quoted by Weinbrot does seem to indicate inclusion, but, as in the reference to man, culpability is not necessarily implied. One might, for example, say "we have acted badly" in reference to the activities of one's country, and yet have opposed those activities. It is, in any case, debatable how much importance

should be attached to the speaker's implied self-inclusion in lines 87-88. Surely this is not the only opportunity that he has had to admit his culpability. When attacking the irresponsibility of Britain's voters he might as easily have said "our," rather than, "Their wish is full to riot and to rail" (l. 98).

The pity that Weinbrot insists is so much a part of the narrator's personality exists, but it is not extended to the targets of his satire, nor does it constitute an admission of guilt. There is certainly little pity evident in the approval of Democritus's censure:

> How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,
> Search every state, and canvass ev'ry pray'r.
> (ll. 71-72)

And there is no compassion for the "hireling ruffian" or "hireling judge" who break and distort the law (ll. 26-27). Admittedly, it is in the portraits of Wolsey, Charles XII, the virtuous old man, and the scholar, that Weinbrot finds the narrator's pity most evident. There is pity to find, but as we shall see the scholar and old man can be presented with sympathy because neither is the target of satire. Wolsey and Charles are a different matter. Their actions are severely reprobated and there is no evidence that the narrator commiserates with either man--or that their lives are viewed as tragic. As Donald Greene argues:

> for critics to maunder on about Johnson's "tragic view of life" and "the great epic wind of sadness blowing through" the poem is utterly beside the point: Wolsey and Charles XII did not have to pursue the mistaken ends they did, nor need one

imitate them.[39]

If Wolsey and Charles are free agents, as Greene suggests, there is no reason to pity them. And when we come to examine their portraits more closely we shall discover that no pity is wasted on them.

The argument that Johnson more often pities than attacks the figures in the Vanity, and that his pity and scorn are directed equally at himself, is closely tied to a belief in the inclusiveness of the poem's target. D.V. Boyd, for example, argues that there is in the poem no "indication of a discriminating nemesis at work, for all are fools."[40] A recurring feature of "tragic" interpretations of the Vanity is the failure to distinguish between the folly of man, for which man is responsible, and the conditions of existence for which man is not responsible. Boyd seems to suggest that life itself is the target: "All is vanity, says Ecclesiastes, and Johnson preserves the full universality of that vision." Patrick O'Flaherty expresses the same view: "the 'philosophy' contained in . . . [the Vanity] is nothing if not simple and dismal. Its basic contention is that man by nature is condemned to indulge in hopes which will never be satisfied."[41] If there is a target, then, it must be the insufficiency of life to satisfy man's desires, or so these critics would seem to argue.

Donald Greene has little patience with these "tragic" interpretations. They are the result, he suggests, of failing to read even the poem's title correctly:

> Critics have called the poem gloomy and pessimistic and have talked about Johnson's Stoicism

> in it (or his "Christian Stoicism," unaware that this is a contradiction in terms). Noting, what is perfectly true, that a great part of the poem is devoted to proving the inability of "human" — materialistic — wishes to guarantee happiness, they have assumed that the subject of the poem is "the vanity of human 'life'"; some have even summed up Johnson's attitude with this very phrase.

As Greene points out, it is a clear misreading of the poem to substitute "life" for "wishes." And, as he also suggests, not all wishes are attacked. What the poem teaches instead

> is that material, self-seeking values — merely "human" wishes — are an unsatisfactory basis on which to build a life; for only the non-material, un-self-seeking values result in enduring happiness.[42]

If Greene is correct there is nothing at all "dismal" in the philosophy of The Vanity of Human Wishes. The poem does not say that "all is vanity." The actions of man, and not the futility of life, are exposed, and not the actions of all men, but only the folly of those who pursue false goods. Implicit also in the argument that the Vanity attacks, or, in Ian Jack's phrase, "diminish[es] . . . human life," is the assumption that wealth, power, fame, and beauty are the only goods available to man, and that once these are shown to be transitory and conducive only to unhappiness then there is nothing left to strive for.[43] But, as Greene points out, there are other values which are more substantial and make nonsense of the view that the poem is a despairing attack, or lament.

The distinction between the false desires that lead to ruin and

the enduring goods that produce lasting happiness is clearly established in the divisions of the poem. The two parts of this division conform perfectly to what Mary Claire Randolph describes as the bi-partite structure of formal verse satire:

> some specific vice or folly, selected for attack . . . [is] turned about on all its sides in Part A, . . . its opposing virtue . . . [is] recommended in Part B.

As Randolph also notes, the B part of a formal verse satire is always much shorter, and in some instances "the admonition to virtue . . . is only implied in Part B."[44] London is an example where the B part exists only by implication. It might even be argued that there is no "invocation to virtue" in London. A moral norm is present in the figure of Thales, and in the monarchs that he recalls, but the world he describes is so corrupt that there would seem to be no one left to emulate these representatives of virtue. Compared to London, The Vanity of Human Wishes is positively optimistic. The B part of the Vanity is set apart from Part A, or the part of the poem which forms the attack, and, though it consists of only the final 26 lines, it clearly establishes an alternative to the folly that is exposed in Part A. Further, the hope that it offers is extended to all men. Nothing could be more wrong than O'Flaherty's assertion that the poem's "basic contention is that man by nature is condemned to indulge in hopes which will never be satisfied." The essential point made in the conclusion is that man is free to guide his will, and it is the purpose of those lines to indicate those wishes that are not vain--that will

not end in frustration.

Before arguing that the conclusion offers hope, it is first necessary to establish that Part A is indeed satiric. Most of the critics who maintain that the poem expresses sorrow and pity focus on two or three of the portraits and ignore everything else. Actually Part A consists of eight distinct sections, and attacks six separate kinds of wishes, all of which are misguided: in addition to the introduction (ll. 1-20) and invocation of Democritus (ll. 49-72), Part A exposes the folly of desiring wealth (ll. 21-48), power (ll. 73-134), fame (ll. 135-174), military glory (ll. 175-254), length of life (ll. 255-318), and beauty (ll. 319-342).

Once attention is directed beyond the first two lines of the introduction, The Vanity of Human Wishes gives every indication that what is to follow will be satiric. The geographical opposition of China to Peru, which, as Hilles remarks, defines the breadth of the narrative perspective, is followed by a series of more abstract oppositions which defines the target. The most general terms of opposition "hope and fear" and "desire and hate" (l. 5) represent the positive and negative sides of human wishes. Corresponding to "hope and fear" are the activities that each inspires, "toil" and "strife" (l. 3), and the ends pursued or avoided, "ills" and "good" (l. 10). The "tragic" interpreters of the poem insist that all "hope and fear" is pictured as futile. On the contrary, from the very beginning it is made clear that hope is foolish only when it "chases airy good," and fear is mistaken when it attempts to avoid "fancied ills" (l. 10). A more

subtle indication of the misdirection of "hope and fear" is found in line 3: "Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife." Just as the adjectives describing Democritus's ". . . cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth" (l. 50) are ironically inverted, so too are the adjectives in line 3, with even more obvious satirical intent. If man's hopes and fears were properly directed "toil" would be "eager" and "strife" "anxious."

The cause of man's failure to distinguish between real and false goods is indicated immediately in the introduction when it is said that,

> . . . hope and fear, desire and hate,
> O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
> Where wav'ring man, betray'd by vent'rous pride,
> To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
> As treach'rous phantoms in the mist delude,
> Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good.
> (ll. 5-10)

Although Johnson's writings have often been described as excessively abstract, the imagery in these lines is so concrete that one might almost overlook the fact that the picture that is developed is metaphoric. The passage is certainly sombre. "The clouded maze of fate," "the dreary paths," and "phantoms in the mist" contribute to an atmosphere of gloom. But to stop here is to emotionally respond, as so many have done, only to the pictorial features of the passage. The landscape may be gloomy, but the scene is not tragic, nor is the man trapped in the maze a tragic figure. The "snares" are set by "hope and fear," not by "fate," and man falls into them only because he responds to "phantoms" of his own creation. Further, it is not fate that directs man's steps,

but pride; and it is his pride, also, that causes him to shun the guide that might lead him safely through the maze. There is nothing noble in this depiction of "wav'ring man." The dangers that he encounters are entirely of his own creation, and the good that he strives for is imaginary.

If awe and pity are inappropriate responses to man as he is described here, so too is laughter. One of the most difficult sections of the poem to deal with is the Democritan passage in which laughter is presented as the rational response to man's folly. Democritus is called upon to "Once more . . . arise on earth, / With chearful wisdom and instructive mirth" (ll. 49-50), he is asked to ". . . feed with varied fools th' eternal jest" (l. 52), he is able to ". . . laugh where want enchain'd caprice" (l. 53), and he is imagined shaking with amusement at ". . . Britain's modish tribe" (l. 61). It is difficult to quarrel with Henry Gifford's contention that the Democritan passage is at odds with the general tone of the poem.[45] The satirized figures in the work (Wolsey, Charles, Xerxes, and others) may not be tragic, but neither do they inspire laughter. But while we may not share Democritus's risibility we can certainly agree with his scorn. That is, in truth, all that we are asked to do. Democritus is the "laughing philosopher," and as such his laughter is fitting; we are asked only to share his judgement:

> How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,
> Search every state, and canvass ev'ry pray'r.
> (ll. 71-72)

It is worth noting also, that while many critics find Democritus's laughter jarring, none has ventured to explain why Johnson kept the laughing philosopher of his source but omitted Heraclitus, "the weeping philosopher." If the general tone were one of pity surely it would have been more appropriate to invoke Heraclitus.

