

University of St Andrews



Full metadata for this thesis is available in
St Andrews Research Repository
at:

<http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by original copyright

THE LATIN POETRY OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

by

Susan Lintelmann

University of St. Andrews

June 1978



Because the more recent edition of Johnson's poems (E. L. McAdam, Jr., Poems, New Haven, 1964) was not readily available I have used the text printed in The Poems of Samuel Johnson by David Nichol Smith, Oxford, 1941. I have not included in the apparatus, taken also from Nichol Smith, obvious early printer's errors.

I gratefully acknowledge the steady encouragement and constant assistance of Professor R. M. Ogilvie.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own composition, that it is based on work done by me, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of Master of Letters in the Faculty of Arts in the University of St. Andrews in October 1976, under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 9.

June 1978

Susan Lintelmann

Certificate

I hereby certify that Susan Lintelmann has spent two academic years in study toward the degree of Master of Letters in Arts, has fulfilled the conditions of Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 9, and is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis in application for this degree.

R. M. Ogilvie
Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This thesis defines, through an examination of Samuel Johnson's Lives of the English Poets, his ideal of poetry, and attempts to discover, through an estimation of his classical education, to what degree he was influenced in his Latin poetry by the writers of the ancient world. It compares Johnson's Latin verse with that of other Anglo-Latin poets, and concludes that he differs from them in the comprehensiveness of his view, which was neither restricted by prejudice nor inhibited by slavish imitation. The success of his Latin poetry is largely dependent upon his ability to discipline his own verse as vigorously as he criticized that of others, and to balance a Christian acknowledgment of God with the universality of the classical world.

CONTENTS

Page

Part A: Introduction

I Johnson's Conception of Poetry	1
II Johnson's Classical Education	7
III Contemporary Latin Verse	13
IV The Quality of Johnson's Latin Verse	17
Footnotes to the Introduction	21

Part B: Commentaries

I <u>Ad Urbanum</u>	26
II <u>In Theatro</u>	30
III <u>Γνωθε Σειρατον</u>	34
IV <u>Verses Addressed to Dr. Lawrence</u>	45
V <u>On Recovering the Use of His Eyes</u>	52
VI <u>Oda</u>	55
VII <u>Oda</u>	61
VIII <u>Insula Sancti Kennethi</u>	65
IX <u>AD T.L. M.D.</u>	71
X <u>In Re^{iv}rum a Mola Stoana Lichfieldiae Diffluentem</u>	75

PART A

INTRODUCTION

I JOHNSON'S CONCEPTION OF POETRY

Johnson's attitude to literature was as forthright and uncompromising as his approach to life itself ("The greater part of mankind", he wrote in his Life of Pope, "have no character at all, have little that distinguishes them from others equally good or bad...").¹ His detachment--and in purely academic matters of moral or aesthetic judgment he was detached--allowed no sentiment. The standards against which he measured poetry, other men's and his own, were high: "as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind."²

What Johnson demanded of poetry was the expression of thoughts that were at once "natural" and "great", were morally instructive and were possessed of a "timeless" quality. Of the metaphysical poets in general he wrote: "Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found."³ So, also, he faults Cowley's verses entitled "The Mistress" because "they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his task, we sometimes esteem as learned, and sometimes despise as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural."⁴ Gray's "Elegy

Written in a Country Churchyard", in contrast, is praised "for the images which find a mirror in every mind": "The four stanzas beginning 'Yet even these bones' are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place, yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them."⁵ By the same reasoning natural thoughts were those most likely to be great: "those searching only for novelty have little hope of greatness: for great things cannot have escaped former observation."⁶ Great thoughts Johnson believed are always general; to him the fragmentation of metaphysical conceits and the pedantry that nourished it were intolerable.⁷ "Such writers could no more represent, by their slender conceits and labored particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he, who dissects a sunbeam with a prism, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon."⁸

Johnson stresses in his Lives of the English Poets that poetry is best when it tackles, in a straightforward manner, a universal subject. He condemns Cowley for his lack of vision and his adherence to the current style of writing: "His character of writing was indeed not his own: he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise, and not sufficiently enquiring, by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows."⁹ Pope, whatever his faults, was independent: he "never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary."¹⁰

Morality was to Johnson no abstraction; he lived, as far as he was able, a life of practical Christian charity and felt it incumbent upon him to help others to do so. Writing was for him a moral force.¹¹ (He added to the list of poets proposed to him for his Lives five more who were "improving poets"; similarly the illustrative quotations of Johnson's Dictionary were never drawn from "any writer of bad moral tendency.")¹² Thus the long-term neglect of a certain work written by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot is justified because "no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it."¹³ The purpose of literature was communication, preferably of a universal ideal. Again, writing of Pope's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day", he argues that the stanzas on mythology have in them "neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction or sweetness of versification, but what can form avail without better matter?"¹⁴ Johnson's appetite for life was marked by conscious thrift of its offerings: "No man needs to be so burdened with life as to squander it in voluntary dreams of felicitous occurrences."¹⁵ Reality, informed by the Christian ideal, was his touchstone: "No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness and...of having turned many to righteousness."¹⁶

It was in part one suspects on moral grounds that Johnson had reservations about both pastoral and metaphysical poetry. For the same reason that he liked best, of literature, biography,¹⁷ and read with the greatest pleasure, in Homer, the

"domestick bits",¹⁸ Johnson deplored a certain early comedy of Cowley's for being "of the pastoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world"¹⁹ and criticized the Metaphysicals in general because they wrote "rather as beholders than partakers of human nature."²⁰ Johnson would never approve of a form of literature whereby men wrote "as Epicurean deities making remarks on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion."²¹ To Johnson, involved throughout his life in personal relationships, with his mother, with his wife, with Boswell and with the Thrales, with the host of friends that kept at bay his melancholy, such an attitude was beyond comprehension; to refuse participation in, and the responsibility for moral judgment upon, the realities of life was in itself immoral. "The basis of all excellence is truth: he that professes love ought to feel its powers."²²

This passion for truth and preoccupation with reality was manifested also in Johnson's conception of style. Imagery, thought Johnson, should be concrete and purposeful--he saw no profit in abstraction or mere ornamentation. "An epithet or metaphor drawn from nature ennobles art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from art degrades nature."²³ The follies of an "unnatural" "confusion of images" he illustrates with examples from the Metaphysicals for some twelve pages in Cowley's Life.²⁴ "Their thoughts and expressions were sometimes...such as no figures or licence can reconcile to the understanding,"²⁵ writes Johnson, destroying with a healthy rationalism the superficially appealing but nonsensical imprecision of a line like "A Lover neither dead nor alive." The seventeenth century fashion for inversion he dismisses as "unnatural",²⁶ and

scoffs at those who claimed, by the undisciplined medley of verses they employed, to be imitating Pindar: "...a poem on the Sheldonian Theatre, in which all kinds of verse are shaken together, is unhappily inserted in the Musae Anglicanae."²⁷ Above all Johnson disapproves Donne's "light allusions to sacred things"²⁸--versification should be suited to its subject, and the subject treated with full respect.

It was his reverence for Christianity that made Johnson forever incapable of the unthinking idolatry of the ancient world that sometimes imprisoned fellow writers. In his Life of Smith he writes with distaste of those who "draw off from the ancients...by a painful industry and servile imitation."²⁹ There was no hint of servility in Johnson's own attitude to the classics. Although his diaries and the pages of Boswell frequently record Johnson's fondness for Latin verse (Boswell 1.70, that Horace's Odes were an early delight; Boswell 1.460, that "'All the modern languages cannot furnish so melodious a line as 'Formosam resonare doces Amarillida silvas.'" (V.Ecl.1.5); Boswell 4.218, at the age of seventy-four his pleasure still in the Aeneid), Johnson for the same reason that he preferred Virgil to Theocritus,³⁰ preferred modern times to ancient: "the degree and diffusion of knowledge in the later period must always be greater."³¹ And inseparable from learning's scope was Christianity, for the lack of which, to one of Johnson's steadfast faith, no ancient thought could compensate. "The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskillful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be

able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy." ³² Thus Cowley is a better Latin poet than Milton, because "Milton is generally content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language...whereas...Cowley, without much loss of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions." ³³ And Addison "has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed... an elevation of literary character above all Greek, above all Roman fame." ³⁴ Johnson despite his admiration for Lucretius did not include him in his list of authors proposed for reading in a grammar-school; the quest for scientific knowledge, pursued unchecked, might end in faith's destruction. Indeed, Johnson's belief in God, his need to carry in his mind the fixed image of a concerned deity, kept him from ever adopting wholeheartedly the attitude of any pagan writer--neither the self-sufficiency of Lucretius, the indifference of Horace, or the insouciance of Ovid could as well stave off his melancholic fear of madness.

Christianity did not however impair Johnson's regard for, or delight in, the classics, which he included as a matter of course as part of the learning which became an educated man. (Boswell, "I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. Johnson. 'Most certainly, Sir; for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, Sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life....' ") ³⁵ Johnson "still believed in the international Latin-based culture of Europe, and with reason: the eighteenth century saw the sunset of this culture, but it was still a

brilliant radiance." ³⁶ Latin he considered was the language in which "everything intended to be universal and permanent, should be" ³⁷ ("Consider, Sir; how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph on Erasmus in Dutch!") ³⁸

Given the importance that Johnson attached to Latin, it is not surprising that he chose it as the language in which to set some of his profoundest thoughts and most accomplished poetry.

II JOHNSON'S CLASSICAL EDUCATION

Johnson learnt his classics at a time when the study of Greek and Latin still dominated the curriculum of most schools. ³⁹ He first read Latin at the Lichfield school, continued it at Stourbridge for a year and afterwards for two years at home read ancient authors. ⁴⁰ Although we have not a record of his school-day schedule, it probably did not differ much from that at the Congleton Grammar School, where in the early 1700's "any boy caught speaking English in class was beaten, prayers were said daily between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. in Latin", and "every ⁴¹ Thursday afternoon the whole school disputed orally in Latin." A vocabulary-book by Thomas Watt, printed in 1734, shows how thoroughly the school-boy was expected to absorb and use the language: we find to be memorized in realistic sequence sentences like inspuit vestibus; de industria agit; exeruit linguam; pedem calcam; convitiatus mihi; Domine, hic mihi molestus; Indica si audeas; edicavi praeceptorum; par pari referam....

Evidence of Johnson's school-boy reading is, like his formal education, sketchy. But for nearly three hundred

years the English grammar-school kept with little change its emphasis on Greek and Latin prose and verse composition, and in Johnson's century especially there was, due to the widespread influence of the Eton system, a similarity in school curricula. It is possible from a glance at such schools to posit Johnson's scholastic background.

At St. Paul's School between 1672 and 1697 the eighth form read, along with Homer and Demosthenes, Persius and Juvenal every afternoon; the seventh form, Horace, Apollodorus and Cicero's orations. In the sixth, only Virgil, Martial and the Greek testament were taught; the fifth read Virgil, Martial and Sallust and turned the Psalms into Latin verse; the fourth read Ovid's Metamorphoses and Heroides; the third form, his Tristia. Mornings in general were reserved for Latin grammar, except Fridays when the week's work was repeated.⁴² In the first decade of the next century we find the upper forms being examined on selected passages of Livy, Cicero, Horace's Odes and Epodes, Virgil's Georgics, Eutropius, Lucan, Terence, Phaedrus and Quintus Curtius.⁴³ At the Congleton School at about the same time boys read Corderius and Cato, then progressed to Ovid's Heroides and Tristia, Aesop's Fables, Cicero's letters, Erasmus, and Phaedrus' Fables. In the third class Virgil and Martial were studied; in the second it was Virgil, Martial and Horace, while the head class read Horace, Juvenal and Persius, Livy, Cicero's Orations, Sallust and Florus.⁴⁴

From the Merchant Taylors' School of 1652 where boys read Aesop and Cato, Corderius and Erasmus, Cicero's letters, the Andria of Terence, Ovid's Tristia and Metamorphoses, Cicero's speeches, Virgil's Eclogues and Aeneid, Seneca's Tragedies,

Horace's Epistles and Ars Poetica, Juvenal and Persius, Sallust, and Pliny's letters;⁴⁵ and the "School-Authors most proper for every form of Scholars in a Grammar-Schoole" suggested by Charles Hoole in A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole (1659) (Cato, Corderius, Aesop's fables, Lily's Grammar, Terence, Ovid's Tristia and Metamorphoses) there has been little change.⁴⁶ But Corderius and Erasmus, as well as Cato and Aesop, were soon to lose their popularity. Eighteenth-century schools, particularly the larger ones, began to replace Aesop with Phaedrus, and to use more frequently Eutropius and Cornelius Nepos.⁴⁷ (All three, Phaedrus, Eutropius, and Nepos, are recommended by Johnson in his scheme for a grammar-school.) The letters of Cicero and Ovid would in a few years be off the lists. For by the middle of the eighteenth century the learning of Latin had slowly come to mean, rather than the perusal, for practical reasons, of oratory and epistolography, the study and composition of elegant verse.⁴⁸ But in Johnson's schooldays the study of epistolography would not yet have entirely given way to verse composition, though Hoole's adjunct would be more than ever heeded: "for gaining a smooth way of versifying, and to be able to expresse much matter in a few words, and very fully to the life, I conceive it very necessary for Scholars to be very frequent in perusing and rehearsing Ovid and Virgil...."⁴⁹

School exercises collected by Boswell show that Johnson must have read some of Virgil's Eclogues (a translation of the first) and some of Horace's Odes (translations of 1.22, 2.9, 2.14), as well as some of the Iliad (a translation from a dialogue in Book VI).⁵⁰ After Stourbridge Johnson spent two years at home, during which time he read at random but

not lightly. As he said to Boswell, "not voyages and travels, but all literature...all ancient writers...though but little Greek...in this irregular manner...I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the University, where they seldom read any books but what are put into their hands by their tutors...."⁵¹

Given the attitude, common in the eighteenth century, that the classics were a subject for the grammar-schools and were expected to have been taught there, the judgment of Dr. Adams, later master of Pembroke College, that Johnson (who had had as we have seen a somewhat irregular secondary education) was "the best qualified for the University that he had ever known come there" is most impressive.⁵²

A friend of the poet Gray, Richard West, called the Oxford he entered in 1735 (Johnson entered Pembroke in 1728) "a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are alike unknown."⁵³ Classical lectures in any case usually extended not beyond the first year.⁵⁴

Johnson told Boswell that "what he read solidly at Oxford was Greek."⁵⁵ However he wrote in his diary in the autumn of 1729: "of the ancient Latins I greatly wish Lucretius, Velleius Paterculus, Justinus and Graevius' edition of Tully's Letters"; and he is known to have bought "at least Cicero's letters and Lucretius before leaving Oxford."⁵⁶

That Johnson's scheme for a grammar-school and suggested reading-list for a young friend, written a few years after he left Oxford, are generally consistent with the usual school curriculum is further evidence that his classical education, though perhaps unconventionally obtained and superior in scope, at least included the authors read by his contemporaries.

