

The Johnson Society of Australia

PAPERS

VOLUME 11

AUGUST 2009



**The Johnson Society of Australia
PAPERS**

Volume 11



Melbourne, August 2009

The Johnson Society of Australia: Papers

Volume 11

Melbourne, August 2009

ISSN 1329-2528

Price: \$10.00 (overseas, add postage)

Published by The Johnson Society of Australia Inc.
44 Essex Street, Footscray, Melbourne, Victoria 3011
JSA Internet home page: <http://www.jsaust.com>

Editor: Paul Tankard

Layout and typesetting:
Barbara Niven
with assistance from Media Relations Pty Ltd

Copyright remains with the individual writers.

The cover illustration shows Samuel Johnson imitating a kangaroo (see Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. G.B.Hill, rev. L.F.Powell [Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1934-64] Vol.V, p. 511), from an etching by John Spooner, which is used with the artist's permission.

CONTENTS

Introduction	page 5
David Fleeman Memorial Lecture, 2007	9
Paul Tankard: <i>Reference Point: Samuel Johnson and the Encyclopaedias</i>	11
Seminar Papers:	
About the Contributors	27
Geoffrey Brand: <i>On the Side of the Angels: Buffon, Linnaeus and The Great Chain of Being</i>	29
Barrie Sheppard: <i>John Law and Dr Johnson: on Money, Trade and Gambling</i>	47
Wallace Kirsop: <i>The Elocutionist and the Lexicographer: Benjamin Suggitt Nayler reads Samuel Johnson</i>	59
John Wiltshire and Daniel Vuillermin: <i>Facing up to Johnson</i>	75
List of JSA Publications	85
About the JSA	88

Introduction

Every year is a big year for anniversaries, and Johnson's life, being (mainly by courtesy of Boswell) so replete with dates, always provides us with something to celebrate. The JSA's annual Fleeman Lecture is held as close as we can manage to Johnson's birthday, 18 September. The prospect this year of Johnson's three-hundredth birthday has stimulated a great deal of extra activity around the world. The true Johnsonian, knowing that Johnson was not a great one for birthdays, will perhaps resist the temptation to sublimate mere chronological coincidences. But we know too that, on his fourth to last sublunary birthday, his seventy-second, Johnson broke the habit of a lifetime to celebrate the day. He wrote in his diary:

I have always accustomed to let this day pass unnoticed, but it came this time into my [mind] that some little festivity was not improper. I had a Dinner, and invited Allen and Levet (*Diaries, Prayers and Annals*, Yale ed., 309).

His neighbour, the printer, Edmund Allen, and 'Dr' Robert Levet, his mysterious long-term house guest: this is hardly a party that would have suited Boswell or the Thrales: there was probably no singing, no speeches, no flirting, no talking for victory or display. It's not clear if Johnson had his guests around to a meal prepared by Mrs Williams at the house in Bolt-Court, or treated them to a meal at a chop-house. As an event it was probably less sumptuous than the lunches we have during our JSA seminar, or the dinners we have afterwards in Toorak Road. But it would have been interesting to have been there – or at least, sitting at the next table.

It is always a privilege to engage, with the particular intimacy of an editor, with the texts prepared for the meetings of the Johnson Society of Australia. This year's offerings consider Johnson's ideas, his image, and his reputation. I thank all the contributors for their texts and their patience with my editorial queries.

Paul Tankard
University of Otago

The Johnson Society of Australia Inc.

**THE DAVID FLEEMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE
2007**

*Reference Point: Samuel Johnson
and the Encyclopaedias*

PAUL TANKARD

The David Fleeman Memorial Lecture

The David Fleeman Memorial Lecture is presented annually by the Johnson Society of Australia in memory of the distinguished British Johnsonian editor and bibliographer who was the Society's first Patron. Each lecture is given by a scholar of international reputation.

The fourteenth Fleeman Memorial Lecture was delivered in Melbourne at the premises of the English-Speaking Union on 15 September 2007 by Dr Paul Tankard.

Paul Tankard is Senior Lecturer in English at the world's southernmost university, the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. His scholarly and teaching interests include Johnson and Boswell, C.S. Lewis and the Inklings, the English essay, and the contemporary transformations of literate culture. He teaches writing and composition, and maintains a writerly profile with his own essays and reviews for the press. Paul did his undergraduate studies at Monash University, Melbourne, in the 1970s, and then worked as a librarian, school teacher, and for *The Age* newspaper. He was a founding member of the Johnson Society of Australia, which was established while he was in the midst of his somewhat belated postgraduate studies in English, for which he wrote both his M.A. and Ph.D. theses on Johnson. He has been for some years the Society's Publications Editor. He took up his position at Otago in 2003. In April 2007 he was the recipient of the Pottle Fellowship at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, and spent a month there working on a selected edition of the never-before reprinted journalistic writings of James Boswell.

Of this lecture, Dr Tankard writes, 'Before our Society was formed, I corresponded with J. D. Fleeman about the bibliography of Johnson's *Rambler*. He replied, twice, with generous advice. There is always a strong bibliographical and paratextual turn to my own scholarly work, and I am pleased to be able to give this lecture in his honour.'

Reference Point: Samuel Johnson and the Encyclopaedias

Paul Tankard

There is a prestigious annual award given in Britain to a writer of non-fiction; it is called the Samuel Johnson Prize. Most people would not think to describe Samuel Johnson as a writer of ‘non-fiction’ – and he himself would not have recognised the term – so it requires a few moments of mental readjustment to realise how appropriate it is that this prize be given in his memory. Writers of what we rather lamely call non-fiction, unlike the writers of what we call literature, have to write about *something*: it might be something serious and abstract, like politics, history, music, or even literature – or it might be something lighter and more vivid, like travel or food or the lives of dead people.