There is perhaps another way of explaining the uneasiness caused by the Democritan passage. The conventional invocation of a past golden age, or of a representative of that age, is usually the means of establishing the moral norm in a satire. In London, for example, Thales recalls four monarchs as patterns of virtue and intelligence. No more is needed to make the world right than to return again to their examples. While Democritus's laughter might be taken at first as the attitude of wisdom, in fact it is ultimately rejected as half-wise. As Howard Weinbrot interestingly argues, the Democritan passage consciously presents an inadequate response to the scene described. There is, he suggests, a connection between this passage and the poem's conclusion: "The entire final paragraph, and final couplet in particular, imply that the pagan, bitter, Democritan view must give way to the Christian."[46] In effect, Weinbrot argues that The Vanity of Human Wishes ultimately rejects the satiric vision of a world totally and hopelessly immersed in folly for a Christian vision that offers hope; or to put it another way, that the Democritan passage presents a satiric response while the conclusion offers a Christian solution.

If Weinbrot is correct, then those critics, like O'Flaherty, who argue that all wishes are vain, must certainly be wrong. There is much

in the Democritan section that might seem to support the view that the poem condemns all of life and all men. Democritus's scorn is "Renew'd at ev'ry glance on humankind" (l. 70), and we are asked to "Search every state, and canvass ev'ry prayer" (l. 72) to see the justness of his scorn. It takes no logical sleight-of-hand, however, to argue that, while "every glance on humankind" may excite scorn, not every human being is necessarily an object of scorn. In the same sense, while folly is said to penetrate "every state," all that is implied is that there is no position in society that does not have its fools. "Canvass ev'ry prayer" is likewise open to the interpretation that if every prayer is overheard many will be found to be specious. There is much else in the poem, and indeed in the Democritan section, that indicates that the attack is discriminate. There is a clear distinction in the following lines between those figures who are satiric targets and those who are exempt:

> All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,
> Whose joys are causeless, or whose griefs are vain.
> (ll. 67-68)

Leopold Damrosch, commenting on this couplet, states that "There would seem to be an implied exception of genuine suffering, which is not 'vain' and is therefore not included in the 'farce.'" Damrosch speaks only of the "suffering" that is not "vain." The lines also suggest that there is "joy" that is not "causeless." Damrosch points to "the descriptions of the scholar and of innocent old age" as examples of suffering that are not part of the farce; the conclusion of the poem indicates

the happiness that is available to man.[47] Thus the satire is not indiscriminate. The target is neither life nor mankind, but rather is limited to those desires that are foolish.

Once such wish is for wealth. Of all the sections of the poem, only these lines which expose the corrupting power of gold (ll. 21-48) are unbegrudgingly accepted as satiric. It should be noted that this section is the only one in which the target is not illustrated by either a historical or a more or less individualized fictional character. There are, admittedly, eight lines depicting the progress of a needy traveller whose peace is broken by the gift of wealth; but gold itself might be said to be the leading actor.

It is impossible to even hint at personification without pausing for a moment to consider the "abstractness," once supposed to be the distinguishing feature of Johnson's writing. Ian Jack is one of the last defenders of the once orthodox opinion that Johnson's appeal is always to the mind and never to the senses. Jack differs only by making a virtue out of what most previous critics pointed to as a defect: "To condemn Johnson for 'failing to bring his personifications to life' . . . is uncritical. That was not the sort of effect that he wished to gain." Indeed, in Jack's view, Johnson is best when he is most abstract:

> in the work of many poets there is some characteristic of style which becomes most evident when they are writing at the top of their bent. This unusual fondness for abstract personifications is Johnson's characteristic.

Jack not only argues that Johnson "personified abstractions," but also that there is an "abstract generality of idiom noticeable in some degree in all Johnson's writing."[48] Jack believes, then, that not only Johnson's personifications, but all of his writing lacks concreteness. This argument has been exploded by Susie Tucker and Henry Gifford, Donald Greene, Macdonald Emslie, and Edward Bloom, among others.[49] The importance of the work done by these critics is underestimated by Patrick O'Flaherty who states that

> Critics, seeking to convince an imaginary hostile audience whose minds have supposedly been poisoned by reading Carlyle and Macaulay, have been at considerable pains to demonstrate . . . that Johnson's language has metaphors in it, [and] that his personifications are not mere tepid abstractions.

We can, he says, "begin by assuming that the nineteenth-century critics were wrong," and we should, he concludes, turn our attention elsewhere.[50] O'Flaherty is mistaken if he believes that Carlyle and Macaulay were the last critics to accuse Johnson of excessive abstractness. Jack's very popular work was published in 1952, and William Wimsatt is not a nineteenth-century critic though he too argues that "Johnson's terms tend to be non-sensory," and if there is imagery in Johnson's writing it "is imagery only in the most diluted sense."[51] O'Flaherty seems to assume that once the view of these "nineteenth" century critics is shown to be wrong it is time to move on to other things. It is not, however, enough simply to recognize that Johnson's writing is filled with imagery, and certainly the scholarship of the last twenty-five years has not exhausted all that there is to say about Johnson and imagery. In the

following lines, for example, the satire resides almost wholly in the various metaphoric transformations of gold; and there is no way to analyze the satiric technique other than by examining the imagery:

> But scarce observ'd, the knowing and the bold
> Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold;
> Wide-wasting pest! that rages unconfin'd,
> And crouds with crimes the records of mankind;
> For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws,
> For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws.
> (ll. 21-26)

In the first couplet man's lust for gold is pictured in images suggesting the slaughter of war. In fact ". . . the gen'ral massacre of gold" goes beyond association to suggest that gold causes war. Gold is next described as an all-infecting and uncontrollable plague, and then as a source of lawlessness. The image here is of the criminal registrar filled with names. The connection between gold and crime is particularized in the next couplet where it is seen as the prize which prompts criminals, and makes criminals of the defenders of law. Image and structure work together to achieve the force of this couplet. The sameness of the hired assassin and the bribed judge is revealed in the power of gold over each and is reinforced by the parallel repetition of "For gold . . . " and the chiastic structure of the rest of the couplet.

In his discussion of Johnson's imagery Donald Greene restricts the meaning of the term to "the metaphoric process," and then goes on to describe its principal function:

> What the writer who uses imagery is trying to do is to take a notion which is nebulous in the

> reader's mind (the 'tenor' of the metaphor, in Richards's terminology) and cause the reader to apprehend it more vividly by associating it with something of which a clear sense impression can be obtained by the mind (the 'vehicle').[52]

This is fine as far as it goes, but more needs to be said. In satire, as in other poetry, there is often an emotional as well as pictorial exchange from the vehicle to the tenor. When Johnson describes the American colonists as "yelping for liberty" the colonists are not only pictured as barking dogs, they are also diminished by the image. A similar process occurs in the passage quoted. The tenor in lines 21-26 of the Vanity is the power of wealth (made somewhat more concrete by being particularized as gold), and the vehicles in turn are war, plague, and crime, none of which can be contemplated without loathing. To compare the destruction wrought by the lust for gold with the slaughter of war thus provides a vivid equivalent while at the same time directing our emotional response. The horror inspired by war, plague and crime is transferred to the effects of gold.

So far the images examined follow one another by a rather loose logic of association. War, plague, and crime are equally hateful and there is no strain on the imagination, nor any shift in tone, when gold is compared first to one and then to the other. As the passage continues, however, Johnson employs an image which, in various manifestations, he returns to throughout the poem:

> Wealth heap'd on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys,
> The dangers gather as the treasures rise.
> (ll. 27-28)

This couplet conveys a general reflection on the dangers of wealth through an image of thunder clouds "gathering" at the top of a mountain. More important here is the suggested identification of height with worldly success, together with the implication that to build so high is to invite disaster: "The dangers gather as the treasures rise" (l. 28). The precariousness of the elevation of wealth is pictured more concretely only a few lines later:

> Low skulks the hind beneath the rage of pow'r,
> And leaves the wealthy traytor in the Tow'r.
> (ll. 33-34)

In this couplet the poor peasant is secure beneath the notice of power while the man of aspiring wealth is transferred to a lofty prison (of course the Tower of London). The identification of worldly success with height, and the danger of such elevation, is seen also in the portrait of Wolsey, whose ambition leads him ever upward,

> Still to new heights his restless wishes tow'r,
> (l. 105)

until inevitably, as he reaches his apex, he comes tumbling down:

> For why did Wolsey near the steeps of fate,
> On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight?
> Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
> With louder ruin to the gulphs below?
> (ll. 125-28)

In another passage the brief tenure of worldly eminence is compared to the fleeting brilliance of a meteor.[53] Those who successfully court fortune achieve only a momentary elevation:

> They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
> (l. 76)

The description of worldly success in images of height, and of misfortune in images of descent is part of the larger pattern of rising and falling in the poem noticed by Walter Jackson Bate.[54] The dedicator, for example, "flies" upward "to growing wealth" (l. 82), while sycophants avoid ". . . the sinking stateman's door" (l. 79). The eager scholar imagines his works spread "O'er Bodley's dome . . . " (l. 139) and Swedish Charles would extend his dominion over all ". . . beneath the polar sky" (l. 204), but both are brought down. There is no glory offered to living genius. Instead,

> . . . nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
> To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
> (ll. 161-62)

Whereas the scholar dies in obscurity, Charles' descent is ignominious:

> His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
> A petty fortress, and a dubious hand.
> (ll. 219-220)

In each example aspiring hope is doomed to an inexorable fall because human success is supported on a weak foundation. This is made clear in the lines describing Wolsey (ll. 125-28), and is emphasized again in the passage on Charles:

> On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
> How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide.
> (ll. 191-92)

There is, however, one instance when rising hope is not dashed to the ground. Securely grounded in Christian faith, the wanderer on earth may ". . . raise for good the supplicating voice" (l. 351), with confidence that when ". . . strong devotion to the skies aspires" (l. 358) his elevation will be certain and eternal. This is the moment prepared for in all of the previous images of rising and falling. Example is piled on example of deluded men climbing to worldly eminence and in each instance falling "With louder ruin to the gulphs below" (l. 128). But with the image of man aspiring to heaven there is finally a movement upward that is not followed by descent.