He suggested in his scheme Corderius and Erasmus, Eutropius and Nepos or Justin, Ovid's Metamorphoses and Caesar's commentaries, then Virgil and Horace; and to the independent scholar he advised that "in the study of Latin, it is proper not to read the later authors, till you are well-versed in those of the purist ages; as Terence, Tully, Caesar, Sallust, Nepos, Velleius Paterculus, Virgil, Horace, Phaedrus."⁵⁷

Phaedrus as we have noted above came into vogue in the eighteenth century, appearing in the curricula of St. Paul's, Halifax, Canterbury, Eton, Rugby, Beaumaris and other schools; Eutropius is found again at St. Paul's, at Monmouth, Chesterfield (1818), Coventry, Appleby Parva; Nepos, at eight schools including Eton; Justin, at Canterbury and Beaumaris. Johnson leaves out Sallust, who is missing also from the curricula of Halifax, Canterbury and Eton (though present at six other schools of the time).⁵⁸

Noticeable at once in all of the preceding schemes, those of St. Paul's, the Merchant Taylors', the Congleton Grammar School, and in Johnson's own, is the ubiquity of certain authors. Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Sallust dominate the classical education provided by the grammar-school, as they had done ever since its foundation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, which works of an author are to be read are not always mentioned, but of Terence, the Andria was most often included; and Cicero's De Officiis, orations and, until mid-eighteenth century, his letters were his most commonly read works. The Aeneid was a constant factor in any grammar-school, accompanied more often by the Eclogues than the Georgics (though the latter appear at St. Paul's in 1710). Horace's Epodes, Epistles and Odes were

most popular (though the Ars Poetica is specified in the Merchant Taylors' School of 1652). Ovid's Tristia enjoyed a steady vogue from the beginning, closely seconded by the Metamorphoses and Heroides. Equally noticeable is the absence, from any school curriculum, of Lucretius, whose only mention appears to be in the utilitarian education by Milton of his nephews. The vogue for Lucretius paralleled the scientific discoveries of the seventeenth century but, like the pragmatic theories of education proposed by Milton, Comenius and Locke, made little imprint on the grammar-school curriculum.⁵⁹

Despite the lively practicality of word-books like Watt's, as soon as statesmen ceased, as they did in the seventeenth century, to speak it, Latin began to be an anachronism.⁶⁰ A remark of Johnson's, when he was recalling his school-days, illustrates precisely why Latin as a modern language, at which the humanists had aimed, was putting back the clocks. His schoolmaster, said Johnson, "would ask a boy a question, and if he did not answer it, would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it. For instance, he would call up a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked..."⁶¹ Such a revival, of a language that could or would not meet the requirements of modern life, was doomed to failure; the enthusiasm of the Renaissance, good in itself and strong enough to rule the schools for centuries, had inevitably to shift its emphasis from spoken to written Latin. Johnson was very likely one of the last men to speak Latin as well as he wrote it.⁶²

Increasingly the view of his contemporaries came to be that Latin, as a language no longer spoken, was a decoration

only.⁶³ As gentlemen they wrote Latin verse, but they erred, as did their predecessors even in the Renaissance, in neglecting to inspire their compositions with either the vigor of modern life or the compliment of original thought. They kept Latin a museum-piece, of which they turned out worthless copies. Johnson stands nearly alone as one who recognised but refused to accept this gradual metamorphosis of a language into what Chesterfield in 1748 called "a most useful and necessary ornament"⁶⁴, and who, however unrealistically, looked beyond the cultural attainment to the universal bond that was still in his century so nearly possible.

Even a brief glance at the Latin verse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries demonstrates how isolated, for the most part, was Johnson's view.

III CONTEMPORARY LATIN VERSE

The Musae Anglicanae, printed in 1691, is a collection of contemporary Latin verse by English authors.⁶⁵ The second volume was compiled by Addison, who included in it all of his own Latin poetry. Johnson writes with approval of his style: "He has not confined himself to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his style from the general language, such as diligent perusal of the productions of different ages happened to supply"; but goes on to criticize three of Addison's poems for being "upon subjects on which perhaps he would not have ventured to have written in his own language: The Battle of the Pygmies and Cranes; The Barometer; and A Bowling-Green."⁶⁶ Such subjects are indeed

nearly typical of the poems in this collection. A few stand out but it is a habit with these poets to lose themselves too often in a multiplicity of subjects, in a lack of focus or simply in an aggregation of classical ornament. Page after page is expended upon stale imitation of ancient writers; unoriginal dissection of naval battles; births, inaugurations, marriages and deaths of royal persons, and panegyrics upon their administrations. With all the thrill of seventeenth-century innocence they celebrate scientific discovery; besides Addison's on the Barometer, we find verses on a microscope, on flies, on flying, on fever, on the circulation of the blood. All are subjects which, although they interested Johnson, did not absorb him: "But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind" ⁶⁷

Johnson was not deceived by, nor would he countenance Latin's prostitution: "When the matter," said he, "is low or scanty, a dead language, in which nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and by the sonorous magnificence of Roman syllables, the writer conceals penury of thought, and want of novelty, often from the reader, and often from himself." ⁶⁸ This criticism is perhaps even more applicable to much of the poetry contained in the Musae Etonenses (published in 1795) of Johnson's own era. For we have in these volumes left behind even the spontaneity resulting from contemporary enthusiasm for scientific discovery. Those few poems discussing natural phenomena, such as Mobilis Aer, Lucidus Aether, Igneus est Ollis Vigor et Coelestis Origo, are now philosophic, pseudo-

Lucretian. There are fewer "public" pieces. The majority are either translations from the Bible and from the Classics; or stilted pastorals, reflections upon spring or shepherds' dialogues on love. These poems lack in general the concentrated clarity of Johnson's; and they all lack his personal immediacy--the authors of the Musae Anglicanae and the Musae Etonenses do not expose themselves to view.

Collections are by their nature subject to the taste of the collector; let us examine briefly the Latin poetry of some independent poets who, like Johnson, wrote primarily in English but occasionally in Latin. In the seventeenth century George Herbert wrote Memoriae Matris Sacrum, memorial verses to his mother, "the most beloved and dominant influence of his life" and several poems on religious subjects, but his Latin verses "representing for the most part the outcome of a conflict that had been resolved in God's favour" do not have the intensity of the English poems in which he wrote his torment down.⁶⁹

Milton wrote thirty-one Latin poems before he renounced that language (and all others) in favour of English. They are mostly commemorative or upon conventional themes, and clearly follow Ovid's style; many are ponderous with the weight of scholarship. The panegyric to Manso, possibly Milton's best Latin poem, "represents the natural world as having its own logic, rewards and happiness."⁷⁰

About Andrew Marvell's Latin verses as about his English there is the chill of flawless marble. He wrote them to display his scholarship and because he took a technical delight in the sonority of Latin. It pleased him also to compare the

resources of the two languages: he often tried the same idea, with different emphasis, in both English and Latin. His subjects are mainly political vers d'occasion like Bilboreum: Farfacio and "A Letter to Dr. Ingelo", or philosophical explorations like Ros or Hortus. Neither the transience of the former, nor the obscure particularization of the latter suited Johnson's broader compass.

Closer to Johnson is Vincent Bourne (1695-1747). As a near contemporary his Latin verses are of especial interest. He and Johnson have in common an economy of style, and a familiarity with the Latin language, that enabled them to avoid the trap of artificiality and the eighteenth-century tendency to prize form over matter. Bourne like Johnson scorned imitation and pretence; his work was his own, as a poem like Ad Davidem Cook , the night watchman at Westminster School, testifies: "What emerges here, apart from the affection of the portrait, is the clever use of detail, the feeling of a classical background but a contemporary setting, the lack of condescension, the humanity of the whole... the poem demonstrates Bourne's constant refusal to strive for effect."⁷¹ But Bourne's attitude, unlike Johnson's, was one of observant detachment. He was essentially an amateur, too conscious of his circumscribed audience to use "grand gestures".⁷² His poems are for the most part diversions, as a catalogue of themes ("addresses to glow-worms, silkworms and snails"; the architecture of the swallow; collecting butterflies) reveals.⁷³ For Johnson, so zealous of improvement, for himself and for others, Bourne's diffident mockery was not enough.⁷⁴

IV THE QUALITY OF JOHNSON'S LATIN VERSE

From all these Latin poets Johnson differs in both scope and attitude. He did not confine his talents to theology, or weigh down his works with excess scholarship, or rob his skill, by trivial subject matter, of any worth. His intellect was not subservient, or detached, but gregariously all-embracing. He used his poetic abilities to the utmost by writing on subjects of moral importance. The collected verses of the Musae Anglicanae and Musae Etonenses are with little exception shallow set pieces on a common theme. When Johnson uses, as he often does, a conventional theme he applies it first to his own situation, and then universalizes it, in the confidence that what affected mankind was everyone's concern. In Johnson's Latin verse there is no "representation", no allegory or rhetorical distance; he presents no world-view or picture of society. He is guilty perhaps of some idealization, notably in Insula Sancti Kennethi and Oda Thralia, but the people described are and remain real; the idealization is unobtrusive. The question of audience did not arise; he wrote as much for his own instruction as for that of others. No one else appears to have written in Latin in his or the preceding century, with similar range, immediacy, and serious intent.

He disciplined his own writing as vigorously as he criticized others'. Latin was not an amusing game. In this he was aided by what was, even for his century, a formidable grasp of that language, "in which," wrote Boswell, "I believe, he was exceeded by no man of his time."⁷⁵ Nor was Boswell the only contemporary to hold Johnson's Latin in high regard.

A poem by John Courtenay, in a "Poetical Review of the Literature and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson", so precisely isolated one of the qualities that singles Johnson's verses out, that it deserves quotation, at least in part:

And with like ease his vivid lines assume
 The garb and dignity of ancient Rome.--
 Let college verse-men trite conceits express,
 Trick'd out in splendid shreds of Virgil's dress;
 From playful Ovid cull the tinsel phrase,
 And vapid notions hitch in pilfer'd lays;
 Then with mosaick art the piece combine,
 And boast the glitter of each dulcet line:
 Johnson adventur'd boldly to transfuse
 His vigorous sense into the Latian muse;
 Aspir'd to shine by unreflected light,
 And with a Roman's ardour think and write.⁷⁶

There is a further tribute, by De Quincey (after the reservation "that Johnson did not understand Latin with the elaborate and circumstantial accuracy required for the editing critically of a Latin classic"): "he possessed that language in a way that no extent of mere critical knowledge could confer. He wrote it genially, not as one translating into it painfully from English, but as one using it for his original agent of thinking. And in Latin verse he expressed himself at times with the energy and freedom of a Roman."⁷⁷

This is borne out by the fact that stylistically Johnson's Latin poetry cannot be classified as Virgilian or Horatian or Ovidian, although a familiarity with all these authors, as well as with others, illuminates his verse. It was from Ovid often that he took his style and metre, and sometimes his theme (Oda Thralia, Insula Sancti Kennethi). Horace more often perhaps than Virgil suited Johnson's mood and reinforced his inspiration (In Theatro, Skia). But he shows his independence by his close association, in the "Verses Addressed to Dr. Lawrence", of Ovid's Metamorphoses

with Lucretius' De Rerum Natura; by the incorporation, in Ἐν ᾧ 91 ἑαυτοῦ, of Horatian concepts, echoes from Virgil, Martial and Juvenal, and Lucretian and Ovidian phraseology. The result is always distinctly Johnsonian. Because he followed his own precepts, eschewing temporary fashion, pursuing the "natural", the "great", the "universal", and the "morally instructive", his subjects--self-knowledge, escape's futility, the disposition of one's time and talent, exile--have not the trappings but the timeless spirit of the ancient world.

Johnson repeated more than once his opinion that "everything intended to be universal and permanent" ought to be in Latin. ⁷⁸ After taking into consideration that Johnson was speaking, in both instances, of epitaphs, and allowing for possible rhetorical exaggeration, a comparison of his English poetry with his Latin still suggests that Johnson to some degree followed, at least with poetry, his own commandment.

Apart from the lighter work which he produced in both languages there are perhaps five serious English verses: "The Young Author" (1743); "An Ode on Friendship" (1743); "A Winter's Walk" (1747); "An Ode" (1747); and "On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet" (1782). There are twice as many in Latin, nearly all of which belong to the later part of his life, in contrast to the English which, with the exception of the memorial to Levet, were written before 1750. Apart from the obviously youthful Ad Urbanum (1738) the Latin poems treated in the following commentary were written, as far as can be determined, after 1770. They are the product of mature reflection on themes that haunted John-

son all his life. Most of them deal with the necessity for self-knowledge and the recognition of man's indebtedness to God. "As the gloom of his life deepened, he seems to have felt that his ready personal feelings had to be couched, perhaps hidden, in the learned language."⁷⁹

His religion was an anchor in a difficult life. "Because of his initial fear of mental disintegration, he clung fiercely to the two strongest things he knew -- reason and obedience to God."⁸⁰ Johnson said of religion that "there must be either a natural or a moral stupidity, if one lives in a total neglect of so very important a concern";⁸¹ but he also believed that "the good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wing of wit; the mind sinks under them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief and humble adoration."⁸² Johnson could not risk doctrinal controversy, for which in any case he had little predilection. Equally, the common-sense that led him to tease a disciple of Berkeley: "Pray, Sir, don't leave us, for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist",⁸³ enabled him to comfort Boswell's uncertainty of predestination: "No man believes himself to be impelled irresistibly; we know that he who says he believes it, lies."⁸⁴ Johnson's religion was neither an obsession nor a blinker.