This suggests a question as to what it was exactly that Samuel Johnson himself – the doyen of non-fiction writers – wrote about. He was considerably more versatile than the awardees of his prize, who are mainly biographers and historians; Johnson’s writings include a number of those categories I just mentioned: travel, politics, literature and biography, and he also wrote about language, and (in his essays) a species of ‘knowledge’ which would today take in moral psychology, cultural studies and etiquette. His epitaph in Westminster Abbey describes him as ‘Grammarian and Critic, versed in English letters, a Poet remarkable for the light of his judgements and the weight of his diction, a profound moral Teacher.’¹

This paper I mean to be a contribution to the understanding of his reception and reputation. I want to show how the apparent doyen of non-fiction is represented in the earliest examples of those vast multi-volume repositories of such writing: encyclopaedias. Such works are, of course, a particular invention of the eighteenth century, and a type of work in which Johnson was himself very interested.

We usually think of the great French *Encyclopédie* of D’Alembert and Diderot (1751-80, 32 v.) as the first such work. Johnson had in his library seven volumes of it, possibly those published before 1759, when further printing was temporarily banned by the French Parlement. But *L’Encyclopédie* was explicitly inspired by an English work, the *Cyclopaedia* of Ephraim Chambers (c.1680-1740).

Chambers' *Cyclopaedia*

Chambers' famous *Cyclopaedia: or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, was first published, in two large folio volumes, in 1728. Johnson had a copy in his library of the fourth edition, dated 1741. There were seven London editions of the work until 1751. As a 'Dictionary of Arts and Sciences', it is focused on the terms used in all areas of human learning; it includes, notably, no names of people or places; that is, there is no History or Geography. The reasoning behind this convention seems to be that the subject matter of history and geography were simply the fundamental conditions of embodied life, applicable to all human communities, and that knowledge of that kind was neither art nor science; an encyclopaedia – literally, a 'circle of learning' – was to be concerned with the products of ongoing intellectual enterprise in civilised societies.

The *Cyclopaedia* would have been much in Johnson's mind as he compiled his *Dictionary* in the 1750s. As Jack Lynch observes, it was 'among his most important sources, at least in the early part of the alphabet.'² Johnson told Boswell that he 'formed his style', in part, upon that of Chambers in his *Proposals for the Cyclopaedia* (1726) as a model for his *Plan* for the *Dictionary*.³ One of his Scottish amanuenses, Alexander Macbean, had worked on the *Cyclopaedia* (*Life* 1:138)

His involvement with the *Cyclopaedia* could have been much more intimate. The minor writer, Percival Stockdale, in his *Memoirs* (1809), records that when he told Johnson that he had declined to edit a new edition of the *Cyclopaedia*, Johnson said that he would undertake it. When Stockdale expressed surprise that, being under no financial necessity, he should be interested in such a tedious task, he replied, 'Sir ... I like that muddling work.' He was disappointed when the work was offered to Dr Abraham Rees (*Life* 2: 203 n.3).

This account is not quite consistent with a series of Johnson's letters from the 1770s, concerning the *Cyclopaedia*. He had apparently discussed with his friend John Hawkesworth the value of making an 'epitome' of the *Cyclopaedia*, and had understood Hawkesworth to be interested in doing it himself. In 1773, Johnson wrote to him asking if the task could be given to another writer who was ready to execute it.⁴ (Johnson had a clear professional etiquette regarding projects, and considered that a literary project was morally the 'property' of the person who had first conceived it.) Hawkesworth must have given the go-ahead, and Dr John Calder was subsequently contracted to do the work. But Calder lavished upon it, as John Nicholls reported, such 'superfluous

diligence' (*Life* 2: 502), that when Johnson and some others were asked by the publisher to make comments on a sample of his work, these were (in the publisher's view) so critical, that Calder was dismissed from the job, and Rees engaged. Johnson was surprised and (one imagines) embarrassed by this turn of events, and wrote to the publishers to intercede on Calder's behalf, but was unsuccessful, and later wrote to Calder apologising (*Letters* 2: 293, 297).

Rees's revised edition of the *Cyclopaedia* was published in parts, 1778-86, making four volumes, and reprinted with a fifth volume added in 1788. It was a work of some 57,000 entries. An important innovation in this edition is that, unlike Chambers, who wrote and edited much of the work himself, Rees sought original contributions from specialist authors in particular branches of the arts and sciences. The work mentions Johnson twice, in articles about *Dictionaries* and *English*.

The article on *ENGLISH, or the ENGLISH Tongue*, briefly refers readers to the 'History' of the language that Johnson prefixed to the *Dictionary*. The article *DICTIONARY* is printed almost unchanged from the seventh edition of 1751, before Johnson's *Dictionary* was published, which, after listing important dictionaries of various European languages, concludes,

for the English, we have as yet scarce any worth the mentioning; unless perhaps those of Lloyd, Philips, Kersey, and Bailly; but a very complete and accurate one is expected daily from Mr Johnson.⁵

It was not until another four years later, in April 1755, that the *Dictionary* finally appeared; the cyclopaedists were apparently not disappointed, and in his revised edition Rees changes the tense, to conclude the sentence with a reference to 'the publication of that very complete and accurate one by Johnson'.

Other Encyclopaedias in Johnson's Library

As well as the French work and its British model, Johnson owned at least four other encyclopaedic works:

- Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire* – second edition (1702)
- Nicholas Lloyd's English edition (1670) of the *Dictionarium Historicum*, by Charles Estienne (1563), the first French encyclopaedia
- Louis Moreri, *Grand Dictionnaire Historique* – second edition (1683)
- Another, unidentified, *Dictionnaire Historique* (1777)

These four works, all French in origin, are not encyclopaedias, either in the *Cyclopaedia* sense of the term, or by the modern usage; as their titles proclaim, they are ‘historical dictionaries’. An historical dictionary would cover historical events and personages, with a great deal of biographical material. Encyclopaedias, as we have seen, were concerned with the ‘circle of knowledge’ after which they were named, rather than the makers of knowledge; the first compilers saw mere biography as somehow not constituting knowledge, and being inappropriate in a serious work. This was the tradition of at least the first edition of the most famous eighteenth-century encyclopaedia, the *Britannica*.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is the most famous eighteenth century encyclopaedia now, on account of its being to us not merely an historical title; it is of course still published, now on the internet and CD-ROM, and in thirty-two volumes of its fifteenth edition (2002). There is no copy recorded as being present in Johnson’s library at his death. But in his lifetime the *Britannica* was a far less important and authoritative work than it has since become. It was a project of two Edinburgh printers, Bell and Macfarquhar, and the content of the first two editions was mainly the work of the two successive editors (more, compilers), William Smellie and James Tytler.