Attention might now be redirected to O'Flaherty's statement that

> Taking for granted . . . that Johnson has the minimal qualification of a poet--a language that is rich and metaphorical in its own odd way--we may ask the question "where do we go from here?"[55]

If O'Flaherty had not passed over Johnson's imagery so facilely he might not have argued that Johnson is a "cynical observer," and that the "feeling against mankind" expressed in his satire "is just as strong, perhaps even at times stronger, than the contempt and bitterness found in Juvenal's tenth satire."[56] Certainly had he traced, even as briefly as has been done here, the images of rising and falling to the final image of man's aspiration to heaven he would not have argued that man

> can accomplish very little and his search for great happiness must prove illusory. He is fated . . . to wander for his lifetime in a mist or maze, shunning fancied ills and chasing airy good.[57]

On the contrary, man can achieve happiness that is not illusory. It is, as Greene argues, only "material, self-seeking values" that are satirized as "an unsatisfactory basis on which to build a life." To see this clearly, however, requires what O'Flaherty disdains to do: to examine Johnson's imagery in detail.

As was suggested earlier, the argument that Wolsey and Charles are tragic figures inspiring awe and pity can be supported only by a very selective reading of the poem. The history of Wolsey, for example, is accomplished in 22 lines and is placed near the center of a 60 line passage exposing the folly of striving for worldly power. To interpret Wolsey's character correctly it is necessary not only to carefully examine what is said about him, but also to consider what precedes and follows his portrait.

The initial impression given of those who would climb to power suggests not so much that they are intrepid over-reachers, but rather that they are driven by a fever:

> Unnumber'd suppliants croud Preferment's gate,
> Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great.
> (ll. 73-74)

The unwholesomeness of the scene is intensified by the echo here also of the plague with which the lust for wealth is earlier associated. Just as the desire for power is described as a sickness, so too is the statesman's rise associated with unpleasantness. His steady progress (each stage of preferment) and inglorious conclusion are, in a submerged

image, likened to a wretched journey in a stagecoach where he is threatened by highwaymen:

> On ev'ry stage the foes of peace attend,
> Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.
> (ll. 77-78)

The chief reward of power, once it is acquired, consists, it would seem, of the adulation of sycophants. But such followers show no loyalty to one who slips from favour:

> Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door
> Pours in the morning worshiper no more.
> (ll. 79-80)

To this point each couplet has developed a new image. This succession of pictures is relieved finally by an extended passage (ll. 83-90) which depicts the obloquy that attends the inevitable reversal of fortune. The ultimate fate of the man who climbs too high can be seen in the fall of his portrait that once ". . . hung the bright Palladium of the place" (l. 84). Once out of power his portrait inspires only disgust:

> And smoak'd in kitchens, or in auctions sold,
> To better features yields the frame of gold.
> (ll. 85-86)

Even the inanimate wall comes to life to join in the contempt:

> The form distorted justifies the fall,
> And detestation rids th' indignant wall.
> (ll. 89-90)

As the attack develops, Johnson's satire strikes both leaders and followers. In a passage that comes as close to being topical as anything in the poem, Britain's rulers are shown buying their way to power, while voters are depicted as being easily bought:

> Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
> And ask no questions but the price of votes;
> With weekly libels and septennial ale,
> Their wish is full to riot and to rail.
> (ll. 95-98)

Here, then, is the introduction to the portrait of Wolsey. The desire for power is seen as misguided, and each step of the ascent increases malice and envy. Such power is held, in modern times, only by bribing voters, and in Wolsey's case, as we shall see, only at the whim of the king. In every instance eminence is achieved only for an instant and is followed by derision. And, finally, the power held consists only of commanding flatterers who owe no allegiance and who fly to every new favorite. It can hardly be argued that Johnson has prepared a noble setting for the entrance of a tragic hero. The aspiration for power, and its trappings, suggest meanness rather than greatness.

Wolsey is abruptly presented to view at the height of his power:

> In full blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
> Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand.
> (ll. 99-100)

Those critics, such as Mary Lascelles, who argue that Johnson's portrait of Wolsey is "devoid of irony" might look more closely at these lines.[58] At the outset Wolsey's greatness is mockingly revealed as specious.

There is a suggestion both of pomposity and artificiality in "full blown dignity"—a suggestion that Wolsey is puffed up and may be easily deflated. Additional irony accrues to "full blown" by the reference in the preceding line to the drunken voters whose "wish is full to riot." It may even be that Johnson draws upon Pope's description of ". . . full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill" (l. 232), who is blown up as boys blow up a toad with a reed.[59] The second line of Johnson's couplet is even more damaging. Macdonald Emslie argues that

> "Law," "Voice," and "in his Hand" suggest a comparison with Moses descending from Sinai--a comparison which emphasizes Wolsey's deficiencies as a man of God. We note that Wolsey does not carry the "Law": instead he has "Fortune in his Hand," which suggests that Fortune to him is more important than the Law. . . . The first half of the line is also made more significant by this submerged comparison to Moses, for whereas Moses carried the tables of the law in his hand, Wolsey has the "Law in his Voice," as only God had on Sinai. Wolsey, this suggests, aspires to the position of God.[60]

Emslie's analysis leads to the conclusion that Wolsey is more than a heroic over-reacher: he is insanely ambitious. The insatiableness of man's appetite for the world's goods, once it begins to feed, is elsewhere dramatized by the nearly mad command of Charles, "Think nothing gain'd, he cries, till nought remain" (l. 202), while the hunger of Xerxes is explicitly insane:

> Fresh praise is try'd till madness fires his mind,
> The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind.
> (ll. 231-32)

Wolsey's ambition is no less irrational, and no more capable of being satisfied:

> Still to new heights his restless wishes tow'r,
> Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r;
> Till conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,
> And rights submitted, left him none to seize.
> (ll. 105-108)

The mention of Wolsey's towering wishes alerts us, of course, to the certainty of his descent. That he is destined to fall is, however, implied much earlier in the lines in which he is shown exercising his power:

> Thro' him the rays of regal bounty shine,
> Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows.
> (ll. 102-103)

The submerged image here is of a prism. The royal light (deriving from the king as sun) passes through Wolsey as he deflects its rays upon his attendants. The word "shine" recalls, if only faintly, the meteor image with its associations of fleeting brilliance. The tenuousnous of Wolsey's brilliance is increased by the fact that he glows with reflected lustre, or, literally, that he commands with borrowed authority. Inevitably he is denied the light by which he shines:

> At length his sov'reign frowns--the train of state
> Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
> (ll. 109-110)

Once again Wolsey turns to his followers but now it is a gesture of supplication. He who once directed "the stream of honour" now searches

for a ray of hope from among his followers. But

> Where-e'er he turns he meets a stranger's eye,
> His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly.
> (ll. 111-112)

To argue that the action in The Vanity of Human Wishes is tragic is to believe, as does Mary Lascelles, that the characters "are playing for high stakes; and it is real money."[61] The stakes may be high in the sense that men like Wolsey forfeit not only their happiness but probably their souls. But the goods that they attempt to win are, as Howard Weinbrot says, "nothing but 'worthless counters.'"[62] Surely the adulation of faithless sycophants is no very valuable article. Wolsey's other losses suggest the dangerous pleasures of "Wealth heap'd on wealth" (l. 27):

> The golden canopy, the glitt'ring plate,
> The regal palace, the luxurious board,
> The liv'ried army, and the menial lord.
> (ll. 114-16)

The contrast between this golden splendour and the severe plainness of Wolsey's final residence opens another avenue of satire:

> With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
> He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
> (ll. 117-18)

These lines might inspire pity were it not for the fact that it is appropriate for Wolsey, as a man of religion, to end his days in a monastery. That he does so with bitterness simply indicates how

completely he has exploited his ecclesiastical position only as a means to achieve worldly power. Emslie's remarks on the submerged comparison with Moses suggest one way in which Johnson exposes Wolsey's distorted values. As Emslie argues, Wolsey usurps the role of God, and his greatest regard is for fortune, which in this context must be read as "'wealth' rather than 'fate.'"[63] But there is more. As a man of God it is Wolsey's duty (using the conventional metaphor employed ironically by Johnson) to spread the light of God among the people; instead, he reflects only the light of a worldly king. His "bounty" consists of worthless treasures and is offered not to a following of spiritual worshippers but to a train of greedy flatterers. After these allusions in the earliest part of his portrait, Wolsey appears only as a man of political position with earthly aspirations. The absence, until the conclusion, of any other mention of Wolsey's religious role emphasizes how completely his life has been devoted to amassing wealth and power. For a man in his position this is more than foolish, it is impious.

The scorn that Wolsey inspires is increased by our last glimpse of him:

> Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
> And his last sighs reproach the faith of Kings.
> (ll. 119-20)

Those who find pity in this picture would certainly point to "grief" and "disease." Admittedly, it would be cruel to mock Wolsey for these torments, even though they are, in part, the fruits of his vain ambition. But only Patrick O'Flaherty could imagine that "we are asked

to laugh . . . at suffering."[64] It is the second line of the couplet that is satiric. "The faith of Kings" is complexly ironic. There is, of course, an allusion to the alacrity with which Henry VIII renounced one church and created another to facilitate his divorce and remarriage. And on the surface the phrase expresses Wolsey's complaint regarding the king's loyalty toward himself. Most importantly, however, the phrase is an ironic reflection of Wolsey's own misplaced faith and his continued ignorance of his fault. Although Wolsey may be stung by "remembered folly," he dies unaware of his essential mistake. As a man of God his faith should have been grounded in religious principles, and his hope should have been directed toward God. That he dies accusing the king of faithlessness serves to define the exact nature of his error.