The Latin poems treated below, although only one is categorically "religious", are nearly all infused throughout with a sense of the presence of God. It must have been in part the comprehensiveness of Johnson's view that enabled him to succeed where so many Anglo-Latin poets failed. For it is largely Johnson's ability to balance a Christian acknowledgment of God with the universality of the classical world, that gives to his Latin verses such distinction.

FOOTNOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

- 1 Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1905), pp. 263-264.
- 2 James Boswell, Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1934), vol.II, p. 351.
- 3 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 20.
- 4 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 62.
- 5 Johnson, Lives, III, pp. 441-442.
- 6 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 21.
- 7 Johnson, Lives, I, pp. 45, 55.
- 8 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 21. But for Johnson's praise of the Metaphysicals, see further down on the same page: "To write on their plan it was at least necessary to write and think."
- 9 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 56.
- 10 Johnson, Lives, III, p. 219.
- 11 John Wain, Samuel Johnson (London, 1974), p. 156. For Johnson's views on the advisability of concealing or revealing a man's ^{vices} in his biography, see Boswell, III, p. 155.
- 12 Wain, p. 348.
- 13 Johnson, Lives, III, p. 182.
- 14 Johnson, Lives, III, p. 228.
- 15 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 7.
- 16 Johnson, Lives, II, p. 126.

- 17 Boswell, I, p. 425.
- 18 Boswell, IV, p. 218-219.
- 19 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 4.
- 20 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 20.
- 21 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 20.
- 22 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 6.
- 23 Johnson, Lives, III, pp. 436-437.
- 24 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 41.
- 25 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 30.
- 26 Johnson, Lives, I, pp. 60-61.
- 27 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 48.
- 28 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 58.
- 29 Johnson, Lives, II, p. 7.
- 30 Boswell, IV, p. 2.
- 31 Boswell, IV, p. 217.
- 32 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 179.
- 33 Johnson, Lives, I, p. 13.
- 34 Johnson, Lives, II, pp. 125-126.
- 35 Boswell, I, p. 457.
- 36 Wain, p. 341.

- 37
Boswell, III, p. 85, note 2 continued from p. 84.
- 38
Boswell, III, p. 84, note 2.
- 39
R. M. Ogilvie, "Latin for Yesterday," Essays in the History of Publishing ... 1724-1974, ed. Asa Briggs (London, 1974), p. 221.
- 40
Boswell, I, p. 43-58.
- 41
Ogilvie, "Latin for Yesterday," p. 221.
- 41a
Thomas Watt, Vocabulary English and Latin (1734), p. 12-13.
- 42
Michael F. J. McDonnell, A History of St. Paul's School (London, 1909), p. 266.
- 43
McDonnell, p. 288-289.
- 44
Ogilvie, "Latin for Yesterday", p. 223-224.
- 45
M. L. Clarke, Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900 (Cambridge, 1959), p. 41.
- 46
Charles Hoole, A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole, ed. from 1659 edition by I. Campagnac (Liverpool, 1913), p. xvii.
- 47
Clarke, p. 51.
- 48
Ogilvie, "Latin for Yesterday", p. 233; Clarke, p. 40 ff.
- 49
Clarke, p. 40.
- 50
Boswell, I, pp. 51-53.
- 51
Boswell, I, p. 57.
- 52
Boswell, I, p. 57.
- 53
Clarke, p. 72.

- 54
Clarke, p. 70.
- 55
Boswell, I, p. 70.
- 56
Samuel Johnson, Diaries, Prayers and, Annals, ed. E. L. McAdam, Jr. et al. Yale Edition, I (New Haven, 1958), p. 26.
- 57
Boswell, I, p. 100.
- 58
Clarke, p. 195-196.
- 59
Clarke, p. 45. In the preceding paragraph I follow the argument of Clarke, p. 6-20 and 34-60.
- 60
Clarke, p. 46.
- 61
Boswell, I, p.99.
- 62
Clarke, p. 47 ff.
- 63
Ogilvie, "Latin for Yesterday", p. 233.
- 64
ibid.
- 65
Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta (Oxford, 1699). To avoid confusion I adopt Johnson's abbreviated title.
- 66
Johnson, Lives, II, pp. 82-83.
- 67
Johnson, Lives, I, p. 99.
- 68
Johnson, Lives, II, p. 83.
- 69
J. W. Binns, ed., The Latin Poetry of English Poets (London, 1974), p. 26 and 35 respectively.
- 70
Binns, pp. 63-80.
- 71
Binns, p. 146.

72
Binns, p. 122.

73
Binns, p. 136.

74
Binns, p. 135.

75
Boswell, I, p. 45.

76
Boswell, I, p. 62.

77
Boswell, I, p. 272, note 3.

78
Boswell, III, p. 842; V, p. 154.

79
Samuel Johnson, Poems, ed. E. L. McAdam, Jr., Yale Edition VI
(New Haven, 1964), p. xxii.

80
Wain, p. 156.

81
Boswell, IV, p. 215.

82
Johnson, Lives, I, p. 182.

83
Boswell, IV, p. 27.

84
Boswell, IV, p. 123.

PART B

COMMENTARYI AD URBANUM

Urbane, nullis fesse laboribus,
 Urbane, nullis victe calumniis,
 Cui Fronte Sertum in Erudita
 Perpetuo viret et virebit;

Quid moliatur Gens Imitantium, 5
 Quid et minetur, sollicitus parum,
 Vacare solis perge Musis,
 Juxta Animo Studiisque felix.

Linguae procacis plumbea Spicula,
 Fidens, Superbo frange Silentio; 10
 Victrix per obstantes catervas
 Sedulitas animosa tendet.

Intende nervos fortis, inanibus
 Risurus olim nisibus Aemuli;
 Intende jam nervos, habebis 15
 Participes operae Camoenas.

Non ulla Musis Pagina gratior,
 Quam quae severis ludicra jungere
 Novit, fatigatamque nugis
 Utilibus recreare Mentem.

Texente Nymphis sarta Lycoride,
 Rosae ruborem sic Viola adjuvat

Immista, sic Iris refulget

Aethereis variata fucis.

Metre: Alcaics

The Gentleman's Magazine, March 1738, p. 156, and 1784, verso of title-page of Part I.

Hawkins, Life of Johnson, 1787, p. 90.

Works, 1787, xi. 388.

Boswell, Life, 1791, i. 56 (1934, (1934, i.113)).

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 101.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 40.

Translations: The Gentleman's Magazine, May 1738, p. 268.
(reprinted by both Boswell and Hawkins).
verso of the title-page of Part II, 1784.

Johnson wrote this poem in 1738 as his first contribution to The Gentleman's Magazine, in defence of its editor, Edward Cave (who contributed articles under the name of Sylvanus Urban), then under attack from rivals. Cave was not an immediately appealing man. Hawkins describes him as one who "had few of those qualities that constitute the character of urbanity"; and records that "Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting..., and, for a few minutes, to continue silent...."¹ But Johnson, as the brief biography of Cave he later wrote testifies, liked and respected him; and as a new recruit to the magazine he probably welcomed the chance to write a poem in Cave's defence.²

The theme, direct praise of an individual's diligence, artistic integrity and disregard for public attack, would for a struggling author such as Johnson have in any case a strong appeal. The tone of these verses is not so intimate, nor do the thoughts flow with such an easy grace, as in the

later poems. Despite its stiffness however the sincerity³ of Johnson's address recalls the friendly concern for others which prompted so many of Horace's odes and epistles (Odes 1. 29, 1. 33, 2. 9, 2. 10; Ep. 1. 4, 1. 11 etc.). Horace often wrote also of the isolation of the beleaguered artist, and of his distrust for the multitude, as in for example Ep. 1. 1. 70, 19. 19ff., Sat. 1. 6. 14-18, 1. 10. 36-9. Johnson himself touches upon these topics in the English poem "The Young Author", though with different emphasis.

The poem is interesting as an example of Johnson's early work and for the espousal of literary theory in the fifth stanza. The signs of immaturity are clear in the formality of structure, in the linguistic and metrical eccentricities of lines three and nine, and in the repetitions of the first, second, and third stanzas. That Johnson here adopts the theory, expounded in the Ars Poetica and the Satires of Horace, that poetry should consist of a tempered mixture of humour and gravity, pleasure and instruction, demonstrates how early was his recognition of the writer's potential as a moral arbiter.

Notes

- 1-2. nullis fesse laboribus...calumniis: cf. Ov. Met. 3. 158 antrum nemorale... arte laboratum nulla; and Met. 12. 166, 12. 170, 13. 81.
3. Sertum: the use of the singular is very rare and denotes Johnson's youth. Note the ring formation, completed by serta in l. 21 (the more usual plural).
5. Gens: in the sense of a crude throng.
Gens Imitantium: so Hor. Ep. 1. 19. 19ff. O imitatores, servum pecus....
7. Vacare...perge: cf. Cic. Ac. 1. 8. 28 perge...explicare.

9. plumbea Spicula: such scansion before sp is very rare in Horace; it is again an irregularity that Johnson would not have been guilty of in later years.
- 9-12: Linguae...tendet: recalls in sentiment Hor. Odes 3. 1
Odi profanum vulgus et arceo; also Sat. 1. 10. 73, 1. 4. 71.
11. Victrix...catervas: so Hor. Odes 3. 20. 5 cum per obstantis iuvenum catervas; 4. 9. 43 per obstantis catervas/ explicuit sua victor arma. For the poet beleaguered by critics who keeps his identity, see Sat. 2. 1.
12. Sedulitas: cf. Hor. Ep. 1. 7. 8.
13. Intende nervos: so Ter. Eun. 2. 3. 20 digna res est ubi tu nervos intendas tuos. See also Hor. Ars P. 26.
16. Camoenas: Hor. Ep. 1.1.1; Sat. 1. 10. 45.
- 17-20 Non...Mentem: for a discussion of this theory, see Brink's commentary on the Ars Poetica, p. 352 ff.
18. severis: Hor. Ars P. 216 sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,/ et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia praecept...
Hor. Odes 2: 1. 9. For the conjunction with ludicra, Sat. 1. 10. 11, 14-15. For the use of ludicra alone see Ep. 1. 1. 10.
19. nugis: cf. Hor. Sat. 1. 9. 2; Ars P. 451.
- 19-20. nugis mentem: Hor. Ars P. 333 Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae/ aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae;
and 343-4.
22. Rosae...Viola: Cic. TD 5. 73 in rosa ^{au} et in viola.
- 23-4. sic Iris...fucis: recollects Virg. A. 4. 700-702.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 266.

Translations: Notes and Queries, 4 March 1905 (by Mrs. Thrale).

On the evening of March 8, 1771 Johnson accompanied Mrs. Thrale to a performance at Covent Garden. She wrote in her Anecdotes that "though he was for the most part an exceedingly bad playhouse companion... he sat surprisingly quiet, and I flattered myself that he was listening to the music. When we got home however he repeated these verses..."⁴

The poem treats in verse a subject on which Johnson had written for the September 8, 1750 issue of the "Rambler": "To secure to the old that influence which they are willing to claim,...., it is absolutely necessary that they give themselves up to the duties of declining years; and contentedly resign to youth its levity, its pleasures, its frolics and its fopperies." But twenty years have passed and Johnson writes no more with clinical detachment. He is sixty two: an increased awareness of mortality gives to the poem a sharper focus. For a parallel sense, in antiquity, of the passing of time and the necessity for serious pursuits see the closing lines of Hor. Ep. 2. 2 (which Johnson quoted in the "Rambler" essay); and the last two stanzas of Odes 4.11. For the reverse advice, to youth to be merry while they can, see Hor. Odes 1. 9. 15ff. There is on page 245 of the first volume of the Musae Etonenses of Johnson's day a poem with a similar sense of what is fitting for age:

Mens etiam senium patitur; nec, ut ante, Camenas

Excolit, aut lepidis convenit illa jocis....
 Naevia, dum teneras imitaris cana puellas,
 Multa in deformem quisque jocatur anum.

This poem however has neither the immediacy nor the poignancy of Johnson's .

Notes

1. Tertii ... quater ... lustris: i.e. sixty two.
2. Crispe: the name is probably no more than a convenient tag, especially as the poem was occasioned by Johnson's own visit to the theatre and is addressed as much to himself as to Crispus.
4. Voluptas: so Hor Ep. 1. 2. 55 sperne voluptates: nocet empta dolore voluptas; and Sat. 2. 2. 19.
5. fidibus canoris: Hor. Odes 1. 12. 11, where the subject is Orpheus.
6. Modulis stupere: so Hor Odes 2. 13. 33 carminibus stupens.
7. pictas ... formas: perhaps pictas also in the sense of unreal, vain, merely painted, recalling Hor. Odes 1. 14. 14 nil pictis timidus navita puppibus fidit.
- 9-10. Inter ... studiosus: reminiscent of Hor. Ep. 1. 1. 7ff. solve senescentem ... where he gives up lyrics for philosophy; and Odes 4. 1 where he puts aside love.
11. Rectius vives: Hor. Odes 2. 10. 1 rectius vives Licini ...; and Ep. 1. 16. 17 tu recte vivis, si curas esse quod audis.
- 11-12. carpat/ Gaudia: so Ov. Ars. 3.661 credula si fueris, aliae tua gaudia carpent; Mart. 7. 47. 11; Stat. Theb. 11. 184.
13. lusibus gaudet puer: see Hor. Ep. 2. 2. 141-4, where he leaves light verse to boys.