The first edition was published (1768-71) in parts, then (1771) in three volumes. Its editor, William Smellie, was a remarkable young man, a master printer, who edited the *Scots Magazine*. He was a renowned classicist, and had a professional knowledge of medicine, gained by attending lectures at the University. Unable to afford a medical degree, he had gone into printing, and earned the respect of many of Scotland’s most eminent scholars and authors. Although the first *Encyclopaedia Britannica* sold out and went to a second Edinburgh printing and a London printing, it was not much esteemed by the literary world.

The only mention it makes of Johnson, that I have been able to find, is a long entry (six pages) devoted to a detailed critique of his *Dictionary*.⁶ This is a curious essay, being virtually the only article in the work devoted to one text. The article starts by observing,

The only attempt which has hitherto been made towards forming a regular dictionary of the English language, is that of the learned Samuel Johnson. But although it is executed in a masterly manner, yet as it cannot be expected that an undertaking of this nature could be brought to perfection by one man, we shall venture to suggest a

few circumstances which, if onely attended to, may perhaps be of some utility.

Most of the rest of the article consists of fifteen examples of definitions which the author says more accurately fulfil the proper function of a dictionary, which is to distinguish words from others with which they may be confused. So it provides accounts of words such as *tall* and *high*, *wide* and *broad*.

The second edition (1777-84) was in ten volumes, expanded in part by the inclusion, at the proprietors' insistence, of biographical entries for historical persons. Smellie argued with the proprietors over this and other issues, and left the project, and a journalist and political writer named James Tytler was appointed editor. Like Smellie, he wrote much of the work himself. Tytler had studied medicine and had an extensive knowledge of chemistry. However, and as the Preface to the third edition frankly notes, 'his conduct has been marked by almost perpetual imprudence.'⁷ He drank, gambled and was frequently in debt, and is said to have written hundreds of articles on the upturned tub belonging to a washerwoman with whom he and his family lodged, outside Edinburgh. Tytler was also the first Briton to make a successful ascent by balloon.

The final volume of Tytler's edition was published in the year Johnson died, so he is not accorded a biographical entry. He is mentioned in ten articles and in the biographies of four of his literary acquaintances: Churchill, Garrick, Goldsmith and Savage. His work is mentioned in the articles on Shakespeare, Printing, and the very long article on Poetry (under the sub-heads Fable, Allegory and Satire). The long critical article from the first edition about the *Dictionary* is reprinted unchanged.

In the article on the satirist Charles Churchill, the story is told about Churchill's poems being shown to Johnson, who was unenthusiastic about them. When this opinion was passed on to Churchill, 'he resolved to requite this private opinion with a public one,' and portrayed Johnson as the character Pomposo in his poem, *The Ghost*. The article mildly notes that 'those who disliked Mr Johnson, allowed it to have merit', and Johnson is implicitly commended for his temperate response: his 'only reply to Churchill's abuse was, "that he thought him a shallow fellow in the beginning, and could say nothing worse of him still."⁸

With regard to *Garrick* (5: 3219-20) and *Goldsmith* (5: 3341-43), Johnson's friendship with each is briefly mentioned. It is reported of Garrick that 'Dr Johnson and he were fellow-students at the same school [not true!]; and it is a curious fact, that these two celebrated geniuses came up to London, with the intention of putting themselves into active life, in the same coach' [also not true]. Johnson is mentioned with others as one of the 'literary friends' of Goldsmith. Interestingly, I heard on New Zealand National Radio only a week or so ago (1 September 2007), a biographer describing, as one of the difficulties of writing biography, how to deal, in a chronological account, with the subject's lifelong friendships. The six-column article on Richard Savage is longer than those on Churchill (two columns), Garrick (three columns), Goldsmith (four columns) – and Shakespeare (three columns). This does not so much represent the writers' comparative significance, as the availability of biographical materials: in Savage's case they have, of course, his *Life* by Johnson. For *Savage* (9: 6956-59), Dr Samuel Johnson is mentioned only as the author of his 'admirable Memoirs'.

Under *Shakespeare*, Johnson is credited with sourcing the story of King Lear '[i]mmediately from an old ballad', and only thence (as was more generally known) to Geoffrey of Monmouth; he is also listed as an editor of the plays. In the article on *Printing* (9: 6481), Johnson is credited with being the only critic to have noticed an interesting passage in 2 Henry VI, IV.vii, but the writer thinks that even he dealt with it in a 'trifling' manner.

In the long article, *Poetry*, under the heading 'Fable', Johnson's 'beautiful allegories' in the *Rambler* are mentioned (with works by Spenser, Thomson, Addison) as examples of the fable 'being designed only to clothe and adorn the moral'. Johnson's 'Eastern Stories' in the *Rambler* are given as modern examples of the genre of Allegory. Regarding 'Satire', it is said that satires are either jocosely or seriously, and that of the latter kind,

the characteristic properties ... are, morality, dignity, and severity; a better example of which cannot be mentioned than a poem entitled *London*, written in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, by Mr Samuel Johnson, who has kept up to the spirit and force of the original.

The third edition (1788-97) was published in eighteen volumes (with a two volume supplement in 1801). Tytler commenced as editor,

but left Edinburgh in a hurry to avoid imprisonment, either for debt or his radical political opinions, or both. One of the proprietors, Colin Macfarquhar, edited through to the article 'Mysteries', until his sudden death at the age of forty-eight. At that point, a scholarly clergyman, George Gleig, later a bishop in the Scottish Episcopal Church, who had already contributed to the work, was invited to become editor, and completed it. Rather than being mainly the work of the compilers, with entries taken from textbooks and other sources, Macfarquhar and Gleig's *Britannica* – like its contemporary rival, Rees's edition of the *Cyclopaedia* – boasted original treatise-like articles (some of great length) by eminent scholars. This has remained the model for all authoritative encyclopaedias.

I want to leave the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for now, to look at an example of that other type of work which contributed to the modern encyclopaedia, the historical dictionary.