The lesson that Wolsey's life teaches is not that life is tragic, but that it is foolish to strive for such dangerous and fleeting power. At the conclusion of Wolsey's portrait the narrator speaks directly to the reader and asks us to learn rather than grieve:

> Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
> Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end be thine?
> (ll. 121-22)

He then recalls others who, like Wolsey, placed their faith in kings. Villiers, Harley, Wentworth and Hyde are driven by ". . . their wish indulg'd in courts to shine" (l. 133). Once again "to shine" implies the brevity of glowing eminence, and like Wolsey each man is brought to an abrupt and inglorious end.

The section dealing with military fame (ll. 175-254) differs somewhat in structure from the section just examined. There is, again, an introductory passage that defines the target and influences our perception of the representative figures. In this instance the target is illustrated through the lives of three men: Charles XII of Sweden, Xerxes, and Charles Albert of Bavaria. There is, however, no concluding over-view. The section is brought to a close instead with Charles Albert slinking off, full of shame, to die in obscurity.

As this might suggest, there is little glory in the death of Charles Albert. Indeed, there is even less in the final days of Swedish Charles and Xerxes. And yet it is this section of the poem that critics most often see as "heroic" and "tragic."[65] If Johnson does admire and sympathize with these men, he is strangely inconsistent: first, with his wish expressed in Adventurer 99 that men like Xerxes and Charles might be "huddled together in obscurity or detestation," and more importantly, with the tone of his introductory remarks.[66]

This section begins with a review of the spoils of war:

> The festal blazes, the triumphal show. (l. 175)

Such fires are soon extinguished and "show" may even imply the appearance rather than reality of triumph:

> The ravish'd standard, and the captive foe. (l. 176)

The pleasures here are savage. The connotations of "ravish," as defined by Johnson, are nearly all cruel, and it is unlikely that he finds much

that is glorious in the sight of chained prisoners.

> The senate's thanks, the gazette's pompous tale.
> (l. 177)

Here the irony is explicit. By being coupled with the puffery of a factional newspaper "the senate's thanks" are rendered unmistakably worthless. The men who desire such rewards are then associated with the "ruffian" and "judge" criticized earlier. The entire catalogue of the prizes sought falls under the category of "bribes" (l. 179). There is yet another internal allusion suggesting the emphemerality of these "bribes":

> For such in distant lands the Britons shine,
> And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine.
> (ll. 181-82)

While "shine," as usual, suggests transience, the second line of this couplet depicts the horror of slaughter. If this is not enough to convince us of how the warrior is to be viewed, Johnson is even more direct:

> Yet Reason frowns on War's unequal game. (l. 185)

In the lines that conclude this introduction, the specious profits first listed ("the festal blazes" etc.) are paralleled by the actual effects of war:

> Where wasted nations raise a single name,
> And mortgag'd states their grandsire's wreaths regret,
> From age to age in everlasting debt:

> Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey
> To rust on medals, or on stones decay.
> (11. 186-190)

The focus in these lines shifts from the broad view of "wasted nations" to the ruin of families. Like countries, the individuals who join in battle bequeath a legacy of "everlasting debt." The worthlessness of their gains and the cost in lives are pictured in the last line: while "festal blazes" may "shine," the "dear bought" medals rust; and the same wreaths which adorn the disregarded medals appear on gravestones, and are as soon effaced by time.

Like Wolsey before him, then, Charles enters on a scene that hardly seems prepared for a hero. And yet it is Charles that Henry Gifford finds "tragic." He is, argues Gifford, "the victim of a superb delusion."[67] Leopold Damrosch balks at the word "tragic" and claims instead that Charles "is heroic in the sense that figures in Augustan satire seldom are."[68] Patrick O'Flaherty, the most effusive of those who find Charles admirable, combines the views of Gifford and Damrosch:

> Johnson does not scorn Charles's ambitions or laugh at his ignominious fate. It is obvious that the young king seems to him a flamboyant, heroic, poetic figure when victorious, and a tragic figure after his defeat.[69]

The portrait which has inspired such regard is divided into three parts: lines 191-97 in which Charles is described by the narrator; lines 198-214 which dramatize his life; and lines 215-222 in which the narrator reflects on the death and immortality of Charles. In the first descriptive couplet Charles is given those qualities so admired by critics:

> A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
> No dangers fright him, and no labours tire.
> (ll. 193-94)

An attentive reader might remember that ". . . restless fire precipitates on death" (l. 20), but a nearer indication of the ironic undercutting of this noble king is found in the next couplet:

> O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
> Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain.
> (ll. 195-96)

Howard Weinbrot argues that "Charles is super-human but inhuman." Charles' "exclusion of women from his life was well known," and in Johnson's lines "he rejects the needs of mere humanity, and fixes his mind solely on martial glory."[70] The single-mindedness of Charles' obsession, as dramatized in the succeeding lines, suggests not that he is noble, but rather bloodthirsty and unbalanced:

> No joys to him pacific scepters yield,
> War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
> . . . . . .
> Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
> "Think nothing gain'd, he cries, till nought remain,
> "On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
> "And all be mine beneath the polar sky."
> (ll. 197-204)

Charles' desire to be lord of all "beneath the polar sky" is a sterile ambition that reverberates finally with dramatic irony: it is appropriate that "His fall was destin'd to a barren strand" (l. 219). The "nothing" of the fourth line of this passage is also prophetic in the sense that Charles finally gains "nothing." But the irony cuts another

way. The emptiness of Charles' ambition is clearly evident in his wish "till nought remain." Weinbrot finds more evidence in the word "Gothic," which

> of course . . . means Swedish, but other common meanings of the word were "rude," "barbarous," and "uncivilized"; it was a term associated with the destruction of Rome and the encroachment of darkness, and reminds us that . . . Charles' . . . wish for military supremacy threatens civilization.[71]

It is, however, Charles and not civilization that is finally brought to nothing. There is more than a hint of ignominy in the reference to the battle in which Charles was defeated:

> Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day. (l. 210)

This shamefulness is intensified by the details of Charles' subsequent actions:

> The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
> And shews his miseries in distant lands.
> (ll. 211-12)

"Hero" is, in these lines, clearly ironic since the act described is desertion. Leaving his helpless troops in the ". . . realms of Frost" (l. 208), Charles scurries to safety. "Shews his miseries" is equally demeaning with its possible suggestion of a beggar "showing" his sores, or more precisely, of a soldier exhibiting his wounds for the coins of passersby. The diminishment of Charles continues:

> Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
> While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
> (ll. 213-14)

Weinbrot notices that "the word supplicant . . . associates the ends of Charles and Wolsey."[72] The important point, however, is not that Charles' "suppliants scorn him" (l. 112), as do Wolsey's, but rather that he is now the dependant. There is, as the Yale editors note, an allusion in the lines to the assistance on Charles' behalf of the Russian empress Catherine;[73] but the submerged image here is of an insignificant petitioner waiting humbly at the outer doors while servants decide whether to admit him. That ladies should "interpose" for him makes his fall complete. The man who was the "Unconquer'd lord of pleasure" is now a dependant on the sex that he scorned.

In another context the miseries depicted here might inspire pity but in this instance the appropriate emotion is scorn. What has been shown is the fall of pride—pride that expressed itself in blood-thirstiness and inhumanity. Charles' vaunted courage did not prevent him from abandoning his army, and his self-sufficiency was illusory. Surely, then, there is little that is "heroic" in his actions either before or after his defeat at Pultowa. The diminution of Charles continues in the lines describing his last days:

> But did not Chance at length her error mend?
> Did no subverted empire mark his end?
> Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
> Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
> (ll. 215-18)

Although Charles may have failed to subvert empires, he may, so these lines suggest, have salvaged a measure of renown by having died a grand death. The world finds nobility in glorious defeats as well as in great triumphs. The precise purpose of the next couplet, however, is to deprive him of even this vestige of glory:

> His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
> A petty fortress, and a dubious hand. (ll. 219-20)

The effect of these lines, taken together, is to artificially inflate Charles through questions that excite heroic associations, and then to dispel the illusion with the mundane reality of his death. Far from "tragic," Charles' end is bathetic. The little fame that survives his death is equally incommensurate with the glory that he sought. Charles is an incidental figure in The Vanity of Human Wishes; he is only one of many illustrative characters. And such, Johnson states, is the full extent of his surviving fame:

> He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale. (ll. 221-22)

There can be no doubt that the second of the three portraits in this section is satiric. There is no trace of nobility in Xerxes and nothing glorious in his actions. More than Xerxes is satirized, however. There is much in the lines degrading him that invites a comparison with what is shown of Charles' life. Xerxes, and by extension the warrior, is compared to a vulture, while the movement of his army has the effect on the land of a plague of locusts:

> Great Xerxes comes to seize the certain prey,
> And starves exhausted regions in his way.
> (ll. 227-28)

The praise that is the warrior's reward, and for which Xerxes strives, is then reduced to gross flattery, which must be more and more exaggerated to be satisfying:

> Attendant Flatt'ry counts his myriads o'er,
> Till counted myriads sooth his pride no more.
> (ll. 229-30)

As was noted earlier, the madness that is suggested of Charles is made explicit in Xerxes. Not satisfied with power over men, Xerxes imagines himself a god and would extend his dominion to nature:

> The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind. (l. 232)

Xerxes is granted his wish for divinity; but while he is made a god in metaphor, he is not granted immortality:

> New pow'rs are claim'd, new pow'rs are still bestow'd,
> Till rude resistance lops the spreading god.
> (ll. 233-34)[74]

While Charles' fall is accompanied with shame, Xerxes' turn of fortune is associated more directly with ridicule:

> The daring Greeks deride the martial show,
> And heap their vallies with the gaudy foe.
> (ll. 235-36)

Like Charles, Xerxes also deserts his troops to save his own life. The

suggestion of cowardice is even more explicit, and the picture of Xerxes, who once claimed mastery over the waves, rowing furiously across the blood-stained waters, excites horror and grim laughter:

> Th' insulted sea with humbler thoughts he gains,
> A single skiff to speed his flight remains;
> Th' incumber'd oar scarce leaves the dreaded coast
> Through purple billows and a floating host.
> (ll. 237-40)

Johnson may have helped to preserve Charles and Xerxes from "obscurity" but he certainly "huddled" them "together in . . . detestation." The portrait of Xerxes reflects on that of Charles, and, by being more explicit, exposes their shared vanity and madness, the viciousness of their ambition, and most damning to a warrior, their cowardliness. There is another detail that connects the ends of Xerxes and Charles with the ignominious fall of Wolsey: each man looks for help precisely where he had formerly claimed dominion. Wolsey, who once grandly dispensed favour, pathetically looks for support from his erstwhile supplicants; Charles, who excluded women from his life, waits "while ladies interpose" on his behalf; and Xerxes, who at the height of his power lashed the waves, looks to the sea with "humbler thoughts" after his defeat.