14. oblectat Juvenem; cf. Hor. Ars P. 321. For the young man's attitude to the theatre, see Prop. 2. 22A. 4ff.
- 15-16. Sapienter uti: so Hor. Odes 4. 9. 48 rectius occupat/ nomen beati, qui deorum/ muneribus sapienter uti.

III ΠΝΩΘΙΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ

(Post Lexicon Anglicanum auctum et emendatum.)

Lexicon ad finem longo luctamine tandem
 Scaliger ut duxit, tenuis pertaesus opellae,
 Vile indignatus studium, nugasque molestas,
 Ingemit exosus, scribendaque lexica mandat
 Damnatis, poenam pro poenis omnibus unam. 5

Ille quidem recte, sublimis, doctus, et acer,
 Quem decuit majora sequi, majoribus aptum,
 Qui veterum modo facta ducum, modo carmina vatum,
 Gesserat et quicquid Virtus, Sapientia quicquid
 Dixerat, imperiique vices, coelique meatus, 10
 Ingentemque animo seclorum volverat orbem.

Fallimur exemplis; temere sibi turba scholarum
 Ima tuas credit permitti, Scaliger, iras.
 Quisque suum norit modulum; tibi, prime virorum,
 Ut studiis sperem, aut ausim par esse querelis, 15
 Non mihi sorte datum; lenti seu sanguinis obsint
 Frigora, seu nimium longo jacuisse veterno,
 Sive mihi mentem dederit Natura minorem.

Te sterili functum cura, vocumque salebris
 Tuto eluctatum spatiis Sapientia dia 20
 Excipit aethereis, Ars omnis plaudit amica,
 Linguarumque omni terra discordia concors
 Multiplici reducem circumsonat ore magistrum.

Me, pensi immunis cum jam mihi reddor, inertis
 Desidia sors dura manet, graviorque labore 25
 Tristis et atra quies, et tardae taedia vitae.
 Nascuntur curis curae, vexatque dolorum

Importuna cohors, vacuae mala somnia mentis.
 Nunc clamosa juvant nocturnae gaudia mensae,
 Nunc loca sola placent; frustra te, Somne, recumbens 30
 Alme voco, impatiens noctis metuensque diei.
 Omnia percurro trepidus, circum omnia lustrō,
 Si qua usquam pateat melioris semita vitae,
 Nec quid agam invenio, meditatus grandia, cogor
 Notior ipse mihi fieri, incultumque fateri 35
 Pectus, et ingenium vano se robore jactans.
 Ingenium, nisi materiem Doctrina ministret,
 Cessat inops rerum, ut torpet, si marmoris absit
 Copia, Phidiaci foecunda potentia coeli.
 Quicquid agam, quocunque ferar, conatibus obstat 40
 Res angusta domi, et macrae penuria mentis.

Non Rationis opes Animus, nunc parta recensens,
 Conspicit aggestas, et se miratur in illis,
 Nec sibi de gaza praesens quod postulet usus
 Summus adesse jubet celsa dominator ab arce; 45
 Non operum serie, seriem dum computat aevi,
 Praeteritis fruitur, laetos aut sumit honores
 Ipse sui iudex, actae bene munera vitae;
 Sed sua regna videns, loca nocte silentia late
 Horret, ubi vanae species, umbraeque fugaces, 50
 Et rerum volitant rarae per inane figurae.

35-47 These lines were written below the date at the end, and replace the following cancelled lines;

Notior ipse mihi fieri, pectusque fateri
 Incultum Studiis, et paucis dotibus auctum
 Materies arti, sua desunt arma labori
 Ingeniumque sui cohibet penuria census.

Nec miratur opes, celsa speculator ab arce (aut above neque
 Congestas animus, laetos aut sumit honores struck out)

37 ministret ministrat Works 42 Rationis...recensens above
 Animus sero nimium dum parta recenset MS. 43 Conspicit
 aggestas above Versat opum cumolos MS.

Quid faciam? tenebrisne pigram damnare senectam
 Restat? an accingar studiis gravioribus audax?
 Aut, hoc si nimium est, tandem nova lexica poscam?

12 Dec. 1772.

44 Nec above Non MS. postulet postulat Works 46 Non
 operum...aevi above Non numerat palmas, aut unfinished

Metre: Dactylic Hexameter

Works, 1787, xi, 389

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 160.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works
 of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 271

Translations: Murphy's Life, 1792, p. 82.

"What is most difficult to man? To know oneself," said Thales of Miletus. His phrase, γνῶσι βεαυτόν, inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, has been repeated often. "It is splendid," wrote Plato, "for the wise man to know everything, but the next best thing is not to be ignorant of himself." (Philebus 19C) and again, "Self-knowledge is temperance" (Charm. 164D). "Apollo dicit: Nosce animum tuum," wrote Cicero. (TD. 1. 22. 52) In Thyestes Seneca describes a character thus: Notus nimis omnibus/ ignotus moritur sibi. (Thyestes 402) Ovid (A.A. 2. 499) Plutarch (Ad. Apoll; Lives: Demosthenes 3. 2; Moralia 472C) Epictetus (Discourses 1. 18); Juvenal (Sat 11. 27) all make reference to this dictum; Pope in his Essay on Man writes: "all knowledge is ourselves to know."

Johnson, wrote one of his biographers, in this poem "has left a picture, of himself, drawn with as much truth, and as firm a hand, as can be seen in the portraits of Hogarth or Sir Joshua Reynolds."⁵ Clear upon the canvas is Johnson's modesty (ll. 12-18 ... tibi, prime virorum/ ut studiis sperem, aut ausim par esse querelis/ non mihi sorte datum ...), his insomnia (ll. 30-31: Frustra te, Somne, recumbens/ Alme voco); his restless, frustrated mind (ll. 40-41: Quidquid agam ... conatibus abstat/ Res angusta domi, et macrae penuria mentis). Johnson's need for employment was occasioned in part by a recurrent fear of madness (see ll. 49-51 for a glimpse of the brink on which he felt himself to stand). He "often talked to Mrs. Thrale and to Boswell about the means by which a man might hold onto his sanity, of the importance of having something to occupy the mind".⁶

"To have the management of the mind is a great art ... Let him man contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can" Johnson wrote at the time of the Dictionary's 4th edition.⁷

Other men, upon finishing a great work, do not display Johnson's self-doubt or hesitation. Of examples from antiquity, Ovid either anticipates with confidence a new career (Am. 3. 13) or notes with satisfaction the certainty of lasting fame (Met. 15. 871-9). Fame is the preoccupation also of Horace (Odes 3. 30) and of Statius (Theb. 12. 810-19). Johnson looked neither backward with satisfaction nor forward with confidence. Contrast with this poem's uncertainty the complacent beginning to his contemporary, Gibbon's memories: "In the fifty second year of my age, after the completion of an arduous and successful work, I now propose to employ some moments of my leisure in reviewing the simple transactions of a private and literary

life..." He admits to a momentary restlessness, on completion of his 3rd volume: "yet in the luxury of freedom I began to wish for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book, and an object to every inquiry..."⁸ But Gibbon's statement lacks significance before Johnson's record (ll. 24-39) of frustration.

The poem appears indebted stylistically to no single author but by its composite construction shows the breadth of Johnson's scholarship. He employs Horatian concepts (l. 24: me ...mihi reddor; l. 25: Desidiaē sors dura; l. 37: nisi materiem Doctrina ministret) and in one instance (l. 38) borrows nearly verbatim from the Ars Poetica. From Lucretius he borrows technical phrases (l. 30: loca sola; l. 51: per inane) investing them with human dimension; and thoughts (l. 27: Nascuntur curis curae; l. 29: nocturna gaudia mensae; l. 44: de gaza praesens). Lines 40-41 obstat res angusta domi is taken straight from Juvenal; while the phrase taedia vitae appears in Ovid's works twenty six times.

But the final impression perhaps is Virgilian. The metre, dactylic hexameter, is that used by Virgil in the Aeneid. Line 49 consists of two separate phrases taken one from the first Eclogue and the other from the sixth book of the Aeneid. Line 40 surely has behind it, as well as lines of Juvenal, Ovid and Lucretius, the sobering fate of Turnus (A. 12. 910ff) Lines 49-51 recall most strongly the sixth book of the Aeneid. Johnson suffered from a hell of his own making, such as Lucretius describes in 3. 978-9 and 10. 18-23; and probably believed as well in a hell after death. Virgil's description, in Book Six, suits both kinds.

There does not appear in contemporary collections of Latin

verse a comparable poem expressing self-knowledge. But several of Johnson's phrases, words or concepts (or rather classical concepts Johnson uses) appear. Thus one finds in the Musae Anglicanae an encouragement to Frederick the Great, having won honours, to win more post taedia belli perfecti; two addresses to sleep; an allusion to men's restlessness: non secus ipsa pati grave dedignatur veterum/ Mens humana novos fines, nova gaudia, quaerit... In the second volume the adjective Phidiacum appears twice and the conjunction of senectus with piger also appears.⁹

Notes

2. Scaliger: J.J. Scaliger (1540-1609) editor of among other works those of Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and Manilius, had a reputation as a very great scholar. Johnson had in 1773 read Scaliger's Confutatio Fabulae Burdonum. Nichol Smith gives with this poem Scaliger's epigram on lexicographers.
pertaesus: Cic. Q. Fr. 1. 2. 4 pertaesum est enim levitatis.
opellae: used once by Lucr. 1. 1114 and once by Hor. Ep. 1. 7. 8.
3. nugasque: so Cat. 1. 4 of his verses; Hor. Sat. 1. 9. 2
nescio quid meditans nugarum and elsewhere.
4. exosus: not used by Lucr. or Hor. but frequently by Ovid.
5. poenam ... unam: cf. Scaliger in his epigram: omnes/ Poenarum facies hic labor unus habet.
- 6-18. Ille quidem ... minorem: these lines are a form of recusatio. For parallels cf. Hor Sat. 1. 4. 39-44 and 1. 10. 40-49.
9. quicquid Virtus, Sapiencia ... dixerat: Hor. Ep. 1. 2. 17
... quid Virtus et quid Sapiencia possit
10. coelique meatus: Virg. A. 6. 849; meatus is used frequently by Lucretius: 1. 128, 6. 301, 2. 108, 5. 76, 5. 774.

12. turba scholarum: so Hor. Sat. 1. 10. 67 poetarum seniorum turba.
14. Quisque suum norit modulum: cf. Hor. Ep. 1. 7. 98 metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede; and Sat. 1. 3. 77. prime virorum: Hor. Odes 2. 7. 5 Pompei, meorum prime sodalium
16. Lenti ... sanguinis ... frigora: Lucretius writes of the chill of death (3. 401, 4. 924) and of limbs (1.355, 6.394) // but not of blood. In Virg. A. 12. 905 ... gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis the thought is similar but not as strikingly phrased.
17. longo jacuisse veterno: so Cat. 17. 24; Virg. G. 1. 124; Hor Ep. 1. 8. 10; Stat. Theb. 6. 94.
20. Sapientia dia: personified also by Lucr. 5. 10. (Also in Lucretius, dia Voluptas, 2. 172; and dia Otia, 5. 1389.)
22. discordia concors: Hor. Ep. 1. 12. 19 Poetae discordia concordia mundum constare dixerunt.
23. reducem circumsonat: a strong verb, used by Cic. Off. 325; // (Fam. 6. 18. 4.) The image recalls a successful general's return for a triumph.
24. pensi immunis: used with a similar abstract genitive Ov. Tris. 4.2. 62 immunes boni. mihi reddor: cf. Hor. Ep. 1. 14. 1 and 1. 18.101.
- 24-25. inertis desidiaae sors dura manet: so Cic. Off. 1. 123 ne languori se desidiaaeque dedat senectus; and Hor. Sat. 2. 3. 15 vitanda est inproba Siren desidia. Tucker and Gifford, "Johnson's Latin Poetry", Neophilologus, (July, 1957, pages 215-221) point out that inertis desidiaae; quies with tristis et atra; and macrae penuria mentis (l. 41) are all strikingly modern images, classically delivered.

26. tristis ... vitae: taedia vitae appears frequently in Ovid (Met. 10.482, 625; Ex. P. 1. 9. 31, Tris. 4. 10. 584). // The line is a clever adaptation of Virg. A. 6. 522: dulcis et alta quies placidaequae simillima morti.
27. Nascuntur curis curae: cf. Lucr. 2. 48 Hominum curaeque sequaces and 3. 1048-52.
28. vacuae ... mentis: cf. Virg. G. 3. 3 vacuas ... mentes.
29. clamosa ... nocturnae gaudia mensae: recalls Lucr. 2. 26 lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur; and 3. 1060-67 exit saepe foras ... subitoque revertit
- 29-31. Nunc ... diei: so Hor. Sat. 2. 7. 114-15.
30. loca sola: appears Lucr. 4. 573 and 6. 396. frustra te, Somne: Sleep personified also addressed in Virg. A. 5. 838 and Ov. Met. 11. 623 and Tib. 2. 1. 90. //
31. impatiens noctis metuensque diei: Sen. Dial. 11. 6. 6 // vaga et quietis impatiens est mens hominis; Lucr. 2. 56 veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia ... in tenebris metuunt, sic nos^m luce timemus interdum; and Hor. Ep. 1. 16. 66 qui metuens vivit, liber mihi non erit umquam.
32. circum omnia lustrum: perhaps reminiscent of Virg. A. 2. 564 respicio et quae sit me circum copia lustrum. Copia would be too optimistic a word for this line of Johnson's; it is here the very lack of resource that causes frustration.
33. semita vitae: cf. Hor. Ep. 1. 18. 103 quid pure tranquillet ... secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae. Tucker and Gifford cite Juv. 10. 363-64 semita certe/ Tranquillae per virtutem patet unica vitae.
- 35-47. Notior... honores: see apparatus supra. The deleted lines are too lengthy a personal elaboration; speculator

- does not give the same sense of control as dominator.
37. Doctrina: appears *Lucr.* 2. 8; 3. 307; 5.727; *Hor. Odes* 4. 4. 33 doctrina sed vim promovit insitam.
38. inops rerum: *Hor Ars P.* 322 quam versus inopes rerum nugaeque canorae.
39. Phidiaci foecunda potentia coeli: cf. *Mart.* 6. 13. 1
Quis te Phidiaco formatam ... caeloPhidias, a contemporary of Pericles renowned for his sculpture, is referred to often by Cicero (*Ac.* 2. 47. 146; id. *Tusc.* 1. 15. 34; id. *Brut.* 73. 257, etc.). For the adjective see also *Juv.* 8. 103 and *Stat. Silv.* 2. 2. 66.
40. conatibus: so *Virg. A.* 12. 910ff. and *Lucr.* 5. 385 quod facere intendunt, neque adhuc conata patrantur.
- 40-41. conatibus/ obstat res angusta domi: *Juv.* 3. 164
Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat/ Res angusta domi. Also *Ov. Met.* 4. 249 tantis fatum conatibus obstat; *R.A.* 683.
41. macrae penuria mentis: an unusual use of macrae: Seneca uses it to described parts of the body but not for the mind; *Ep.* 78. 8; Persius writes in 2. 35 spem macram, using the word metaphorically.
42. non rationis opes animus: the mind consists of Reason, Courage and Desire: see Plato's *Republic* 4. 434 D-441 C.
44. gaza: may recall *Lucr.* 2. 37ff.: quapropter quoniam nil nostro in corpore gazae/ proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni/ quod superest, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum; also possibly *Hor. Odes.* 1. 29. 2.
45. Summus ... dominator: the man himself, with reference to the Platonic theory of the brain as the citadel of the mind. See Plato's *Republic* 4. 434 D-441 C.