The *Biographia Britannica*

The first edition of the *Biographia Britannica: or, the lives of the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland, from the earliest ages*, was published 1747-66 in seven volumes. According to the preface of volume two of the second edition, it was the work of Johnson's old colleague on the *Harleian Catalogue*, William Oldys, and a number of others.

Johnson relied heavily on the *Biographia Britannica* as a source for his *Lives of the Poets*. On 25 September 1777, during his annual jaunt to the Midlands, he wrote to Hester Thrale asking her to have the work sent to his London residence (*Letters*, 3: 76), and six weeks later when he returned to London, he wrote again saying he wanted it as soon as possible (6 Nov.; *Letters*, 3: 93). Quite how much Johnson owed to this work is made apparent in Roger Lonsdale's new four-volume Oxford edition of *Lives of the Poets*; as Lonsdale succinctly states, 'The *Biographia* included articles on thirty-one of his fifty-two poets, some twenty-two of which ... seem clearly to have been his primary source.'⁹ (It was also an important source for his earlier *Lives of Ascham and Browne*.) In fact, he even used, in his *Life of Addison*, the one volume of the revised edition that came out in time for him to consult it.

Johnson would not have been writing *Lives of the Poets* at all if he had accepted a different project. Boswell reports that Johnson told him that 'he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, but had declined it; which he afterwards said to me he

regretted' (*Life* 3: 174, 19 Sept. 1777). Andrew Kippis was appointed, and his edition was published 1777-93.

Kippis entered the Presbyterian ministry at the age of twenty-one, and for the last forty-three years of his life was the minister to a congregation in Westminster. He was ridiculously learned; at a period in his youth, as a contemporary remarked,

he read for three years at the rate of 16 hours *per* day; and one of the works ... which he read entirely through was the General Dictionary, in 10 volumes; this ... laid the foundation of his taste and skill in biographical composition.¹⁰

He wrote a great deal for the magazines and learned journals, and had a high reputation, being awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by the University of Edinburgh, and made a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society. In the first edition of the *Life of Johnson*, Boswell complained that the *Biographia Britannica* was 'crowded with obscure dissenting teachers', but in the next edition added a long footnote correcting this, on Kippis's advice (*Life* 3: 174 and n.3). Kippis knew Johnson, and was with him on Sunday evening 30 May 1784 (*Life* 4: 282), and passed on to Boswell an anecdote of the occasion.

In view of Johnson's dependence on the first edition of the *Biographia Britannica* for his *Lives of the Poets*, it is pleasant to be able to observe that in Kippis's revised edition, the *Biographia Britannica* returned the compliment. Without claiming to have made a comprehensive survey of the five volumes, I have found forty-six articles that quote or mention Johnson: the number of mentions increases in each successive volume: one, three, nine, sixteen, sixteen. By far the majority of these (twenty-five of forty-six) are articles in which Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* is called upon for either biographical facts, or (more often) critical insight. But the writers also make use or mention of Johnson's *The Adventurer*, *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, early *Lives* of Ascham and Browne, two obscure articles, and the four major biographical works: Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*, Thrale's *Anecdotes*, Hawkins's *Life* and Boswell's *Life*. The last of these is only quoted twice, and would no doubt have furnished more material; but it was only published in time to be scoured for volume five, with which the publication of the second edition of the *Biographia Britannica* finished, part-way through the letter "F", as a result of the death of its editor, and no replacement being found. A sixth volume was printed, but a disastrous

fire in the warehouse destroyed all but a few copies and it was never distributed.

A tabulation of these articles makes it clear how assiduously the editor kept up with new publications. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, published in 1779, is understandably not quoted in the main text of the second volume (1780), but in the 'Corrigenda and Addenda to Volume 1'. By the third volume (1784 – the year Johnson died), Kippis has harvested material for five items in the 'Corrigenda and Addenda to volumes 1 and 2', as well as his own editorial additions to three articles in the main text. In volume four (1789), all the references to *Lives of the Poets* are in the main text, and all the Johnsonian citations in six items in the 'Corrigenda and Addenda' to earlier volumes are from the two works of Johnsonian biography published since the previous volume: Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* (1785) and Hawkins' *Life of Johnson* (1787). Boswell's *Life* (1792), finally makes its only appearances in the 'Corrigenda and Addenda' in volume five (1793).

It will be apparent that some conspectus of critical opinion is part of the brief of the *Biographia Britannica*. Many of the articles are in fact taken straight from the first edition, but with additional material printed as lengthy footnotes, sometimes as long again as the original articles. In the Preface to volume two, Kippis notes, 'Some approve of reflections and remarks, others dislike them; though recommended by the example of such Biographers as a Tacitus and a Plutarch, a Bayle and a Johnson.'¹¹ It was Kippis's style to write with courteous flattery, to be generous to his subjects; Horace Walpole dubbed the work, 'Vindicatio Britannica, or a defence of everybody' (quoted *Life* 3: 174 n.3), and many mentions of Johnson come with some compliment. His *Life of Addison* is called 'beautiful' (3:6), and Johnson himself is called 'our great Poetical Biographer' (3:7), 'liberal-minded' (3: [xxii]), and an 'eminent writer' (3:34). His criticism of Butler's *Hudibras* is described as 'the most capital criticism ever published ... so ingenious, masterly, and candid' (92).

But Kippis will also take issue with Johnson, especially when his judgments are ungenerous. He says that Johnson's praise of Dyer's 'Ruins of Rome' 'is given with a very scanty, and, we must add, with a very unjust, hand' (5: 525). Citing Johnson's description of Swift's biographer, Charles Boyle, fifth Earl of Orrery, as feeble-minded, Kippis notes, 'It will be remembered, that Dr Johnson was perhaps too ready to depreciate the abilities of those persons whose minds were not so

energetic as his own' (4:12). Johnson's 'estimate of the genius and writings of Mr [William] Collins is too severe' (4:33). He quotes Johnson on Congreve, and then adds, 'Whilst we are sensible of the acuteness of the preceding remark, and that it shews Dr Johnson's great knowledge of the human mind, we are not satisfied with the application of it, in regard to Mr Congreve' (4:78). He says that Johnson's account of Cowley adds little to the facts of the poet's life, and corrects him in a mistake; but he goes on to quote Johnson for some five columns for the 'new aspect' that he gives to those facts, 'from the strength and sagacity of his mind' (4:375), and compliments him in particular for his 'account of the Metaphysical Poets [which] is uncommonly ingenious and curious' (4:380).