The third person of the military triumvirate, Charles Albert, is almost summarily dispatched, but again the same features appear. He too is driven by ". . . the hope of plunder and of praise" (l. 248). Like Charles XII and Xerxes, he brings destruction: "And all the sons of ravage croud the war" (l. 250). Like them also, he ends a ludicrous

figure as his last act is to flee: the object of "His foes derision, and his subjects blame" (l. 253), he ". . . steals to death from anguish and from shame" (l. 254).

While it is a simple enough matter to demonstrate that the desire for military glory is shown to be vicious and destructive, and that Charles is presented as a satiric rather than tragic figure, the section dealing with the life of a scholar presents new problems (ll. 135-174). Like Wolsey and Charles, the scholar is viewed by most critics as a tragic figure. In this instance there is some justification for that view. There is, in fact, a mixture of pity and disapproval in the portrait of the scholar which corresponds to the blamelessness of his activity and the folly of his hopes. Unlike the desire for power or military glory, the pursuit of learning is praiseworthy. As the section reveals, however, it is foolish to expect that praise, and wiser to avoid notice.

The motive that inspires the scholar is shown as not very different from the force that led Charles along his bloody path:

> When first the college rolls receive his name,
> The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame.
> (ll. 135-36)

There is, perhaps, a suggestion of lack of restraint in "enthusiast," and suspicion is increased by the reference to "fame." The desire for reputation is expressed in the same image that illustrates the lust for gold:

> Through all his veins the fever of renown
> Burns from the strong contagion of the gown,
> (ll. 137-38)

though the image here is more complex because of the allusion to the shirt of Nessus which Boswell noted.[75] The scholar's imagined achievements are as grandiose as the ambitious designs of Wolsey and Charles:

> O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
> And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.
> (ll. 139-40)

To this point it would be easy to argue that the tone is satiric. The scholar is feverish for fame, and the triumph he imagines is unbounded domination of the world of letters. But then the narrator interjects a comment that suggests encouragement rather than ridicule:

> Are these thy views? proceed, illustrious youth,
> And virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!
> (ll. 141-42)

While an ironic note might be detected in "illustrious youth," the second line of this couplet is unquestionably sincere. It is important to observe, however, that the scholar is urged upward to the seat of "Truth," and not to the heights of "fame." The difference between truth and fame is crucial since the two words separate the narrator's sympathy from his disapproval. Quite simply, to the extent that the scholar reaches for truth he is encouraged, and to the extent that he seeks fame he is chided.

The search for truth is as difficult and praiseworthy as the

craving for fame is dangerous and foolish. The lines which describe the various obstacles and temptations that lie in the scholar's path (ll. 143-54) do not constitute part of the satiric attack, but they are so memorable that critics have concentrated on them at the expense of the rest of the section. Certainly the passage is rich in imagery. Donald Greene notes that the "principal metaphor" throughout is "the familiar one of a journey, a quest, like those of the Arthurian knights." Greene quite rightly compares the scholar to a "Spenserian hero."[76] The foes that he encounters, "false kindness," "Praise," "Difficulty," "Novelty," "Sloth," "Melancholy," suggest a Spenserian allegory.

In addition to the sustained questing metaphor, there are a number of submerged images that echo other parts of the poem. Particularly interesting is the evolution of the fever image of a few lines earlier:

> Yet should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
> Till captive Science yields her last retreat.
> (ll. 143-44)

The underlying image in these lines derives from alchemy. The soul is pictured as an alembic from which, when heated by learning, may be extracted the secrets of nature. In the next couplet there is an echo of the opening lines of the poem:

> Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
> And pour on misty Doubt resistless day. (ll. 145-46)

Here the deluding "phantoms in the mist" seem to be dispelled by reason, and the "clouded maze" illuminated. On closer examination, however, it appears that the "misty Doubt" covering the truths of science, and the

"clouded maze" in which ignorant man wanders, are not at all the same. Certainly reason can do little to bring happiness, for the scholar is immediately directed to shift his gaze:

> Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
> And pause awhile from letters, to be wise;
> There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
> (ll. 157-160)

Part of the folly exposed here is the belief that literary achievements will bring honours. In what the Yale editors describe as "a reference to the bust of Milton placed in Westminster Abbey in 1737," Johnson observes that literary honours are usually conferred posthumously:[77]

> See nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
> To buried merit raise the tardy bust. (ll. 161-62)

As galling as it might be to be ignored, to achieve recognition might even be worse. The imprisonment of Lydiat and the persecution of Galileo are recalled, both of whom suffered because their writing brought them to notice. To this sad history is added the fate of Laud:

> See where the vulgar 'scape, despis'd or aw'd,
> Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud.
> (ll. 167-68)

There is an echo in "Rebellion's . . . talons" of "confiscation's vulturs" (l. 36), and an obvious parallel in the couplet with the earlier description of the safety of poverty which passes unnoticed while wealth is brought to the Tower (ll. 33-36). There is, however, an inversion of blame. While wealth is culpable ("The wealthy traytor")

and poverty blameless, in this passage the learned who stand out are praiseworthy, while the ignorant who pass unobserved are contemptible. Johnson mocks those who live in the safety of ignorance by calling on them to attend the fate of Laud:

> . . . hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.
> (l. 174)

Obviously, part of the evil attacked here is the failure of society to reward, and its more usual habit of persecuting, men of learning. Some critics go so far as to argue that society is the principal target. D.V. Boyd, for example, states that "the scholar is not doomed by any shortcomings in the self at all, but rather by the purely objective conditions of a hostile social environment."[78] On the contrary, the satire strikes in two directions. The fate of Laud indicts society but it also demonstrates the folly of hoping to receive from society those honours that it has historically always withheld. Boyd fails to consider that while the desire for knowledge is laudable, the scholar in these lines wants more. It is the "fever of renown" that burns in his veins. In short, while what he does is commendable his reasons are suspect. A comparison with Charles XII might be helpful. Charles' wish for fame is foolish because the memory of military triumphs fades as quickly as emblematic wreaths "rust on medals." The desire for military glory is also vicious because of the means by which it is attained (the same wreaths "decay" on gravestones). The activity of learning, on the other hand, is worthy of approbation, but the desire for recognition is as foolish in the scholar as it is in Charles, first

because it is rarely given, and secondly because it only brings danger. This desire for fame is the vain human wish that is the primary target.

A secondary attack, unnoticed by those concerned only with the social criticism in the poem, is directed at reason's ultimate impotence in leading man to happiness. In a passage already quoted a distinction is made between wisdom and learning. The domain of learning is clearly limited to the truths of science, but these truths, valuable in themselves, do not constitute wisdom. As in The Vision of Theodore, reason is capable of leading man only part way along the path to happiness, and this insufficiency of reason is of great significance since in the poem, as in the Vision, it opens the way for faith as man's ultimate guide.[79]

The failure to correctly identify the target has also led to a misunderstanding of the section dealing with the wish for length of life (ll. 255-318). Many critics find only pity in the verses. Mary Lascelles, for example, states that Johnson tempers "the terrible picture of old age . . . by changing Juvenal's repulsive dotard among a crowd of parasites into a solitary figure, not without dignity." And Henry Gifford writes that

> Johnson often rebates his satire, or gives it up altogether, when he contemplates human suffering. Wanton beauty or miserable old age are fair game for Juvenal; but Johnson shrinks from the spectacle.[80]

Lascelles and Gifford seem to believe that the target, or rather what

would have been the target if the lines were satiric, is old age. In fact, old age is depicted as both ludicrous and pitiable, but it is not itself the target. Rather, it is the desire of extending life beyond the normal allotment of years that is shown to be foolish. Johnson may have feared death, but he recognized at what cost it is unnaturally put off, and in rare praise of anything by Swift he refers to the Struldbrugs as "miserable beings . . . 'supremely cursed with immortality.'"[81] The curse of old age is stated quite directly in The Vanity of Human Wishes in lines which also expose the folly of desiring it. The man who prays for ". . . multitude of days" (l. 255)

> Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know,
> That life protracted is protracted woe.
> (ll. 257-58)

The error, clearly, is not in being old, but in believing that old age brings anything but unhappiness.