- celsa ab arce: cf. Sen. Tro. 929; Virg. A.1.56 celsa sedet
Aeolus arce; Tucker and Gifford cite also Stat. Silv. 2. 2. 131.
46. aevi: i.e. time in general.
48. Ipse sui iudex: this concept appears in Cypr. Demetr. 10
qui alios iudicas ... est et tui iudex; Hier. Ep. 52. 17. 2;
Claud. 22. 221 iudex dura sui.
actae bene munera vitae: cf. Hor. Ep. 2. 2. 131, but the
thought is not really similar; also Lucr. 3. 956 omnia...
vitae praemia
49. sed sua regna videns: so the dispossessed, to the shepherd
in Virg. E. 1. 69 post aliquot, mea regna, videns mirabor
aristas.
loca nocte silentia late: so Virg. A. 6. 264ff: Di, quibus
imperium est animarum, umbraeque silentes/ et Chaos et
Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late,
- 49-51. Sed ... figurae: cf. Lucr. 3. 459-61, though Lucretius
perhaps thinks of definite instability and disease. Also
Lucr. 4. 34ff. atque eadem nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
terrificant Johnson's terrors are also of the mind but
he does not follow Lucretius' prescription for their dis-
persion.
50. ubi vanae species: Hor. Ars P. 8 cuius, velut aegri somnia,
vanae/ fingentur species.
51. Et rerum volitant ... figurae: volitare is used frequently
by Lucretius, of atoms and of visions (4. 32, 38); he uses the
phrase per inane some fourteen times. Virgil uses volitant
of dead souls, A. 6. 329.
52. Quid faciam?: the rhetorical device appears often in
Horace: Odes 3. 28.2; Sat. 1. 3. 94, 1. 9. 40, 2. 1. 5,
2. 1. 24; Ep. 2. 2. 57.

pigram damnare senectam: so Hor. Sat. 22. 88 tarda senectus;
 Virg. A. 8. 508 sed mihi tarda gelu saeculisque effeta
senectus; Virg. A. 5. 395; Ov. Met. 10. 396 non est mea
pigra senectus.

53. an accingar ... audax: for a similar metaphorical sense,
 see Virg. G. 3. 46 and A. 4. 493.

52-54. Quid faciam ... poscam: in the year following the
 publication of the Dictionary Johnson, driven by res
angusta domi, wrote prefaces and essays, brought out an
 edition of Sir Thomas Browne's Christian Morals, edited
 and contributed to "The Literary Magazine", and started his
 edition of Shakespeare. Five years later he had begun
 writing the Lives of the English Poets.

IV VERSES ADDRESSED TO DR. LAWRENCE,

composed by Dr. Johnson, as he lay confined
with an inflamed Eye.

Sanguine dum tumido suffusus flagrat ocellus,
Deliciasque fugit solitas solitosque labores;
Damnatus tenebris, lectoque affixus inertii,
Quid mecum peragam, quod tu doctissime posses
Laurenti saltem facili dignarier aure? 5
Humanae mentis, rerum se pascere formis,
Est proprium, et quavis captare indagine verum
Omnibus unus amor, non est modus unus amoris.
Sunt qui curriculo timidi versantur in arcto,
Quos soli ducunt sensus, solus docet usus; 10
Qui sibi sat sapiunt, contenti noscere quantum
Vel digiti tractant, oculus vel sentit et auris:
Tantundem est illis, repleat spatia ardua coeli
Materies, vastum an late pandatur inane.
Scire vices ponti facile est, nihil amplius optant 15
Nec quaerunt quid, luna, tuo cum fluctibus orbi.
Sic sibi diffisi, lenta experientia cursum
Qua sulcat, reptant tuti per lubrica vitae.
Altera pars hominum, sanctae rationis alumni,
Permissum credit nudas sibi sistere causas, 20
Materiemque rudem, magnaeparentis adesse
Conciliis, verique sacros recludere fontes.
Gens illa, impatiens per singula quaeque vagandi
Tentat iter brevius, magno conamine summam

11 sapient Rylands 14 Materies emend.: Materia Rylands,
Piozziana, 1788 24 ita Rylands, with iter above in another har

Naturae invadens, mundique elementa refingens 25
 Laevia serratis miscens, quadrata rotundis,
 Corpora cuncta suis gestit variare figuris,
 Particulasque locans, certas certo ordine, pulchram
 Compagem edificat, coelorum atque aetheris ignes
 Accendit, rerumque modos ac foedera ponit. 30
 Hi sunt quos animi generosa insania magni
 In sublime rapit, queis terra et pontus et aer
 Sub pedibus subjecta jacent; queis ultima primis
 Nexa patent; hi sunt quos nil mirabile turbat,
 Nil movet insolitum, sub legibus omnia fictis 35
 Dum statuunt, causisque audent prefigere metam.

Metre: Dactylic Hexameter

Transcript by Mrs. Thrale in the John Rylands Library
 Piozzi, Letters, 1788, ii. 415.
 Mainwaring Piozziana, i. 81.
 Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 162.
 McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works
 of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 275.

Translations: Yale Edition, following the poem on p. 275

In metre, inspiration and often phraseology this poem owes much to Lucretius. Stylistically it is Ovidian, as lines like "Deliciasque fugit solitas solitosque labores" (2) and "Omnibus unus amor, non est modus unus amoris" (8) make clear. With both ancient poets Johnson shared a prevailing curiosity and with Lucretius particularly a thirst for knowledge. He writes to George Staunton 1 June 1762, "Trust as little as you can to report; examine all you can by your own senses" and to Susannah

Thrale (#944), "... all truth is valuable Take therefore all opportunities of learning that offer themselves...", and praises in another letter (#181) Boswell's "wise and noble curiosity."¹¹ Lucretius heads a list Johnson made in the autumn of 1729: "... Of the ancient Latins I greatly wish Lucretius, Velleius Paterculus, Justinus and Graevius' edition of Tully's Letters;" and Johnson is known to have bought "at least Cicero's Letters and Lucretius' before leaving Oxford."¹²

But when Johnson drew up in 1736 his program for a grammar school, Lucretius was not among the suggested authors; and when he wrote his Lives of the English Poets Johnson chastized Milton for teaching schoolboys "those authors that treat of physical subjects, such as the Georgics, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. Johnson contended that "the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind", and that "the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong." "Our intercourse with intellectual nature," wrote Johnson, "is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure." He cites, in defence of his contention, Socrates, who sought "to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life."¹³ There exists a contemporary parallel to this, a poem entitled "Philosophiam Decocavit e Coelo":

... Scande coelos; i, Jehovahae suggeras queis legibus
angelos gubernet: inde, stultus atque ineptiens
In tuum descende pectus ... O sophorum magne princeps,
o verende Socrates,
Devocabas rite coelis incolam scientiam ...¹⁴

For Johnson was a man of his century, and the tide had turned since Milton's day, when as Johnson admits, the reading

of "Georgics and astronomical treatises" was looked upon as beneficial.¹⁵ By the time Johnson was a schoolboy, Lucretius and his Epicurean doctrine were no longer popular; editions of the DRN in Johnson's time were few and far between.¹⁶ If men still said, as Francis Bacon had done earlier, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," it was with reservation. The first exultation of discovery, in the century of Newton and William Harvey, did not last. Latin poems collected in the Musae Anglicanae (1691) have themes similar to the one pursued in lines 19-36 of Johnson's poem: "In artem Volandi" (Quis, si optio detur non vellet potius tranare lavem aethera pennis...); "Dioptrices Laus" (Illustrat sic terra/ Polum, dum tollit ad astra/ Mortales, miscetque deis, specularis Arundo...); "Experimentum Machinae Pneumaticae ab Honoratissimo D.D. Boylaeo Inventae" (Tibi fas soli cognoscere causas/ Abstrusas, verique imos penetrare recessus/ O Terrae Coelique potens!...). By 1795 when the Musae Etonenses appeared the general attitude was one more cognizant of religion. Celebrations of scientific learning, such as "Igneus est ollis vigor et coelestis origo" note with care God's existence: ..

Nos docti meliora, Deum nunc rite colamus,
 Qui mare, qui terras flectit; quique omnia praesens
 Metitur numeratque,... 17

Johnson was like Lucretius curious, but not to the destruction of religion and never to the nullification of his soul. For he was by all accounts a religious man and religion does not lend itself to the rules that play so large a part in science. He was vibrantly aware of man's gifts and capabilities but he knew also to whom they were owed. This perhaps accounts for a certain ambiguity, or detachment, in this poem - Johnson approves the search for truth but not its arrogance.

Notes

1. flagrat ocellus: so Sen. Dial. 3. 1. 4 flagrant et micant oculis; also Sen. Ep. 115. 4 and Pliny Nat. 11.173.
2. Deliciasque ... labores: a most Ovidian line, stylistically. Cf. Ov. Met. 1. 240 occidit una domus: sed non domus una perire; for further examples see Met. 1. 304-5, 429, and Am. 3.9.1. For Lucretius' idea of delicias vitae see 5. 1448ff.
5. facili ... aure: in sing. Prop. 1. 1. 31 facili deus annuit aure; in plural Sen. Dial. 4. 22. 3. dignarier: Lucr. 5. 51 hunc hominem numero divum dignarier esse?
6. rerum ... formis: Lucr. 5. 1263 quamlibet in formam et facies decurrere rerum.
se pascere: in a parallel sense, Lucr. 2. 419 oculis qui pascere possunt.
7. indagine: does not appear in Horace or Lucretius. Virgil uses it A. 4. 121. For the sense, see Hor. Odes. 1. 3. 25ff. captare ... verum: in a parallel metaphorical sense, Hor. Sat. 1. 4. 83 famam; and Ov. Tris. 5. 1. 75 gloriam.
8. omnibus ... amoris: also Ovidian in style: Am. 14. 63. Oscula iam sumet: iam non tantum oscula sumet.
9. Sunt ... arcto: recalls Hor. Odes. 4. 15. 1-4; and Prop. 3. 3. 18.
11. Qui sibi sat sapiunt: so Lucr. 3. 145 idque sibi solum per se sapit (id) sibi gaudet.
- 13-14. Tantundem ... inane: for discussion of space and matter, see Lucr. 1. 418ff. and 503ff., especially 1. 507: nam quacumque vacat spatium, quod inane vocamus Inane (11. 507, 509, ⁵¹⁰511, 514, etc.) and materies (11. 512, 516,

518, etc.) and spatium (ll. 523, 527, etc.) are key words in his discussion.

17-18. per lubrica vitae: reminiscent of Sen. Thy. 391 ff

Stet quicumque volet potens
 aulae culmine lubrico
 me dulcis saturet quies

These lines were much imitated and translated in Renaissance England, with versions by Wyatt, Heywood, Marvell and Cowley.

18. reptant: a rare word, used by Lucretius once (2. 318) and once by Horace (Ep. 1. 4. 4). In its first sense it means to creep, as of animals (Plin. 9.30. 50 # 95). Transferred to people, the meaning is to "walk slowly or lazily" (see Lewis and Short): so Plaut. Fragm. ap. Gell 3. 3. 5: major pars populi avidi reptant fame.

sulcat: like reptare, found mostly in poetic or post-Augustan prose. Virgil uses it when he writes of ships on the sea: A. 5. 158, 10. 197; as does Ov. Ex. P. 2. 10.33.

20-21. causas/ ... Materiemque: Sen. Ep. 65. 2: Stoici ... duo esse in rerum natura causam et materiem.

21. magnaeque parentis: used similarly Hor. Odes. 2. 19. 21.

22. verique sacros recludere fontes: Virg. E. 1. 52; G. 2. 175 (especially where the theme is the greatness of Italy and her men); Phaedr. 3. 10.43 certum ... fontem veritatis repperit.

23-36. Gens illa, ... metam: see Lucr. 1. 62ff.; also Ov. Met. 1. 84-6 for his version.

24. magno conamine: Lucr. 1. 72-3 for the concept; for the phrase, Lucr. 6. 326, 835. Also Ov. Met. 3. 60.

28. certo ordine: very frequent in Lucretius: 5. 732, 2. 252, 5. 679, 736, 1183, 1439.

30. ac foedera ponit: so Lucretius, foedera naturai 1. 586.