When he finds that Johnson has in his Life of Cowley commended a long poem on the death of Crashaw 'with a quaint obscurity, rarely found in his forcible language', he adds the entire poem to Crashaw's entry (4: 428). There are twelve pages in the second edition of the *Biographia Britannica* entry on Dryden, followed by thirteen pages of additional material in two columns, mainly from Johnson.

Kippis's mind is apparently full of Johnson, so that he can quote a remark of Johnson's about Isaac Watts, and apply it to Dr Doddridge (5:305). He is occasionally misled by his wide reading. He says, in the 'Corrigenda and Addenda' to volume two (5:11), 'Concerning Brady's translation of the Aeneid, Dr. Johnson's expression is, that "it was dragged forth into the world, but lived not long enough to cry."' Kippis always carefully gives his sources, and tells us that he found this in Daniel Lyson's *Environs of London* (1792). I was naïve enough to imagine I had stumbled upon some otherwise unrecorded Johnsonian sentiment, when I realised (as Kippis apparently did not) that it was taken from Johnson's Life of Dryden, in *Lives of the Poets* (2: 146). He would, perhaps, have been less ready to quote it, had he found it in its original context, in which Johnson candidly continues, 'I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.' G. B. Hill's footnote on this passage suggests, appropriately, that the source could have been the first edition of the *Biographia Britannica*. One of his contemporaries said, 'Kippis laid so many books upon his head that his brains could not move' (Robert Hall, qtd. Rushton).

Kippis made additions (as long again) to the article about the minor literary figure, John-Gilbert Cooper (or J. Gilbert Cooper), whose main surviving contribution to literary history is having described

Johnson as the ‘Caliban of Literature’ (*Life* 2: 129). Kippis glosses the account of Cooper’s *Letters Concerning Taste* (1755) with a paragraph attributed to Johnson, from a review of the third expanded edition of the essay (1757), that is not elsewhere identified as his. This is certainly interesting, but my subsequent investigations have tracked it down to an article in Johnson’s *Literary Magazine*, which none of the experts on this aspect of Johnson’s work consider to be his. Kippis concludes his comments with a story for which this is the only source, that,

at the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce ... Dr Goldsmith, I remember, made an attempt at a speech, but was obliged to sit down in confusion. I once heard Dr Johnson speak there, upon a subject relative to mechanics, with a propriety, perspicuity, and energy which excited general admiration (4: 266; this is cited by Powell at *Life* 2: 139, n.10).

In summary, Johnson is quoted in the second edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, wherever there is an opinion of his available, either a passing remark reported by a biographer, or an extended critique in one of his *Lives*. Such treatment can only have contributed to consolidating his posthumous literary authority and reputation.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, third edition

I want to return now to the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which – like the revised *Cyclopaedia* – brings together the Arts and Sciences, History and Biography, and expert contributors. It has another call on our attention: Johnson having now become historical himself, he is accorded a long biographical entry (an essay of twenty-seven paragraphs), by the editor, George Gleig.

It is this edition in which I am most interested. Johnson’s presence in encyclopaedias here takes a new direction, as he is used as an authority in, for instance, the entry on *memory*. Given Gleig’s interest in and knowledge of Johnson, it is probable that he is responsible for selecting passages from Johnson. Certainly mentions of Johnson increase after Gleig took over editing; the rate more than doubles from 1.75 times per volume to 4.75. Most mentions of Johnson come with some compliment. The following is not claimed to be a comprehensive account of references to Johnson, but I believe it to be representative:

- a celebrated genius (Garrick)
- the great lexicographer (Grammar)
- brightest ornament of the eighteenth century (Johnson)
- our great lexicographer (Kenrick)

- whose critical judgment will not be rashly questioned (Mason)
- the first moralist of the age (Moral Philosophy)
- the moralising traveller (Pittenweem)
- an able critic (Poetry)
- a great critic (Printing)
- a great master of moral wisdom (Providence)
- a celebrated writer (Stanhope)
- the leviathan of literature (Superstition)

Although Gleig obviously holds Johnson in high esteem, it could not be said that Johnson is an authority of exceptional importance in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, third edition. The way to be cited frequently in a ‘dictionary of arts and sciences’ is to have written a systematic work on some particular but broad subject, such as the law (Blackstone), theology, natural history or rhetoric (Blair or Kames), or to have been the only visitor to certain remote regions, and furthermore, a Scotsman: the Scottish explorer of Abyssinia, James Bruce, is frequently quoted. Although Johnson is given high praise as a moral philosopher, he is not a *systematic* moral philosopher (we know what he thought of systems generally). When the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* deals with the subject (apart from literature) to which Johnson made the greatest contribution, it reverts from alphabetical treatment to a systematic treatment; one feels that if Gleig were to have made a dictionary of Moral Philosophy, Johnson would have been a major source – this is in effect what is supplied by those many books of Johnson’s wit and wisdom, which are often alphabetically arranged.

Johnson’s most systematic works are the *Dictionary* and *Lives of the Poets*; the *Dictionary* covers common nouns rather than proper nouns – and in a way that actually competes with encyclopaedic treatment. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* edition three uses *Lives of the Poets*, but having only lately admitted biography, and wanting to keep the work as scientific as it can, it does not go the further step of the *Biographia Britannica* and include critical reflections. Johnson’s biographies in *Lives of the Poets* are seldom the source of original biographical facts, so in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* they are cited far less often than in Kippis’s *Biographia Britannica*. Among the articles in which one might not necessarily expect to find mentions of Samuel Johnson are the following essays: *Memory*, which quotes four passages from Johnson’s *Idler* essay, no. 74; *Providence*, which includes seven paragraphs from *Idler* 69; *Quality*, which quotes an apposite couplet

from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*; and *Superstition*, which discusses a number of passages concerning the ‘second sight’ from Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Isles*.