The suffering that comes with age is illustrated in two very different figures; but while the difference between them is obvious it is also important to consider what they have in common. The first of the two men is, as Damrosch recognizes, a "loathsome old man--loathsome morally, not just physically."[82] The life that this man has led may be inferred from the pleasures lost to him through age. All of his delights are related to his senses, and all of his senses are dulled, or, indeed, blocked:[83]

> Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
> And shuts up all the passages of joy. (ll. 259-60)

Smell and sight are the first to go:

> In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
> The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flow'r,
> With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
> He views, and wonders that they please no more.
> (ll. 261-64)

Taste is also lost:

> Now pall the tasteless meats, and joyless wines.
> (l. 265)

And finally even the pleasure of sound is denied the old man:

> Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend,
> Nor sweeter musick of a virtuous friend.
> (ll. 271-72)

The second line of this couplet introduces a new line of attack. The absence of the conversation of a "virtuous friend" may be attributed, it seems, not to the man's deafness, but to the fact that he has never acquired, or deserved, such a friend. He has instead surrounded himself with flatterers, and even they are barely able to hide their revulsion:

> . . . growing hopes scarce awe the gath'ring sneer,
> And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear.
> (ll. 277-78)

Of all of his passions only one survives untouched by time. While the decay of his senses may have deprived him of all other pleasure,

> . . . unextinguish'd Avarice still remains.
> (l. 285)

To the last he

> . . . views his coffers with suspicious eyes,
> Unlocks his gold, and counts it till he dies.
> (ll. 289-90)

To this picture of aged vice Johnson contrasts ". . . the virtues of a temp'rate prime" (l. 291). While the vicious old man struggles to reanimate his appetites and clutches his gold, the virtuous man

> . . . melts with unperceiv'd decay,
> And glides in modest innocence away.
> (ll. 293-94)

But even virtuous old age is painful:

> New sorrow rises as the day returns,
> A sister sickens, or a daughter mourns.
> Now kindred Merit fills the sable bier,
> Now lacerated Friendship claims a tear.
> (ll. 301-304)

The virtue of this man, like the iniquity of the previous figure, can be inferred from the losses he most laments: the deaths of those he loves. In images which suggest the changing seasons and the emergence of new growth, the virtuous old man becomes a solitary figure among strangers:

> Year chases year, decay pursues decay,
> Still drops some joy from with'ring life away;
> New forms arise, and diff'rent views engage,
> Superfluous lags the vet'ran on the stage.
> (ll. 305-8)

Their desire to emphasize Johnson's compassion has led Lascelles

and Gifford to concentrate on this second portrait. Damrosch may have these critics in mind when he states that "The lines . . . in which Nature at last 'bids afflicted worth retire to peace,' have frequently been mentioned as if they were the entirety of the section."[84] To ignore the first portrait is misleading since in it Johnson does, in fact, preserve "Juvenal's repulsive dotard among a crowd of parasites." Both figures, however, illustrate the folly of desiring unnatural length of life, since for both old age brings the loss of those joys which make life endurable. The pleasures may be vain, or worthy, but they inevitably disappear with the passing of each year.

It would be craven to pass on from this section without at least touching on what Damrosch calls "the terrible lines":[85]

> From Marlb'rough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
> And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show.
> (ll. 317-18)

Our knowledge of Johnson's dislike of Swift might lead us to see this as a cruel attack. Certainly the passage seems indelicate; and there is an element of vindictiveness, as Damrosch points out, in "the deep irony of compelling Swift and the man he hated to share the closed unity of a couplet, just as they have had to share the fate of man."[86] It is probable, however, that Johnson looked upon Swift's end with more horror than vindictiveness and this seems especially likely when we remember Johnson's own fear of madness. Whatever his feelings about Swift might have been, these lines attack the wish for length of life more than they attack the individuals. Just as old age brings with it

the loss of pleasure, so too does it involve the loss of abilities. "Streams of dotage" has meaning precisely because of Marlborough's former courage, while Swift's imbecility is remarkable only in contrast to his former wit and intelligence.

The least discussed of all the sections of the poem is that which deals with the wish for beauty (ll. 319-42). There is good reason for this neglect, since it is not only the shortest section of the poem, but is also the one least capable of being misunderstood. To hope for beauty is clearly to desire that which can last for only a very short time, and the dangers occasioned by it are obvious. If chastity is considered a virtue, then the greater the beauty the more determined the assault will be upon virtue.

Johnson begins the attack by referring to Anne Vane and Catherine Sedley, both of whom lost their virtue as a consequence of being well-favoured. He then exploits the familiar associations of beauty with mindlessness, triviality, and insincerity:

> Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
> Whom Pleasure keeps too busy to be wise,
> Whom Joys with soft variety invite,
> By day the frolic, and the dance by night,
> Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
> And ask the latest fashion of the heart.
> (ll. 323-28)

The vanity described here has a serious consequence. As MacDonald Emslie observes, the last couplet, especially, "demonstrate[s] how a life of superficialities has destroyed the capacity for true feeling

and self-honesty."[87]

There are other dangers. Just as wealth purchases only temporary flatterers, beauty attracts admirers anxious to despoil, while all others are filled with envy:

> Against your fame with fondness hate combines,
> The rival batters, and the lover mines.
> (ll. 331-32)

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this section is the development of the siege imagery implicit in these lines.[88] A woman's honour is pictured as a fortress continuously under assault and defended by virtue. But as is stated earlier in the poem, "praise" has "pow'r . . . that virtue scarce can warm" (l. 183). The sound of flattery is more appealing than the remonstrances of virtue, and so virtue is soon dethroned:

> Tir'd with contempt, she quits the slipp'ry reign,
> And Pride and Prudence take her seat in vain.
> (ll. 335-36)

Ruled by easily duped defenders, the fortress is soon taken:

> In croud at once, where none the pass defend,
> The harmless Freedom, and the private Friend.
> The guardians yield, by force superior ply'd;
> By Int'rest Prudence; and by Flatt'ry, Pride.
> (ll. 337-40)

It is, finally, the envious who are gratified by the success of the admirer:

> Now beauty falls betray'd, despis'd, distress'd,

And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.
(ll. 341-42)

With these lines Johnson brings his survey of worldly ambition to a close. Were the poem to end here it would still not be accurate to describe the tone as tragic, but O'Flaherty's contention, that "the 'philosophy' contained in the poem is . . . dismal," would at least be more understandable. To this point each human aspiration has been shown to lead only to unhappiness. The hopes indulged for wealth, power, fame, length of life, and beauty are seen to be foolish at best, and at worst as vicious. The only rational response to this scene implied so far is found in the scornful laughter of Democritus, whose mockery is not much removed from the angry disdain of Thales. Democritus and Thales share the satirist's vision, including a sense of hopelessness. As they view it, the world is so totally immersed in corruption that a virtuous man can only laugh or flee. London ends with this sense of futility; but as we have seen, the Democritan response in The Vanity of Human Wishes is ultimately shown to be inadequate. It is, as it were, a false lead; while we might share Democritus's scorn we are finally led away from his despair. The poem ends instead on a wholly different note. The final 26 lines, constituting Part B in Randolph's terminology, not only set forth the opposing virtues to the folly exposed in Part A, but also break through the stasis of the satiric vision. In effect Part B confronts the Democritan satiric vision which is limited to the world, and which sees existence as static, and offers instead a Christian vision which looks beyond and

offers hope for change.

Part B begins with a series of questions that mirror the despair to which the poem seems to have arrived:

> Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
> Must dull Suspence corrupt the stagnant mind?
> Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
> Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
> Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
> No cries attempt the mercies of the skies?
> (ll. 343-48)

Donald Greene summarizes the answer that appears to be demanded by these questions:

> "Direct them [hope and fear] to nothing outside yourself; disengage yourself from life; repress all such emotions; commit yourself to nothing, let your judgement of values remain in suspense."[89]

This, in fact, is the advice that Juvenal seems to offer as he suggests that it is better not to disturb the skies:

> Let the gods themselves determine what's more appropriate
> For mankind . . . .
> (ll. 347-48)

And only reluctantly he relents:

> Still if you must have something to pray for . . .
> . . . then ask
> For a sound mind in a sound body . . .
> (ll. 354-57)

Little, then, is to be expected from the gods; instead Juvenal insists that "What I've shown you, you can find by yourself" (l. 363). What

can be found is an obdurate will with the strength to suppress all desires:

> . . . that's strong to endure
> All kinds of toil, that's untainted by lust and anger.
> (ll. 359-60)

The Stoic response (the cessation of nearly all action) is, as Donald Greene points out, inconsistent with Christian belief, and so "the Stoic answer is abandoned with almost pitying abruptness." In its place is

> substituted the Christian answer full of emotional commitment, but to the right values--the non-material, the spiritual ones of faith, hope, and, above all, love.[90]

The "emotional commitment" is especially apparent when Johnson's lines are compared to those of Juvenal. In the introductory series of discouraging questions, it is finally asked: may "No cries attempt the mercies of the skies?" (l. 348). Johnson's fervent answer contrasts sharply with the cold advice of Juvenal:

> Enquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
> Which heav'n may hear, nor deem religion vain.
> (ll. 349-50)

While Juvenal's prayers are offered up in a calm, almost detached manner, prayer is for Johnson a passionate act:

> And strong devotion to the skies aspires. (l. 358)

The prayers offered by Johnson begin with pleas similar to those of

Juvenal:

> Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
> Obedient passions, and a will resign'd.
> (ll. 359-60)

But as he continues, a far greater good is requested:

> For love, which scarce collective man can fill.
> (l. 361)

Juvenal's gods are not without love. In fact, ". . . a man / Is dearer to them than he is to himself."[91] Still the interaction between Juvenal's gods and man is slight. Johnson's invocation of God's love, on the other hand, draws upon the entire force of the Christian tradition. God not only loves man, but saves him; and not only from the despair of his earthly existence, but for eternity. Further, God's love is the greatest good to which man can aspire and is the only enduring source of happiness. It is only through prayer--not the "specious pray'r" (l. 354) for the world's goods, but prayer for faith, hope, and love--that man will find peace:

> These goods for man the laws of heav'n ordain,
> These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;
> With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
> And makes the happiness she does not find.
> (ll. 365-68)

One must wonder with Greene, "how, in the face of this statement," the poem can be "termed 'pessimistic.'"[92] One must wonder, also, how it can be termed "tragic." The conclusion to the poem certainly replaces the satiric vision (the Democritan view) with a Christian

vision that offers hope. But at the same time, the folly of Charles' or Wolsey's misplaced desire is made even more apparent by the contrast with the spiritual aspirations outlined in Part B. That is, Part A not only remains satiric, but is made even more satiric by the conclusion. Just as vice is made more abhorrent by being contrasted with virtue, so is folly made more foolish when it is contrasted with wisdom. By concluding the poem as he does, Johnson draws away from the satiric vision, but by doing so he intensifies, rather than negates, the attack in Part A.