- 31-32. animi generosa ... rapit: Hor. Odes. 1. 3. 38-40
caelum ipsum petimus stultitia.
33. Sub pedibus ...jacent: Lucr. 1. 78-9 quare religio
pedibus subjecta vicissim/ opteritur, nos exaequat victoria
coelo. Also 3. 26-7, 5. 1139, 5. 1236.
34. quos ... insolitum: cf. Lucr. 2. 1038-39, 1026-29.
36. metam: used metaphorically Virg. A. 1. 278 his ego nec
metas rerum nec tempora pono; Sil. 7. 478 nullae regnis
per saecula metae.

V ON RECOVERING THE USE OF HIS EYES

Vitae qui varias vices
 Rerum perpetuus temperat Arbiter,
 Laeto cedere lumini
 Noctis tristitiam qui gelidae jubet,
 Acri sanguine turgidos 5
 Obductosque oculos nubibus humidis
 Sanari voluit meos
 Et me, cuncta beans cui nocuit dies,
 Luci reddidit et mihi,
 Qua te laude, Deus, qua prece prosequar? 10
 Sacri discipulus libri
 Te semper studiis utilibus colam:
 Grates, summe Pater, tuis
 Recte qui fruitur muneribus, dedit.

Metre: Second Asclepiad

Works, 1787, xi. 383.

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 164.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 277.

Translations: Yale Edition, following the poem on p. 277.

This poem (dated in the Works June 20, 21, 1773) is of the genre eucharistikon, of the form eucharistikos hymnos. Examples of thanksgiving in antiquity are Hor. Odes 3. 13; Prop. 3. 17; and Aus. Bk. 20. For a discussion, see Cairns, Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry, pp. 74ff. Johnson, in contrast to Cicero (TD 5. 38.IIIff.), seems to

have had an abhorrence of the dark that no philosophy would banish. In a letter to his friend John Taylor on 17 February 1776 he wrote, "Lye in bed with a lamp, and when you cannot sleep, and are beginning to think, light your candle and read. At least light your candle, a man is perhaps never so much harassed by his own mind in the light as in the dark."¹⁸ Elsewhere Johnson equates the ability to read with the ability to think, a concept not entirely unrelated perhaps to his fear of blindness, which besides leaving him a prey to the turmoil of his mind, would cut him off from books.¹⁹ (Note that Johnson speaks with some experience, while Cicero presumably does not.)

For an early example of the necessity for proper use of one's gifts, see Hom. Il. 3. 65. Compare also Hor. Odes 4. 9. 48 rectius occupat nomen beati, qui deorum/ muneribus sapienter uti. Johnson, well aware of the generosity with which God had endowed his intellect, was haunted all his life by the fear that God would condemn him for not having used his talents to the full.²⁰

Notes

2. Arbiter: so Sen. Ep. 16. 5 arbiter deus universi; Auson. 406. 48; Amm. 29. 2. 20.
4. Noctis ... gelidae: cf. Virg. G. 1. 287; Hor. Ep. 2. 2. 169 noctem gelidam; Sil. It. 12. 20 gelidas noctes.
- 1-4. qui ... temperat ... qui ... jubet: for a similar construction see Hor. Odes 1. 10. 2.
6. Obductosque oculos: an uncommon phrase; perhaps Petr. Sat. 19 is the only parallel: et mors non dubia miserorum oculos coepit obducere. For a similar metaphorical use of obducere, cf. Virg. A. 10. 64 obductus verbis dolor.

- 8-9. Et me ... reddidit et mihi: so Hor. Ep. 1. 14. 1, 18. 101.
- 10-12. te.../ Te: for a discussion of the use of te and tu in hymns, see Nisbet and Hubbard, Commentary on Horace Odes I, p. 131, where they list as examples Hor. Odes 1. 35. 5ff.; Lucr. 1. 6ff.; Cat. 34. 13ff.; Tib. 1. 7. 25, 61; Prop. 3. 17. 3ff.; Virg. A. 8. 293ff.; the Te Deum and Gloria.
- 10-14. Qua te laude ... dedit: for similar bargains in antiquity see Hor. Odes 3. 22. 6-8; 3. 18. 5-8; and Prop. 3. 17. 13-42.
- 11-12. Sacri ... colam: cf. Prop. 3. 17. 19-20 quod superest vitae per te et tua cornua vivam, / virtutisque tuae, Bacche, poeta ferar.
14. muneribus: Virg. G. 1. 238 divom; and Hor. Odes 4. 9. 48 rectius occupat nomen beati, qui deorum / muneribus sapienter uti.

VI ODA

Ponti profundis clausa recessibus,
 Strepens procellis, rupibus obsita,
 Quam grata defesso virentem
 Skia sinum nebulosa pandis.

His cura credo sedibus exulat; 5
 His blanda certe pax habitat locis:
 Non ira, non moeror quietis
 Insidias meditatur horis.

At non cavata rupe latescere,
 Menti nec aegrae montibus aviis 10
 Prodest vagari, nec frementes
 E scopulo numerare fluctus.

Humana virtus non sibi sufficit,
 Datur nec aequum cuique animum sibi
 Parare posse, ut Stoicorum 15
 Secta crepet nimis alta fallax.

Exaestuantis pectoris impetum,
 Rex summe, solus tu regis arbiter,
 Mentisque, te tollente, surgunt,
 Te recidunt moderante fluctus. 20

2 'In the manuscript, Dr. Johnson, instead of rupibus obsita, had written imbribus uvida, and uvida nubibus but struck them both out.' Boswell 12 E scopulo In specula 1787 15, 16 'Instead of these two lines, he had written, but afterwards struck out, the following:

Parare posse, utcunque jactet
 Grandiloquus nimis alta Zeno.' Boswell.
 This reading was adopted in 1787 20 recidunt
 Malone's Errata recedunt Boswell: resident 1787

Metre: Alcaics

Boswell, Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides, 1785, p. 173
The Gentleman's Magazine, February 1786, p. 156
Works, 1787, xi. 394
 Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 166
 McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works
 of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 278

Translations: The Gentleman's Magazine, February 1786, p. 156
 April 1792, p. 365
The Scots Magazine, April 1799, p. 261

Dated by Boswell, Sunday 5th September 1773

This type of Latin poem, an address to a geographical location which develops often into an occasion for philosophical reflection, has a long tradition beginning in Latin with Catullus' praise of Sirmio (31), where he could shed responsibility and live in carefree leisure, and continued in Horace's celebration of the Sabine farm (Sat. 2.6), which restores his equanimity, and Statius' poems to the villas of his friends (1.3; 2.2). Examples of this genre reappear in the Musae Anglicanae in such poems as: In paludes ab Ormondo duce siccatas...; Descriptio Spectaculi, quod exhibet templum Harlemianum; Bellositum, sive de Regione Oxonium circumiacente; they are present as paeans to Eton in the Musae Etonenses of Johnson's own day. Unlike, however, these poems, Johnson's ends in rejection of the place it celebrates in the opening stanzas. For the initial theme, praise of a place which offers tranquility, is here linked with a second, that of the inability of geography to alter one's state of mind.

Like Horace (Ep. 1.11.27; Odes 2.16.19-20) and Lucretius (3.1068-70) before him Johnson recognized the futility of escape from one's state of mind. But the stubborn melancholy of the third and fourth stanzas has no place in the hedonism of Catullus or the Epicurean philosophy of Horace. The ancient poet finds his own stability (Hor. Ep. 1.18.112: Det vitam, det opes, aequum mi animum ipse parabo). Juvenal could write:

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia:nos te
nos facimus, Fortuna, deam caeloque locamus.

Typically for his century Johnson appears, in "The Vanity of Human Wishes", to have used the variant reading Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia (see Nichol Smith's note to the V. of HW page 48). This he renders as in the ode to Skye, "... with these celestial wisdom calmes the mind and makes the happiness she does not find". The pagan finds his own salvation; for loss of pagan independence the Christian's recompense is hope.

Skye fades into the romantic background although its very suitability to all three proverbial devices of the third stanza may well have helped suggest to Johnson his theme. Johnson's moral reveals itself as two-fold: the futility of escape and the necessity for God.

Notes

- 1-8. Ponti ... horis: Tucker and Gifford point out that Johnson's pattern resembles the end of Virgil's second Georgic (p. 217).
2. rupibus obsita: see apparatus supra: uvida is too mild. The detail of the rock gives form to the vignette.
3. grata defesso: so to Sirmio Catullus came, 31. 9 fessi ... larem ad nostrum.
4. Skia: the delay is effective. Horace often thus delayed the

appearance of his addressee's name until the second or third line, as in Odes 1. 5, 1. 9, 1. 12, etc. Cf. also Auson. Mos. 212; and Stat. Sily. 1. 2, where Stella is introduced in line 17.

5. His ... exulat: for exulat in a similar metaphorical sense see Ov. Ex P. 4. 9. 41. For the sentiment see Cat. 31. 7.
6. blanda ... pax: Ov. Fast. 3. 19; Avien. Orb. Terr. 290 blanda quies.
7. Non ira, non moeror: an allusion to the Stoic philosophy, according to which the wise man is subject to no passions. See von Arnim, Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, Leipzig, 1924, vol. 2, p. 50-52; and p. 130.
8. Insidias: recalls, in Hor. Sat. 2.6, the country mouse's farewell: me silva cavusque / Tutus ab insidiis tenui solabitur eruo. (116-17)
meditatur: Tucker and Gifford suggest this may recall Hor. Odes 4. 14. 25-9 (p. 217).
9. cavata rupe: a natural conjunction, used twice by Virgil, A. 1. 310, and 3. 229; also by Ovid, Met. 9. 211. For caves as places of solitary poetical inspiration see Hor. Odes 3. 4. 40, 2. 1. 39, 2. 19. 1ff.
10. menti ... aegrae: used by Ovid in the Tristia, 4. 3. 21, 4. 6. 43., etc.
montibus aviis: cf. Hor. Odes 1. 23. 2, where the quarry is a girl. For mountains as a refuge for the distraught, see Virg. E. 2. 4; A. 11. 810. For the combination of caves and mountains for solitary reflection, cf. Hor. Odes 3. 25. 2, 7-8.
11. [Non] ... prodest: the theory of Escape's futility is a commonplace. Thus Oedipus seeks refuge, from his crime and from himself, Soph. Oed. Rex. 1409-12, 1436-37, 1520. So

- Lucr. 3. 1068ff. hoc se quisque modo fugit (at quem scilicet, ut fit, effugere haut potis est....; Hor. Ep. 1. 11. 27 caelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt; Odes 2. 16. 19 patriae quis exsul/ se quoque fugit. Often love is the cause of sickness and flight, as in Theocr. 27. 20 and Virg. E. 2. 60. For further examples of distraction caused by love see P. J. Enk, Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus, Leydon, 1962, under Prop. 2. 30A.
12. E scopulo numerare fluctus: see apparatus supra: scopulo is more parallel to caves and mountains: specula, meaning 'watch-tower', is unsuitably civilised for this context. The image recalls Lucr. 2. 1ff. and ties in the metaphor of the mind counting waves with that of the waves of the mind (ll. 19-20). See Cyril Bailey's Commentary on Lucretius, Oxford, 1947, vol. 2. Combined in Johnson's poem however with the futility of counting waves is the futility of philosophic detachment without God. The proverb, a metaphor for pointless activity, dates from Simon. Fr. 107 $\kappa\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau' \alpha\mu\iota\sigma\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$. It appears in Theocr. Eleg. 16. 60; in Aesch. P. V. 90; in Cic. ad Att. 2. 6; in Virg. G. 2. 108; in Mart. 6. 34.
- 13-16. Humana virtus ... fallax: contrast Hor. Ep. 1. 18. 111-112 Sed satis est orare Iovem qui ponit et aufert:/ Det vitam, det opes, aequum mi animum ipse parabo.
14. aequum ... animum: used frequently by Lucretius (3. 939, 962; 5. 1119, etc. Cf. also Hor. Ep. 1. 18. 112).
15. Stoicorum secta: 1. e. the teachings of Zeno; see apparatus supra. According to him, each man holds the sole responsibility for the circumstances of his life. See von Arnim, vol. 1, pp. 56-62.
- 17-20. Exaestuans ... fluctus: Tucker and Gifford point out

that Johnson has here converted the Virgilian metaphor,

A. 9. 798 mens exaestuatur ira, to a Christian context (p. 217).

18. arbiter: used in a general sense Sen. Ep. 1.6.5 arbiter deus universi.
- 19-20. Mentisque ... fluctus: for the Stoic, the Epicurean and for Johnson, the search was for peace of mind. Thus the image of the rise and fall of the waves of the mind is common in antiquity: Cic. Mur. 35; Sen. Dial. 9. 2. 10; Cat. 64. 98; Cic. de Or. 3. 36. 145; Ov. Ep. 16. 26. Virgil uses it particularly to represent mental irresolution as in A. 12. 486, 4. 532, 8. 19; Tucker and Gifford quote A. 12. 831 Irarum tantos volvis sub pectore fluctus (p. 217).
te ... Te: such repetition is common in religious phraseology. Cf. Cat. 34. 13ff; Lucr. 1.6; Hor. Odes 1. 35. 5ff.; Tib. 1. 7. 25, 61; for a discussion see R.G.M. Nisbet, A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I, Oxford, 1970, p. 131.
20. recidant: see apparatus supra: the variants recedunt (fall back, recede), and resident (reside), lack the sharpness of recidunt.

Metre: Sapphics

Manuscript in the Adam Collection.

Transcript made for Mrs. Thrale in the Rylands library.

Thraliana MS. ii (1777-8), p. 97; ed. 1941, p. 215.

Boswell, Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 1785, p. 177.

Piozzi, Anecdotes, 1786, p. 163.

Works, 1787, xi. 394.

Piozzi, Letters, 1788, i. 178.

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 167.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 280.

Translations: The Gentleman's Magazine, March 1792, p. 260.

(signed 'B', dated 1786)

Boswell's Journal, ed. R. Caruthers, 1851, p. 120.

(by Miss Cornelia Knight)

Hayward's Autobiography of Mrs. Piozzi, 1861, i.

p. 29.