One of the most curious mentions is for the Scottish town Pittenweem. The only point to the mention of Johnson, who is alluded to as ‘the moralising traveller’, is to remark that on his trip to the Hebrides he did not visit the town, but that if he had, he would have been emotionally moved by the local abbey. The explanation for this odd citation would seem to be in a fact only to be found outside the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, third edition – that its editor Gleig was once the vicar of Pittenweem, and obviously wants to defend the town’s reputation against having been overlooked by the region’s most distinguished modern tourist.

In examining these five voluminous works of non-fiction we gain a sense of Johnson’s place in the world of letters, not as an authority upon special subjects, but as a critic: a reliable guide on how to think about any topic on which he chooses to comment. As Andrew Kippas, George Gleig and other encyclopaedists seem to recognise, his notice dignifies any subject. This is particularly the case where a biographical connection can be established. It is celebrity, certainly, but something more. From these three works, I think we can see Johnson settling from an early date into the cultural role he continues to occupy, as not just a subject, but a reference point.

Notes

The text above represents my lecture as delivered, with some tidying for publication. However, I continued my research after this presentation and expanded the paper, particularly to take in a detailed examination of the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The expanded text has been published in *Eighteenth-Century Life* 33:3 (2009), 37-64.

1. Epitaph by Samuel Parr, translated in James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. J. D. Fleeman (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), xxiv.
2. Jack Lynch, ‘Johnson’s Encyclopaedia,’ in Jack Lynch and Anne McDermott, ed., *Anniversary Essays on Johnson’s Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 138.

3. James Boswell, *The Life of Johnson*, ed. G.B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell, 6 v. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935-65), 1: 218. This edition will be the one used for the rest of this essay.
4. *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford, 5 v. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992-94), 2: 4.
5. Abraham Rees, ed., [Chambers'] *Cyclopaedia: or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences...*, 5 v. (London, 1778-88), 2: 298.
6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [first edition]: *or, A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 3 v. (1771), 2: 434-40.
7. *Encyclopaedia Britannica: or, A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*. 3rd ed. 18 v. (1788-97). 1: xv).
8. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2nd ed., 10 vols. (Edinburgh, 1778-84), 3: 1974. This story as Boswell re-tells it in the *Life* (1: 418-20) appears to be a conflation of the account in his journal and Churchill's obituary in the Annual Register, which *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2nd edition, gives as the source for its version.
9. Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent Poets*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 v. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 1:91.
10. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1795, qtd. in Alan Rushton, 'Andrew Kippas,' Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online.
11. Andrew Kippis, *Biographia Britannica: or, The Lives of the Most Eminent Persons who have Flourished in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2nd ed., 5 vols. (London, 1778-93), 2: viii; (my emphasis).

SEMINAR PAPERS

**Geoffrey Brand
Wallace Kirsop
Barrie Sheppard
Daniel Vuillermin
John Wiltshire**

About the Contributors

Geoff Brand received a Ph.D. in Zoology from Monash University in the early 1970s and spent many years as a marine biologist in government service. For the last fifteen years he has been involved in the second-hand book trade. He now shares his time between book-selling, rare books in particular, and demonstrating first-year biology at Monash. His other interests include the history and philosophy of zoology.

This paper was delivered at the fourteenth JSA Seminar, 2007.

Wallace Kirsop taught in the French Department/Program at Monash University from 1962 to 1998. He was Director of the Centre for the Book in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash from 1999 to mid-2009 and continues as an Honorary Professor in that School. He is also a Principal Fellow in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Melbourne. Professor Kirsop's teaching and research interests include seventeenth and eighteenth century French literature, book history and bibliography. In 1995 he delivered the JSA's Fleeman Lecture, *Samuel Johnson in Paris in 1775*.

This paper was delivered at the fourteenth JSA Seminar, 2007.

Barrie Sheppard is a former Senior Lecturer in English at the Rusden and Burwood campuses of Deakin University, Victoria. Since taking early retirement he has worked as a consultant to business and government in writing and oral presenting. He has also been able to spend more time writing poetry, and conducting certain unofficial investigations into the hostelries of Melbourne with the JSA's former Secretary, Bryan Reid.

This paper was delivered at the ninth JSA Seminar, 2002.

Daniel Vuillermin is undertaking a Ph.D. at the Biography Institute at the Australian National University, for which he is writing a biography of the New York-born artist and writer, Herbert Kruckman (1904-98). In 2005 he assisted John Wiltshire with his edition of Austen's *Mansfield Park* (2006), and in 2006-07 he was editor of *Who's Who in Australia* (2008). He has given a number of papers at JSA seminars on portraits of Johnson, and contributed a chapter to John Wiltshire's *The Making of Dr Johnson*. Daniel presented this paper with John Wiltshire at the eleventh

JSA Seminar, 2004. Daniel is currently preparing to write a dual biography of Dr Samuel Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

John Wiltshire is Honorary Research Associate and former Professor of English at Melbourne's La Trobe University, and the President of the Johnson Society of Australia. After studying at Cambridge University, he came to Australia, teaching English at the University of Sydney, and from 1968 at La Trobe. His work on eighteenth-century topics includes *Samuel Johnson in the Medical World: The Doctor and the Patient* (Cambridge, 1991) and *Jane Austen and the Body: 'The Picture of Health'* (Cambridge, 1992), and the edition of *Mansfield Park* in the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen (2005). He has given many talks for the JSA, and in 2000 he gave the Fleeman Lecture, *Jane Austen's 'Dear Dr Johnson'*. His new book, *The Making of Dr Johnson*, was published in July 2009.

On the Side of the Angels: Buffon, Linnaeus and The Great Chain of Being

Geoffrey Brand

One day early in the eighteen hundred and sixties, I, being then a small boy, was with my nurse, buying something in the shop of a petty newsagent, bookseller, and stationer in Camden Street, Dublin, when there entered an elderly man, weighty and solemn, who advanced to the counter, and said pompously, 'Have you the works of the celebrated Buffon?'

So wrote George Bernard Shaw in the preface to his play *Back To Methuselah*. The elderly gentleman's 'celebrated Buffon' was of course Georges-Louis Leclerc, the Comte de Buffon (1707-88), the man who had dazzled the eighteenth century with the massive *Histoire Naturelle, Générale et Particulière*: a work of scientific literature that, almost a hundred years on, 'every literate child knew ... as well as Aesop's Fables'. Buffon continued to dazzle, according to Shaw, until his light was dimmed by 'the name that has since obliterated Buffon's in the popular consciousness: the name of Darwin'.