It is its more encompassing vision that most distinguishes The Vanity of Human Wishes from London. London is a very conventional satire in which the forces of chaos dominate. The moral norm in the poem, represented in Thales and the four monarchs that he recalls, functions primarily to set the targets in greater relief. Thales does not, however, hope that the present age will benefit from examples of virtue. Indeed, he exhibits no confidence that the present age will be shamed by his exposure of its abuses. As he takes his leave he speaks instead of warning "succeeding times" (l. 259). For Thales, then, virtue prevailed in the past and may reassert itself in the future, but for the present there is little hope. The depth of Thales' pessimism, and the totality of the satiric vision in the poem, is emphasized by his final retreat from all society and the suggestion that he will soon be joined by the only other honest man of his time: the narrator (ll. 256-63). In The Vanity of Human Wishes, on the other

hand, the moral norm functions far more importantly than as a conventional adjunct to the attack; the conclusion in which it appears is, instead, the most passionate moment of the poem. Throughout the poem images of rising alternate with images of falling. In pursuit of wealth, or fame, or military conquest, a procession of figures climbs to shaky eminence only to come tumbling down in disgrace. In the final twenty-six lines another aspiration is shown, but this time the wish is not merely "human"--it is not a desire for beauty, or length of life, or any other transitory, worldly, good. Instead, ". . . strong devotion to the skies aspires" (l. 358). It could be argued that the rising image in this line is also coupled with a falling image, though "falling" seems hardly accurate to describe the flowing down from God of ". . . love, which scarce collective man can fill" (l. 361). The confidence, evident in this line, of the assuredness of God's love, is remarkable, especially in view of the usual notion, expressed by Krutch, that Johnson "had no trust 'in the mercy of GOD' sufficient to inspire confidence."[93] It is true, as Chester Chapin writes, that "Johnson had never heard of the modern theory that religion's . . . prime function is to 'induce peace of mind,'" and that, as Bertrand Bronson states, religion for Johnson "was not a mild and sunny element in his life, but crossed with storm and struggle."[94] In The Vanity of Human Wishes, however, religion is a "sunny element," and it does "'induce peace of mind'":

> These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;
> With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,

> And makes the happiness she does not find.
> (ll. 366-68)

The God invoked in these lines is not the demanding and retributive figure that Johnson more often conceived, but an unfailing and benevolent source of peace.

The final twenty-six lines not only point the way to "celestial wisdom," they also establish an alliance between the speaker and the reader against men like Wolsey and Charles. They may pursue "phantoms," but the reader, it is implied, has learned from the examples, and would place his trust more wisely, if only he were directed. Direction is given in a command that also promises the fulfilment of proper wishes:

> Enquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
> Which heav'n may hear, nor deem religion vain.
> (ll. 349-50)

While Thales speaks to the narrator, and the narrator writes, it would seem, for "succeeding ages," the final lines in the Vanity are addressed to all readers, and all, it is implied, will join in the rejection of "human wishes." The effect of this union between the speaker and his audience is to cast the poem's satirized figures beyond the boundary of what is normal. Prior to the conclusion it appears, indeed, as if all men are deluded; but, as the world of the poem expands outward to encompass the reader, the world of Charles and Xerxes shrinks. They are reduced to exceptional figures, useful to "point of moral" (l. 222). The despair in London arises because Thales has no audience (or an audience of one); in the Vanity the readers outnumber the figures of

scorn.

There is, of course, much else that separates London and The Vanity of Human Wishes. The poems are as different in technique as they are in vision. The speaker in the Vanity is relatively effaced while illustrative figures stand out; in contrast, the only sharply distinguished individual in London is Thales. The prominence of Thales points to another important difference in technique: it is his anger that establishes the tone in London and directs the reader's attitude; in the Vanity, on the other hand, the satire is conveyed not so much through overt criticism as through images that lie slightly beneath the surface of the lines. Imagery of this sort is also found in London, but is far less important; in the Vanity there would be little satire without it. Wolsey's pride and the worldliness of his ambition is revealed only indirectly. In the same way the sterility of the aims of Swedish Charles, the madness of Xerxes, the cowardice they share, and the bathos of their ends, may be missed if we do not look below the surface of the lines in which these figures are described. Indeed, perhaps more than anything else, it is their failure to notice, or sufficiently regard, the images and patterns of images in The Vanity of Human Wishes that has led so many readers to view the poem as something other than a satire.

NOTES

Chapter Five

[1] The Yale edition of the Poems is used as the text for both poems: London, pp. 45-61; The Vanity of Human Wishes, pp. 90-109. All line numbers are cited within my text.

[2] E.L. McAdam and George Milne, eds., Introduction, Poems, p. xvi.

[3] Life, I, 194.

[4] Life, I, 193, 194.

[5] Joseph Wood Krutch, Samuel Johnson (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1944), p. 65.

[6] Krutch, pp. 64, 65.

[7] Paul Fussell, Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 19.

[8] Walter Jackson Bate, Samuel Johnson (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 172, 173.

[9] Bate, Samuel Johnson, p. 173.

[10] Donald Greene, The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 91.

[11] Mary Lascelles, "Johnson and Juvenal," in New Light on Dr. Johnson: Essays on the Occasion of His 250th Birthday, ed. Frederick W. Hilles (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 44.

[12] William Vesterman, The Stylistic Life of Samuel Johnson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1977), p. 3.

[13] Bate, Samuel Johnson, p. 173.

[14] Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," The Yale Review, 41, no. 1 (1951), 85.

[15] D.V. Boyd, "Vanity and Vacuity: A Reading of Johnson's Verse Satires," ELH: A Journal of English Literary History, 39 (1972), 395.

[16] James L. Clifford, Young Sam Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 188.

[17] Lives III, 176 and 247.

[18] Juvenal, Satire III, in his The Sixteen Satires, trans. Peter Green (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 88. This edition is also used for Juvenal's Satire X. Since this translation does not follow the original in line numbering, only page numbers will be cited.

[19] William Kupersmith, "Declamatory Grandeur: Johnson and Juvenal," Arion, 9 (1970), 68.

[20] Juvenal, Satire III, p. 87.

[21] Lives II, 410.

[22] Christopher Ricks, "Johnson's 'Battle of the Pygmies and Cranes,'" Essays in Criticism, 16 (1966), 281. One other passage should be mentioned where nature is depicted with some irony:

> For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land,
> Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
> There none are swept by sudden fate away,
> But all whom hunger spares, with age decay.
> (ll. 9-12)

The Yale editors of the Poems defend this passage from a charge brought against it by Boswell:

> Boswell thought these lines showed English prejudice against Ireland and Scotland, but they are only the standard contrast between the poor but simple rural life and the vicious and dangerous life of the city. (Poems, p. 48, n. 9-14)

Boswell goes too far by finding in these and other lines evidence of Johnson's "prejudices as a 'true-born Englishman'" (Life I, 129-30), but at the same time the lines do not present a "standard contrast" between rural and city life. "Rocks" surely suggests barrenness rather than simplicity, and the pleasures of rural life are reduced to dying of starvation or of old age. Although elsewhere in the poem London's citizens are chastized for selling honour for bribes, in these lines only a small bribe might understandably convince a man to move to the city.

[23] Juvenal, Satire III, p. 89; E.L. McAdam, Jr., and George Milne eds., Poems, p. 53, n. 94.

[24] Rachel Trickett, The Honest Muse: A Study in Augustan Verse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 228.

[25] Alexander Pope, The Rape of the Lock, in Poems, ed. John Butt, pp. 217-42.

[26] John Butt, "Pope and Johnson in Their Handling of the Imitation," New Rambler, June, 1959, p. 26.

[27] Boyd, p. 395.

[28] Vesterman, pp. 108, 109.

[29] Ian Jack, Augustan Satire: Intention and Idiom in English Poetry 1660-1750 (1952; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 135.

[30] John Hardy, "Samuel Johnson," in Dryden to Johnson, ed. Roger Lonsdale, Sphere History of Literature in the English Language, vol. 4 (London: Sphere Books, 1971), p. 329; Doris Powers, English Formal Satire: Elizabethan to Augustan (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 171; Henry Gifford, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," Review of English Studies, n.s. 6 (1955), 1960; Lascelles, p. 55; Douglas Grant, "Samuel Johnson: Satire and Satirists," New Rambler, June 1967, pp. 14-15; Bate, Samuel Johnson, 279.

[31] T.S. Eliot, "Johnson as Critic and Poet," in his On Poetry and Poets (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 179.

[32] T.S. Eliot, Introduction, London: A Poem; and The Vanity of Human Wishes (London: Etchell's and Macdonald, 1930); reprinted as

"Poetry in the Eighteenth Century," in From Dryden to Johnson, ed. Boris Ford, The Pelican Guide to English Literature, vol. 4 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), p. 275.