(by Lord Houghton)

(reprinted by Hill, Life, v.424.)

This poem can perhaps be described as an inverse epibaterion. Examples of the genre in antiquity are Hom. Od. 5. 299-312; Cat. 63. 50-75; Tib. 1. 3; Prop. 1. 17; and Hor. Odes 3. 27. 37-66. As Cairns points out in his book, Generic Composition in Greek and Latin Poetry, there is no exact prescription for the inverse epibaterion.²¹ Johnson's poem shares however with the poems mentioned above several characteristics. Like those of Prop. 1. 17 (and 1. 18) Johnson's opening lines set a scene of isolation. He emphasizes that the place he is in is uncivilized (11. 5-7); and that he is a stranger (1. 10). Johnson does not expressly state that he is miserable, but by his choice of vocabulary he implies it: torva, steriles (1. 1); vita ubi nullo decorata cultu (1. 6); squallet informis (1. 7); Foeda (1. 8); salebrosa (1. 9). Instead of describing his home, Johnson turns his thoughts to Mrs. Thrale, who as a beloved or familiar companion represents (or is a substitute for) home.

Johnson's ode recalls the desolation of Ovid's letters from

Pontus and the complaints of the Tristia. Ovid's lines are filled with references to the misery of his present location and with pleas for remembrance (Tris, 1. 1. 17ff.; 3. 10. 1ff.; 3. 2. 11, 21 etc.); they form one long inverse epibaterion.

Milton in his first serious poem, Elegia Prima, paralleled his own rustication from Cambridge with Ovid's situation. Like Milton's, Johnson's position lacks the awful uncertainty of Ovid's; but it is more than likely that he did occasionally, travelling at his age, in comparatively uncivilised surroundings, feel a certain kinship with the exiled Ovid. To point the parallel Johnson echoes in lines 11-12 the plaintive poignancy of Ovid's demands for news. The use of the plea found on Greek and Latin epitaphs, sit memor nostri (l. 11), when the situation is not death but geographical distance, was Ovid's before it was Johnson's (Ov. Tris. 4. 3. 10).

Notes

1. Permeo terras: so Ov. Ex P. 4. 11¹⁵/16 dum littera nostra tot maria ac terras permeat.
- 1-2. ubi ... ruinas: recalls stanza one of the ode to Skye, written the previous day.
3. rident: for ridere used with a non-human subject, see Ov. Met. 3. 353. ||
5. Pervagor gentes: reminiscent of Cat. 101. 1 Multas per gentes....
7. Squallet ... tugurique: cf. Virg. G. 507 squalent abductis arva colonis, and the lines that precede and follow it. informis: Virg. E. 2. 25 nec sum adeo informis; Aug. Bon. Coniug. 20, 23 vitae informis et ineruditae. tugurique Virg. E. 1. 68; Col. 12. 15. 1; Plin. 16. 9. 14 #35.
9. erroris ... longi: cf. Ov. Tris. 4. 10. 109 mihi tandem longis

erroribus acto ...; Tac. Germ. 3 longo ... et fabuloso errore
Ulixis .

salebrosa: so Hor. Ep. 1. 17. 53.

- 9-10. Inter ... Inter: a verbal pattern found in Hor. Odes 1.
12. 5-6, 2. 6. 6-7, 2. 8. 21-22, 2. 16. 5-6; Carm. Saec. 45-46.
10. strepitus loquelae: Ov. Nux 89 non hominum strepitus audit.
- 11-12. Quot modis mecum ... dulcis: for the thought of Mrs.
Thrale, see Ov. Tris. 3. 3. 13-15 for a parallel situation.
13. curas ... mulcet: with iras, Virg. A. 7. 755.
- 13-15. Seu ... Seu ... Sive: for a similar verbal pattern, see
Hor. Odes 1. 22. 5-6, 2. 3. 5-6, 4. 2. 10-17.
14. fovet ... sobolem: for the agricultural parallel, cf. Sen.
Dial. 6. 16. 7 agricola eversis arboribus ... subolem residuam
fovet.
- 15-16. pascit ... mentem: for a similar metaphorical use, see
Cic. Tusc. 5. 66 and Ov. Ex P. 1. 4. 21, [where the verb
used is alere.]
17. Sit memor nostri: this phrase is commonplace on epitaphs;
cf. Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs,
- See also Hor. Odes 3. 11. 51 (scalpe querelam) et nostri memorem
sepulcro; 3. 27. 14; and Ov. Ep. 11. 125; Tris. 4. 3. 10;
Ex P. 2. 10. 49-52; 4. 15. 1.
18. Stet fidens constans: so Hor. Odes 3. 7. 4 constantis juvenem
fide/ Gygan?; Ov. Ex P. 2. 4. 33 and 4. 10. 77-84.
19. discant resonare: for the personification, cf. Virg. G. 1. 334
nunc nemora ingenti vento, nunc litora plangunt!; Cat. 31. 13-
14; Prop. 1. 17. 4, 18. 21, 31-32.
20. Thraliae ... Sciae: So Prop. 1. 7. 11 me laudent doctae solum
placuisse puellae.

VIII INSULA SANCTI KENNETHI

Parva quidem regio, sed relligione priorum
 Nota, Caledonias panditur inter aquas;
 Voce ubi Cennethus populos domuisse feroces
 Dicitur, et vanos dedocuisse deos.
 Huc ego delatus placido per coerulea cursu 5
 Scire locum volui quid daret ille novi.
 Illic Leniades humili regnabat in aula,
 Leniades magnis nobilitatus avis:
 Una duas habuit casa cum genitore puellas,
 Quas Amor undarum fingeret esse deas: 10
 Non tamen inculti gelidis latuere sub antris,
 Accola Danubii qualia saevus habet;
 Mollia non deerant vacuae solatia vitae,
 Sive libros poscant otia, sive lyram.
 Luxerat illa dies, legis gens docta supernae 15
 Spes hominum ac curas cum procul esse jubet.
 Ponti inter strepitus sacri non munera cultus
 . Cessarunt; pietas hic quoque cura fuit:
 Quid quod sacrifici versavit femina libros,
 Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces. 20
 Quo vagor ulterius? quod ubique requiritur hic est;
 Hic segura quies, hic et honestus amor.

2 Nota Clara 1787 6 locum...ille locus...iste 1787
 9 habuit tenuit MS.: cepit 1787 10 fingeret crederet
 1787 11 Non Nec 1787 13 deerant desunt 1787 15 Luxerat
 Fulserat 1787 15,16 gens...ac...cum qua...et...gens 1787
 16 jubet velit MS. After this line 1787 reads:

Ut precibus justas avertat numinis iras

Et summi accendat pectus amore boni.

17 sacri non non sacri 1787 18 After this line 1787 reads:

Nil opus est aeris sacra de turre sonantis

Admonitu, ipsa suas nunciat hora vices.

19 libros? 1787 20 Sint pro legitimis pectora pura
 sacris cancelled MS.: Legitimas faciunt pura labella
 preces cancelled MS.: Sint pro legitimis pura labella

Metre: Elegiacs

Boswell, Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 1785, p. 407.
 Works, 1787, xi. 393.

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 169.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 269.

Translations: Lachlan Maclean, Account of Iona, ed. 1841, p. 134,
 reprinted in The Book of Highland Verse, ed.
 Dugald Mitchell, 1912, p. 204.

Boswell dated this poem Sunday 17th October 1773.

"What Johnson was looking for in the wilds of Scotland was what he was looking for everywhere, the truth about human nature."²³

The theme of this poem is the persistence of culture in rough uncultured surroundings, and the irrelevance of grandeur to true nobility. As notes of his journey record, Johnson was much taken with this contemporary illustration of a classical commonplace (evinced in antiquity by among others Romulus and Evander), which must only have reinforced his belief in the universality of great truths. He wrote of his visit to Inch-kenneth, "Romance does not often exhibit a scene that strikes the imagination more than this little desert in these depths of western obscurity, occupied ... by a gentleman and two ladies of high birth, polished manners, and elegant conversation, who, in a habitation raised not very far above the ground, ... practised all the kindness of hospitality and refinement of courtesy."²⁴

The reception of Johnson and Boswell into the McLean household recalls that of the gods into the hut of Philemon and Baucis (Ov. Met. 8. 629-678), which in turn was probably inspired by Theseus' visit to Hecale, in Callimachus' poem of that name. Equally classical is the presentation of Kennethus as a missionary sent to tame and teach. Similar figures in antiquity are Orpheus, who tamed nature with his lyre (Ov. Tris. 4. 1. 12), and Evander, who helped to civilise the first Romans (Livy 1. 7. 3, 8, 14). The poem like Ovid's Metamorphoses is stylized. The comparison of McLean's daughters to water goddesses (l. 10) is the closest Johnson comes in these poems to fantasy. It is only at line 15 that he dispels, deliberately, with Sabbath details, the preceding aura of classical romance.

Ovid delighted in using the elegiac couplet, and Johnson uses here several of Ovid's stylistic tricks. Note the repetition of Leniades (ll. 7, 8), of hic (l. 22), of sive (l. 13); the anaphora of populos domuisse feroces (l. 3) and vanos dedocuisse deos (l. 4); the careful symmetry of lines 2, 3 and 4.

Notes

1. Parva ...sed: a construction used by Ovid, Fast. 3. 179, 4. 685-6; Am. 2. 16. 1-2 Pars me Sulmo tenet ... parva, sed ... ora salubris. Inch Kenneth is an island slightly over a mile long situated on the west side of Mull.
2. Nota: see apparatus supra: the variant clara, with its connotation of brilliance is too striking; its use would undercut nobilitatus (l. 8).
3. Cennethus: known in Ireland as St. Canice of Derry, a friend of Columba who travelled widely in Scotland and founded a

monastery on Inchkenneth. Johnson may have in mind a parallel with Evander (Livy 1. 7. 8 Evander ... auctoritate magis quam imperio regebat loca, and 1. 7. 3, 14) and the civilising role he played. The sense is also reminiscent of Orpheus (Ov. Tris. 4. 1. 17; A. A. 3.321 etc.), who tamed nature with his lyre.

populos ... feroces: cf. Virg. A. 1. 263, 7. 384; Ov. Met. 13. 612.

4. dedocuisse: so Hor. Odes 2. 2. 20 Virtus, populumque falsis / dedocet uti vocibus.

5. per coerulea: used by Virgil A. 4. 583, 3. 208, 8. 673.

6. locum ... ille: see apparatus supra: the variant iste has a pejorative sense from which ille is free.

7. Leniades: the patronymic is an epic touch; like a Homeric king Sir Allan McLean rules his island. For the repetition cf. Ov. Fast. 4. 80-81; Ep. 3. 9-10, 15. 199-200.

humili regnabat in aula: cf. Ov. Ep. 1. 89 aula Ulixis, Met. 4. 512; Hor. Odes 3. 30. 11-12; Virg. A. 1.140. For examples of nobility in low places see Virg. A. 8. 455 ex humili tecto (of Evander); Ov. Fast. 3. 185-6 (of Romulus).

8. magnis nobilitatus avis: cf. Hor. Odes 1.1 Maecenas atavis edite regibus; Ov. Am. 1. 8. 66 A. A. 3. 128; Stat. Silv. 4. 6. 94.

9. habuit: see apparatus supra: cepit implies the seizing of an object not formerly possessed; between habuit and tenuit there is here little difference.

Una ... puellas: cf. Ov. Ep. 7. 138 poenaeque conexos ^{au-} feret una duos, Met. 8. 699.

10. fingeret: see apparatus supra: the reading is more suited than crederet to the fancifulness of this poem.

12. Accola: cf. Virg. A. 7. 729 accola Volturni; Stat. Theb. 3. 479.

- ... Danubii ... habet: Johnson may well be thinking of Ovid's relegation to Tomis, near the Danube, on the Black Sea. Cf. Ex P. 4. 2. 37-8 hic mea cui recitem nisi flavis scripta corallis/ quisque alias gentes barbarus Hister habet; and Tris. 2. 191-4, 3. 10. 13-34 where Ovid stresses the cold (gelido virginis axe premor: arcent mala frigora; glacie pendente capilli...) and the threat of barbarians (Ciziges et Colchi Tereteaque turba Getaeque/ Danuvii mediis vix ^{hi}pro~~h~~entur aquis). Note however that Johnson's maidens are not like Ovid's: Johnson has found what Ovid has not.
13. decrant: see apparatus supra: the present tense, desunt, is inappropriate as the preceding verbs are all in the past. solatia vitae: cf. Lucr. 6. 4 ... primae dederunt solacia dulcia vitae.
15. Luxerat: see apparatus supra: the variant fulserat is too glittering and transitory; the verb is not the important word here. Luxerat is a natural choice: Hor. Ep. 1. 4. 13 diluxisse; Sil. 16. 91; Amm. 21. 15. 2.
illa dies: i. e. Sunday.
- 15-16. gens ... ac ... cum: see apparatus supra: the compact unit is destroyed in the variant.
16. jubet: see apparatus supra: this reading is more definite than the velit of the MS. The two lines that follow in the 1787 ed. are, in so spare an ode, an unnecessary elaboration of thought implied already in ll. 15-16.
Spes hominum ... curas: cf. Pers. 1. 1 o curas hominum; Stat. Theb. 3. 415.
18. Cessarunt ... fuit: see apparatus supra: from the version Johnson sent Boswell two years after he wrote the poem in 1773, printed here, the couplet after line 18 was also

omitted; it is again an unnecessary descriptive elaboration, Note the emphatic placing of fuit.

20. Legitimas ... preces: see apparatus supra: the subjunctive sint is too indefinite, allowing the suggestion that the Sacris were not legitimate. Labella, compared to pectora, is superficial; preces is more specific than sacris. See Boswell, vol. 2, p. 295, note 2.
21. Quo vagor ulterius: for similar means of stopping a discussion, Ov. Am. 1. 5. 23 Quid refero singular.
22. Hic ... hic: the repetition, as with that of Leniades in 11.7 and 8, is Ovidian. Cf. Ep. 7. 156 hic pacis leges, hic locus arma capit.
secura quies: cf. Ov. F. 6. 734; A. A. 1. 639; Virg. G. 2. 467; Lucr. 3. 939.