The scientific world has just (in 2007) celebrated the tercentenary of Buffon's birth, and in preparing this tribute to him I was mindful that the bicentenary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the *Origin of Species* were about to follow. It seemed a suitable occasion for reflecting on Buffon's contribution to the Darwinian Revolution, except for one thing: no firm conclusions have ever been reached about Buffon as Darwin's precursor, and I had no new research material to offer.¹ I decided to look instead at the dispute between Buffon and the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, the other giant of eighteenth century natural history, whose tercentenary we have also just celebrated. At least the matters over which Buffon and Linnaeus clashed can be defined with certainty, as they are still actively debated in modern zoology. For example, recent discussions of the 'species problem' raise questions which Buffon himself might have framed;² and the early Buffon would be pleased that some modern scholars follow him in denying the existence of the category of species, the very entities to which his rival Linnaeus spent his life attaching names.

Shaw was wrong about the decline of Buffon's reputation; his prestige had begun to wane long before Darwin. It had always been linked to his literary style, and as the French Revolution gained pace two years

after his death, that style was fast going out of fashion. Linnaeus's work, on the other hand, stirred republican sentiments. On 23 August 1790, at the height of the Revolution, members of the newly formed Société d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, among them some of Buffon's former colleagues, eager to impress the new authorities with their zeal for public improvement, petitioned the National Assembly for permission to erect a bust of a famed naturalist in the Jardin des Plantes (the former Jardin du Roi). Buffon had directed the King's Cabinet, to which the *Jardin* was attached, for half a century, and the petitioners were careful to defer to him as one of the *grands hommes* of Enlightenment natural history; but it was clearly Linnaeus, *le plus digne* of the two, whom they wished to immortalise:

Notre association s'est restreinte à donner un témoignage authentique de son admiration aux seuls grands hommes qui ont illustré la science ... le nom de Buffon, en France, comme celui de Linnaeus ... Le Naturaliste le plus digne de nos hommages, & conséquemment celui en l'honneur de qui le premier buste sera élevé, est ce même *Linnaeus* ...³

The National Assembly gave permission, the bust was placed on a pedestal under a cedar of Lebanon, and the huge crowd which turned out for the unveiling was not dissatisfied that the latest addition to the *Jardin* was the effigy of the great Swedish botanist. Botany was fashionable. Botany meant Linnaeus, not Buffon. If a few looked on with horror it was not because their hero Buffon had been overlooked – his bust already graced the *Jardin* – but because he was now sharing his home ground with a *nomenclateur*, a librarian of plants and animals, a cataloguer masquerading as scientist. But there was little point in protesting. Educated France was in the grip of *botanophilia*,⁴ Linnaeus's star was in the ascendancy, a veritable cult of Linnaeus was in the offing. Before long, Linnaean societies were destined to appear in the major centres of Europe, in France and England in particular.

The dispute behind this extraordinary event could easily be dismissed as a confrontation between two opinionated self-promoters vying to be considered the leading codifier of the natural world by a public gone mad with cabinets of curiosities. That may well have been the opinion of readers of popular texts like Thomas Bewick's *History of the Quadrupeds*, which noted Buffon's names for the roe-buck and the panther, *le chevreuil* and *la panthere*, side by side with Linnaeus's *Cervus Tarandus* and *Felis Pardus*. Others may have convinced themselves that Linnaeus's ascendancy was a scientific and not a political triumph.

Current Linnaean scholarship is all but silent on the matter, concerned as it is with such ‘modern’ preoccupations as the ‘deplorable lack of gender equity, racial equality, and ecological sensibility’ in Linnaeus’s era, or with Linnaeus as a man engaged in an ‘explicit attempt to “naturalise” the myth of European superiority’, in building an ‘imperial model of ecology’, ‘dove-tailing with the needs of the new factory society’ or in ‘crafting floral systems making [gender] inequalities seem natural’.⁵

The Buffonian camp in fact had a variety of defensible grievances with the Linnaeans which remain relevant to this day. Buffon simply rejected the whole Linnaean classificatory enterprise as producing nothing but artifice: God makes the spectrum, Man makes the pigeon-holes! Buffon’s collaborator Daubenton just found the enterprise dry and incomplete. Others demurred. Classification *was* a vital concern of natural history. Their grievance concerned Linnaeus’s narrow selection of taxonomic characters.

Anyone familiar with Linnaeus’s method of plant classification could not fail to note his deliberate use of traits based on the organs of reproduction. The idea that sex occurred in plants was implicit in the widely accepted notion that nature’s productions formed links in a single chain, a *Scala Naturae*, which began with minerals and proceeded upwards through plants to animals and finally Man. Being placed just below animals on this scale, plants by analogy were expected to have things in common with them, though in a less developed form. Linnaeus subscribed to this argument:

To illustrate the generation of plants ... we must take our first lights from the animal kingdom and *pursue the chain of nature* till it leads us to vegetables.⁶

He was aware of Vaillant’s work suggesting that the sexual organs of higher plants were borne on the flowers, which indeed they are. Pollen are liberated from anthers on the ends of the stamens, adhere to the stigma at the tip of the style of the same or another flower and produce a tube that conveys nuclei to the ovum. Linnaeus’s *Sexual System* assigned plants to twenty-four classes based on the number and arrangement of the pollen-producing stamens and these classes were assigned to higher groupings using simple attributes of the stigma and style.