[33] Quoted by David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam, ed., The Poems of Samuel Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 30, n. 1.2.

[34] F.W. Hilles, "Johnson's Poetic Fire," in From Sensibility to Romanticism, ed. F.W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 68-69.

[35] Lascelles, p. 47.

[36] F.R. Leavis, "English Poetry in the Eighteenth Century," Scrutiny, 5 (1936), 25.

[37] Howard Weinbrot, The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 196.

[38] Weinbrot, p. 196.

[39] Donald Greene, Samuel Johnson, Twayne English Authors Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), p. 57.

[40] Boyd, p. 397.

[41] Boyd, p. 397; Patrick O'Flaherty, "The Rambler's Rebuff to Juvenal: Johnson's Pessimism Reconsidered," English Studies, 51 (1970), 518.

[42] Greene, Samuel Johnson, p. 56.

[43] Jack, p. 135.

[44] Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," "Philological Quarterly, 21 (1942), 369.

[45] Gifford, p. 158.

[46] Weinbrot, p. 200.

[47] Leopold Damrosch, Jr., Samuel Johnson and the Tragic Sense (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 142.

[48] Jack, pp. 141, 140, 139.

[49] Susie I. Tucker and Henry Gifford, "Johnson's Poetic Imagination," Review of English Studies, n.s. 8 (1957), 241-48; Donald Greene, "'Pictures to the Mind': Johnson and Imagery," in Johnson, Boswell and Their Circle: Essays Presented to Lawrence Fitzroy Powell in Honour of His Eighty-Fourth Birthday, ed. Mary Lascelles, et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 137-58; Macdonald Emslie, "Johnson's Satires and 'The Proper Wit of Poetry,'" Cambridge Journal, 7 (1954), 347-60; Edward Bloom, "The Vanity of Human Wishes: Reason's Images," Essays in Criticism, 15 (1965), 181-82.

[50] Patrick O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist: A New Look at The Vanity of Human Wishes," ELH: A Journal of English Literary History, 34 (1967), 79.

[51] William Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson, Yale Studies in English, vol. 94 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 65.

[52] Greene, "'Pictures to the Mind,'" p. 138.

[53] That a meteor is suggested, and not, as F.R. Leavis argues, "fireworks," "The Augustan tradition," in his Revaluation (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 112, is strongly indicated by a number of parallels:

1. In Dryden's All For Love, Antony says, (I. 1. 206-09),
   "Why was I raised the meteor of the world,
   Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,
   Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward,
   To be trod out by Caesar?"

2. From Johnson's Life of Dryden: (Lives I, 370),
   "Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall."

3. From Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland: (Journey, p. 111),
   "Tradition is but a meteor, which, if once it falls, cannot be rekindled."

I am indebted to Professor David H. Curnow, University of Manitoba, for the identification of this, and many other images.

[54] Walter Jackson Bate, The Achievement of Samuel Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 19-20.

[55] O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist," p. 79.

[56] O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist," p. 84.

[57] O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist," p. 83.

[58] Lascelles, p. 49.

[59] Alexander Pope, "An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot," in Poems, ed. John Butt, pp. 597-612.

[60] Emslie, p. 349.

[61] Lascelles, p. 52.

[62] Weinbrot, p. 203.

[63] Emslie, p. 349.

[64] O'Flaherty, "The Rambler's Rebuff," p. 522.

[65] O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist," p. 85; Gifford, p. 163.

[66] Adventurer 99, p. 433.

[67] Gifford, p. 164.

[68] Damrosch, p. 145.

[69] O'Flaherty, "Johnson as Satirist," p. 85.

[70] Weinbrot, p. 204.

[71] Weinbrot, pp. 204-205.

[72] Weinbrot, p. 205.

[73] E.L. McAdam and George Milne, ed., Poems, p. 102, n. 214.

[74] J.D. Fleeman identifies the "spreading god" as "the Hydra," though "lops" and "spreading" would seem more strongly to imply a tree. J.D. Fleeman, ed., Samuel Johnson: The Complete English Poems (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 212, n. 214.

[75] Life III, 357-58.

[76] Greene, "'Pictures to the Mind,'" p. 151.

[77] E.L. McAdam and George Milne, eds., Poems, p. 99, n. 162.

[78] Boyd, p. 399.

[79] Samuel Johnson, The Vision of Theodore, The Hermit of Teneriffe, in Works (1806), 2, pp. 454-71.

[80] Lascelles, p. 53; Gifford, p. 162.

[81] Adventurer 39, p. 347.

[82] Damrosch, p. 152.

[83] While the sense of touch is not clearly suggested in this passage, at least the word "touch" occurs in one line: "No sounds alas would touch th' impervious ear" (l. 269).

[84] Damrosch, p. 151.

[85] Damrosch, p. 143.

[86] Damrosch, p. 144.

[87] Emslie, p. 359.

[88] Military imagery is, of course, found elsewhere in the poem, not only in the portraits of Charles of Sweden and Xerxes, but also in the description of the old man:

> Unnumber'd maladies his joints invade,
> Lay siege to life and press the dire blockade;
> (ll. 283-84)

and in the section on wealth:

> But scarce observ'd, the knowing and the bold
> Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold. (ll. 21-22)

For further discussion of military imagery in the poem see Weinbrot, p. 198.

[89] Greene, Samuel Johnson, p. 57.

[90] Greene, Samuel Johnson, p. 58.

[91] Juvenal, Satire X, p. 216.

[92] Greene, Samuel Johnson, p. 58.

[93] Krutch, p. 548.

[94] Chester Chapin, The Religious Thought of Samuel Johnson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 177-78, n. 1; Bertrand Bronson, Johnson Agonistes and Other Essays (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), p. 41.

CONCLUSION

In conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Johnson once remarked:

> 'There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction, to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner; the other is a conclusion, shewing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the publick.'[1]

Although I am not nearly as confident about my ability to state why the execution of this work has not been equal to what I promised, I am at least aware of the incompleteness of my study. There has, for example, been no attempt to deal with all of Johnson's periodical satires; indeed, the majority of the satiric Rambler and Idler papers have been left unexamined. The need for selectivity in this instance, however, needs little excuse. To study all of the periodical satires would necessitate ignoring everything else. There is, of course, much else that I have omitted, notably Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, his "Reply to a paper in the Gazetteer of May 26, 1757" (his only reply to a personal attack), and the Reflections on the Present State of Literature. The exclusion of these works, along with much else, may perhaps be excused with the observation that inclusion must stop somewhere.

Of more concern to me at the moment is the distorted picture that

I may have presented of Johnson as a writer. Any work that examines only one part of Johnson's thought or literary output runs the risk of suggesting that he was primarily one thing or another, when, in fact, he was so many things that categorization becomes cataloguing. He was (in no particular order on my part) lexicographer, biographer, essayist, poet, editor, diarist, journalist, dramatist, and critic; he also wrote prose fictions, travel books, prefaces and dedications, as well as commentaries on law, sermons, and imagined speeches (that added much to the reputed eloquence of the putative speakers).[2] The list could be expanded.

To examine only Johnson the satirist is, then, to examine only a small corner of his thought and literature. Nevertheless, some argument was needed to show that this corner does, in fact, exist. As is evident by my running quarrel with them in Chapter Five, many critics have denied that Johnson's greatest satire is a satire. One of the most perceptive and sympathetic of these commentators goes even further and argues that Johnson wrote no satires, but rather had a "hatred and fear of satire." This argument is dealt with in Chapter Four, but, of course, my entire dissertation disputes Bate's position. From _London_ to _Taxation No Tyranny_, satire is found throughout Johnson's writings, sometimes dominating the work and at other times appearing only incidentally.

The value of studying Johnson's satires, indeed the value of studying any part of his canon, needs no defense, especially now that attention is finally being directed beyond the figure who appears in

Boswell's work and toward the much more impressive Johnson who appears in his own writings. And though satire forms only one part of the canon, it require study just as his poetry, fiction, moral writings and criticism require study in order to redress the balance tilted by nearly two centuries of biographies. Moreover, through his satires we can view the development of Johnson's thought and art. The Johnson that is preserved in Boswell's great biography is, for the most part, a static figure, a man in his fifties and sixties whose attitudes are formed, whose reputation is established, and who is more remarkable, it would seem, for his conversation than for his literature. As fascinating as his conversation is, it is through his writings that Johnson speaks most eloquently, and through his writings that we encounter the kind of variety that is lacking in Boswell's pages.

NOTES

Conclusion

[1] Life I, 292.

[2] I refer, of course, to the Parliamentary "Debates" written by Johnson for the Gentleman's Magazine, which purported to be the speeches of various members of both houses of Parliament, but which, in fact, "were frequently written from very slender materials, and often from none at all,--the mere coinage of his own imagination" (Life IV, 409-10). Thomas Tyers writes that "Members of parliament acknowledge, that they reckon themselves much obliged for the printed accounts of debates of both Houses, because they are made to speak better than they do in the Senate" (Miscellanies II, 342). How much better the members were "made to speak" is indicated by a conversation recorded by Arthur Murphy:

> An important debate towards the end of Sir Robert Walpole's administration being mentioned, Dr. Francis observed, 'That Mr. Pitt's speech, on that occasion, was the best he had ever read.' He added, 'That he had employed eight years of his life in the study of Demosthenes, and finished a translation of the celebrated orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach of his capacity; but he had met with nothing equal to the speech above-mentioned.' Many of the company remembered the debate; and some passages were cited, with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of conversation Johnson remained silent. As soon as the warmth of praise subsided, he opened with these words: 'That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-Street.'
>
> (Miscellanies I, 378)

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