IX AD T.L. M.D.

Fateris ergo quod populus solet
 Crepare vaecors, nil sapientiam
 Prodesse vitae, literasque
 In trepidis dare terga rebus.

Tu, queis laborat sors hominum, mala 5
 Nec vincis acer, nec pateris pius;
 Te mille succorum potentem
 Destituit medicina mentis.

Per caeca noctis taedia turbidae,
 Pigrae per horas lucis inutiles, 10
 Torpesque languescisque curis
 Sollicitus nimis, heu! paternis.

Tandem dolori plus satis est datum,
 Exsurge fortis, nunc animis opus,
 Te docta, Laurenti, vetustas 15
 Te medici revocant labores.

Permitte summo res hominum Patri,
 Permitte fidens, ac muliebribus,
 Amice, majorem querelis,
 Redde tuis, tibi redde, mentem. 20

Cal. Jun. 1778

4 trepidis dubiis Works 17 res hominum quicquid
 habes Works 18 ac et Works

Metre: Alcaics

Works, 1787, xi. 391.

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 186.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 298.

Translations: The Gentleman's Magazine, December 1784, p. 939.
(signed J. D.; see Nichol Smith p. 186).

We had previously in the ode to Skye the theme that geography, or rather change of place, cannot alter for the better one's state of mind. In this poem Johnson in a variation on the same idea points out the inability of medical science to cure mental unrest. As in the ode to Skye, spiritual distress is consigned finally to God's province. Johnson writes, again, as a man of his century.

Thomas Lawrence, president of the Royal College of Physicians 1767-1774, was as well as Johnson's doctor his friend. When he suffered a stroke in 1782 Johnson wrote in his diary, "Poor Lawrence has almost lost the sense of hearing, and I have lost the conversation of a learned and intelligent and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Lawrence is one of the best men whom I have known."²⁵

In keeping with the affection which Johnson felt, the tone in this poem is much more personal than in the address to his employer Cave (Ad Urbanum). Instead of sturdily exhorting, Johnson pleads with Lawrence's reason. He is gently argumentative, immensely tactful, recalling the skill of Horace's appeal to Tibullus (Ep. 1. 4).²⁶ Horace reminds Tibullus of the gifts he is wasting (ll. 6-11) and urges him to take

life as it comes (ll. 12-14); Johnson appeals to Lawrence's sense of duty as a learned physician (ll. 13-16) and advises him to consign to God what he cannot cure (ll. 17-20).

Several of Horace's poems in this metre have a "carpe diem" theme not far removed from the last two stanzas of Johnson's (Odes i. 9, 2. 3, 2. 9, 2. 11, 2. 14). In the Musae Anglicanae of the seventeenth century there are several poems addressed to famous doctors (vol. 1, p. 90, vol. p. 199), but they do not dwell as Johnson does upon the inadequacies of medicine. There is a poem in the Musae Etonenses (vol. 1, p. 266) with a description of the torment of cares similar to Johnson's in lines 9-12: Occultis animum stimulis ubi cura lacessit .../ Sic ubi mens nimia curarum mole fatiscit....

Notes

1. quod populus solet: Horace often thus isolates himself from an anonymous populus, as in Sat. 1.1.66, Ep. 1. 16. 21; Ep. 2. 1. 108 mutavit mentem populus levis.
2. crepare: cf. Hor. Odes 2. 17. 26 cum populus frequens laetum theatris ter crepuit sonum, and 1. 18. 5, Sat. 2. 3. 33. vaecors: so Cic. Tusc. 1. 9. 18; Sest. 55. 117; Hor. Sat. 2. 5. 74; Tac. H. 2. 23.
- 3-4. nil sapientiam/ prodesse vitae: cf. Lucr. 2. 39ff. But also 2. 54ff., where he opposes Johnson's view.
4. dare terga: a common figure of speech, used by Ov. Tris. 3. 56, R. A. 154 deliciae iam tibi terga dabunt; Lucr. 6. 155; Stat. Sily. 2. 6. 94, etc.
8. medicina mentis: cf, Ov. Ex P. 1. 3. 85ff. and Tris. 5. 1. 33. See Gow's Commentary on Theocritus, Cambridge, 1958, vol. 2, p. 195, the note on 10. 11. For Cicero's viewpoint, Tusc. 3.1 Est profecto animi medicina, philosophia..., 4. 58 and 4. 61.

9. caeca: so Lucr. 2. 14 O misera hominum mentis, O pectora caeca, and 4. 456 in noctis caligine caeca.
10. Pigrae ... lucis: cf. Ov. Tris. 4. 10. 116 nec me sollicitae
Horace uses piger with annus Ep. 1. 1. 21.
inutiles: Virg. A. 2. 647 with annus.
12. heu: for a similar delayed placement, cf, Hor. Odes 4. 6. 17.
- 17-18. Permitte... Permitte: Horation phrasing: Odes 1. 9. 9
permitte divis cetera.
- 18-19. muliebribus ... querelis: a common concept; cf. Sen. Dial.
6. 11; Livy 2. 40. 1; Cic. Tusc. 2. 57; Hor. Epod. 16. 39.

X IN RIVUM A MOLA STOANA
LICHFELDIAE DIFFLUENTEM

Errat adhuc vitreus per prata virentia rivus,
 Quo toties lavi membra tenella puer;
 Hic delusa rudi frustrabar brachia motu,
 Dum docuit blanda voce natare pater.
 Fecerunt rami latebras, tenebrisque diurnis 5
 Pendula secretas abdidit arbor aquas.
 Nunc veteres duris periere securibus umbrae,
 Longinquisque oculis nuda lavacra patent.
 Lympha tamen cursus agit indefessa perennis,
 Tectaque qua fluxit, nunc et aperta fluit. 10
 Quid ferat externi velox, quid deterat aetas,
 Tu quoque securus res age, Nise, tuas.

Metre: Elegiac

Works, 1787, xi. 389.

Nichol Smith and McAdam, ed., Poems, 1941, p. 228.

McAdam, Jr., with G. Milne, ed., The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. vi, 1964, p. 342.

This poem is undated; Johnson's last visit to Lichfield was in the autumn of 1784.

"One of the great sources of poetical delight," wrote Johnson in his Life of Cowley, "is description, or the power of presenting pictures to the mind."²⁷ (So Horace, Ars Poetica, p. 361, ut pictura poesis.) We have in this poem an example of the classical locus amoenus as deftly crafted as the one that Virgil left us in the first Eclogue (ll. 46-58).²⁸ Johnson's touch upon it is as light and imperceptible as the passing of life itself.

^t
 Syllistically the poem is Ovidian: note the contrast of tenebrisque diurnis (l. 5); the alliteration of abdidit arbor aquas (l. 6); the balanced opposition of Tectaque qua fluxit, nunc et aperta fluit (l. 10); the repetition of Quid ... quid (l. 11).

For examples of possible classical inspiration see Hor. Sat. 1. 6. 70ff. and Ov. Tris. 4. 10. 1ff.; and for a similar restraint of detail, Prop. 1. 22. There does not seem however a parallel to Johnson's connection of paternal guidance with a revisited childhood scene, or his philosophic acceptance of its its changed (superficially) appearance.

His relationship to the stream echoes Hor. Odes 3. 13 and Ep. 1. 16. 12-16. There is in the first volume of the Musae Anglicanae an address to the Cherwell (p. 7) that bears a similar depth of feeling. Closest in spirit perhaps are the eighteenth century poems to Eton found in the Musae Etonenses. For a Renaissance Italian poem quoted by Johnson, with a similar theme, see Boswell, vol. 1, p. 251.

Notes

1. vitreus ... rivus: so Virg. A. 7.759 vitrea ... unda; Hor. Odes 4. 2. 3; Ov. Met. 5. 48.
per prata virentia: perhaps Lucr. 5. 785; and Virg. G. 4. 18.
4. blanda voce: cf. Ov. A. A. 1. 703; Enn. Ann. 50; Cat. 64. 139; Lucr. 6. 1244. The term is often associated with the skill of Orpheus, as in Hor. Odes 1. 24. 13. Johnson also perhaps recalls the blandi doctores of Hor. Sat. 1. 125.
6. abdidit arbor aquas: Ovid achieved the same striking alliteration in A. A. 2. 344 quaque venit, multas accipit annis aquas.
7. duris periere securibus: Virg. G. 3. 364 caeduntque securibus umida vina; Ov. Met. 328.
9. Lympha: so the water in Horace's land free of bloodshed, Epod.

16. 48 montibus altis/ Levis crepante lympha desilit pede.
perennis: like V̄irgil's dispossessed shepherd (E. 1. 53-8)
 Johnson emphasizes the permanence of a scene of which he
 is no longer a part.

12. Nise: Ovid addresses Nisus, king of Megara, whom his daughter
 Scylla despoiled of his purple lock twice (R. A. 68; Tris.
 // 1. 9. 362), and describes him Met. 8. 1ff. Nichol Smith
 suggests that this is "apparently a reference to a schoolboy
 joke involving Edmund Hector who told Boswell that Johnson
 at their last visit in 1784 was 'very solicitous to me to
 recollect some of our most early transactions, and transmit
 them to him, for I perceived nothing gave him greater pleasure
 than calling to mind those days of our innocence' ". (p. 228).

FOOTNOTES TO THE COMMENTARY

- 1
Boswell, I, p. 113.
- 2
Wain, p. 81-85.
- 3
Wain, p. 85.
- 4
Nichol Smith, p. 152.
- 5
Boswell, I, p. 298, note 4.
- 6
Christopher Hibbert, The Personal History of Samuel Johnson (London, 1971), p. 211.
- 7
ibid., p. 214.
- 8
Edward Gibbon, Memoirs of My Life, ed. G. A. Bonnard (London, 1966), pp. 1 and 159 respectively.
- 9
Musae Anglicanae, pp. 11, 52, 81, 33, 8, 31, 102 respectively.
- 10
Wain, p. 193 ff.
- 11
Samuel Johnson, Letters, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1952), I, p. 140; III, p. 144; I, p. 183 respectively.
- 12
Johnson, Diaries, p. 26.
- 13
Johnson, Lives, pp. 99-100.
- 14
Musae Etonenses, ed. W. Herbert (Oxford, 1699), I, p. 278.
- 15
Johnson, Lives, p. 99.
- 16
Cosmo Alexander Gordon, A Bibliography of Lucretius (London, 1962), pp. 14-19.

- 17 Musae Anglicanae, I, pp. 77, 94; II, p. 270, 24; further example on p. 206.
- 18 Johnson, Letters, II, p. 106.
- 19 Johnson, Letters, II, p. 381.
- 20 Wain, p. 369.
- 21 Francis Cairns, Generic Composition in Greek and Latin Poetry (Edinburgh, 1972), p. 60-67 ff.
- 22 Binns, p. 59 ff.
- 23 Wain, p. 303.
- 24 Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, ed. E. J. Thomas (London), p. 132.
- 25 Johnson, Diaries, p. 315.
- 26 Gilbert Highet, Poets in a Landscape (Harmondsworth, 1959), p. 159 ff.
- 27 Johnson, Lives, p. 51.
- 28 See Highet, p. 59 ff.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnim, Johannes von. Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta. 4 vols. Leipzig, 1924.
- Binns, J. W. The Latin Poetry of English Poets. London, 1974.
- Boswell, James. Life of Johnson, ed. G. B. Hill. 6 vols. Oxford, 1934.
- Brink, C. O. Horace on Poetry: the "Ars Poetica". Cambridge, 1974.
- _____. Horace on Poetry: Prolegomena to the Litarary Epistles. Cambridge, 1963.
- Cairns, Francis. Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry. Edinburgh, 1972.
- Clarke, M.. L. Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900. Cambridge, 1959.
- Enk, P. J. Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus. Leydon, 1962.
- Gibbon, Edward. Memoirs of My Life, ed. G. A. Bonnard. London, 1966.
- Gordon, Cosmo Alexander. A Bibliography of Lucretius. London, 1962.
- Hibbert, Christopher. The Personal History of Samuel Johnson. London, 1971.
- Highet, Gilbert. Poets in a Landscape. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959.
- Hoole, Charles. A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole, in Four Small Treatises, ed. from 1659 edition by I. Campagnac. Liverpool, 1913.
- Johnson, Samuel. Diaries, Prayers, and Annals, ed. E. L. McAdam, Jr. with Donald and Mary Hyde. Yale Edition, I. New Haven, 1958.
- _____. A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland, ed. E. J. Thomas. London, n.d.
- _____. The Letters of Samuel Johnson, ed. R. W. Chapman. 3 vols. Oxford, 1952.
- _____. Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill. Oxford, 1905.
- _____. Poems, ed. E. L. McAdam, Jr., with George Milne. Yale Edition, VI. New Haven, 1964.
- _____. The Poems of Samuel Johnson, ed. Nichol Smith. Oxford, 1941.

- Lattimore, R. "Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs," Illinois University Studies in Language and Literature XXVIII, 1-2.
- McDonnell, Michael F. J. A History of St. Paul's School. London, 1909.
- Musae Etonenses, ed. W. Herbert. 3 vols. Oxford, 1699.
- Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta. 2 vols. Oxford, 1699.
- Nisbet, R. G. M. A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I, with M. Hubbard. Oxford, 1970.
- Ogilvie, R. M. Latin and Greek: a History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918. London, 1964.
- _____. "Latin for Yesterday." Essays in the History of Publishing in Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the House of Longman 1724-1974. ed. Asa Briggs. London, 1974.
- Tucker, S. "Johnson's Latin Poetry," with H. Gifford. Neophilologus, 41 (July, 1957), 215-221.
- Wain, John. Samuel Johnson. London, 1974.
- Watt, Thomas. Vocabulary English and Latin. 1734.
- Wilkinson, Lancelot Patrick. Golden Latin Artistry. Cambridge, 1963.