The wide acceptance of this System owes much to the cultural milieu of eighteenth-century natural history. Rousseau provides a glimpse of it in his *Letters on the Elements of Botany*:

distant voyages were incessantly enriching Botany with new treasures. ...Lost in this immense labyrinth, the Botanists were obliged to seek a thread to extricate themselves from it, they attached themselves therefore at last seriously to method ...⁷

Field botanists made the discoveries. Linnaeus provided the thread by which they could be codified. His System had the virtue of simplicity. A field botanist in the wilds of Africa – provided he was happy to ignore the higher meaning of what he was doing – could readily assign plants with five stamens and one style to the class *pentandria*, order *monogynia*. Some protested at the use of so few taxonomic characters, others accepted the System uncritically. The scientific community at large was placated by repeated calls for patience until something better came along, as Rousseau explains:

Not that the nomenclature of Linnaeus is without its faults, or gives no handle to criticism; but 'till a more perfect one shall be found, in which nothing is wanting, it is far better to adopt this than to have none. ... [T]he Botanists of Europe ... will renounce it with still more unwillingness than they found in adopting it. In order to bring about such a change, an author must be found with credit enough to efface that of Linnaeus, one whose authority all Europe would be willing a second time to submit, which appears to me not likely to happen. (Rousseau, 15)

Some who bowed to Linnaeus's authority took their prizes – Linnaeus didn't invent the practice of naming plants after people, but he turned it into a system of reward-by-immortalisation which lured many botanists into his camp – or contented themselves that by liberating plants from their 'barbarous' local names they were claiming them for the cabinets of civilised Europe.

In what sense did Linnaeus imagine his System to be natural? Linnaeus's real agenda starts to become clear when we look at his attempts to create higher taxonomic categories. In *Classes Plantarum*, he described sixty-four orders based again on reproductive characters. Ritterbush suggests that he was hoping these orders could be assembled along the *Scala Naturae* in conformity with this ruling metaphysical assumption that nature's productions formed a single unbroken chain of increasing complexity.⁸ The attempt failed. No matter how hard Linnaeus tried to shoe-horn his plant groups into this

a priori system, the pattern they formed, as he himself admitted, was more like a geographical map than a linear series.

This attempt to reconcile observation and metaphysical assumption was a way of resolving a conflict inherent in Linnaeus's program without doing injury to the piety that motivated him. The *Scala Naturae* was not initially a theological or a biological conception. We encounter it in the seventeenth century, used as a literary device in John Donne's satirical poem *The Progress of the Soul*,⁹ and again in the eighteenth century in Pope's *Essay on Man*, in which he depicts Man as a necessary link in an uninterrupted linear scale of beings:

Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man.

and

Vast chain of being! Which from God began
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing. – On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
(Ep. I, ll. 45-46, 237-46)

Its elevation in the eighteenth century was helped by Leibniz and Spinoza, who revitalised old ideas of plenitude, gradation, and continuity. Its roots actually lay in notions of continuity traceable to Plato's belief that all material phenomena are imperfect representations of an unchanging world of 'Ideas'. One expression of the perfection of this 'Ideal' world is that it contains no gaps: so too, then, the material world – which is the ideal world's imperfect expression – must also have no gaps. All is continuity; everything that can exist does exist ... somewhere! Strangely enough, it took hold in general culture in an age of reason; even more strangely, it became the ruling paradigm in Enlightenment biology. As Lovejoy notes,

No history of the biological sciences in the eighteenth century can be adequate which fails to keep in view the fact that, for most men of science throughout that period, the theorems implicit in the conception of the Chain of Being continued to constitute essential presuppositions in the framing of scientific hypotheses.¹⁰

One reason for its acceptance was the support it gave to Natural Theology. We read in Addison's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*:

If we consider those parts of the material world which lie nearest to us ... it is amazing to consider the infinity of animals with which it is stocked. Every part of matter is peopled; every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarce a single humour in the body of man ... in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures.¹¹

Addison at first glance seems to be quaintly putting the case for common descent:

how many of the works of nature are published, if I may use the expression, in a variety of editions. ... Providence has shewn the richness of its goodness and wisdom, not only in the production of many original species, but in the multiplicity of descants which it has made on every original species in particular. (Addison, 78)

There was nothing *temporal*, however, about what Addison had in mind. The scale was to him (and was for most of the eighteenth century) a static hierarchy of contemporaneous entities arranged in a graded continuum:

It is wonderful to observe, by what a gradual progress the world of life advances through a prodigious variety of species, before a creature is formed that is complete in all its senses. ... This progress in Nature is so very gradual, that the most perfect of an inferior species comes very near to the most imperfect of that which is immediately above it ... the animal and vegetable kingdoms are so nearly joined, that if you will take the lowest of one, and the highest of the other, there will scarce be perceived any great difference between them: and so on till we come to the lowest and the most inorganical parts of matter. (Addison, 73)

Addison's 'gradual progress' could be extended by analogy from Man, the being 'complete in all its senses' at the pinnacle of the visible world, upwards into the unseen world to the angels and on to God. The theologians were delighted. So too were the naturalists. Here was a thread with which they could, in Rousseau's words, 'extricate themselves', make sense of the burgeoning labyrinth of biological treasures pouring in from new worlds. Moreover, the *Scala Naturae*, like the Phlogiston Theory, had explanatory power. Even at its most vulnerable point, its insistence on continuity, it resisted the onslaughts of experience. Perceived gaps could easily be dismissed as temporary ignorance – especially given that among the specimens pouring into the cabinets of Europe there were 'missing links' that filled gaps in the

chain, creatures like the duck-billed, egg-laying platypus, with characteristics intermediate between known groups.

Linnaeus, with his naïve piety, saw the *Scala Naturae* as part of the divine plan, which it was his God-ordained mission to unveil for all to see. In actual fact, the scale gave no intellectual support to his activities at all. As the historian of classification, Henri Daudin, has argued, the conception of a continuous chain of being was antithetical to his whole program.¹² Plant and animal classification as practised by the Linnaeans involved differentiation. Differentiation implied *discontinuity*. If living things formed part of a *Scala Naturae*, if Nature makes no leaps, then all taxonomic divisions must be interruptions of the natural order and thus artificial. When Linnaeus failed to validate the divine order, failed to arrange his higher categories along the scale, he lapsed into bewilderment, dropped the matter and turned to other things. To do otherwise would have involved challenging either the veracity of his own method or the prevailing paradigm.

Did Buffon follow Linnaeus in blindly accepting this *a priori* metaphysical conception? One reading of the *Histoire Naturelle* suggests he did so unreservedly:

It is possible to descend by almost insensible degrees from the most perfect creature to the most formless matter. ... these imperceptible shadings are the great work of nature.

When we look at the development of Buffon's scientific approach, we see this acceptance in a different light.

Buffon's career straddled a period in which the intellectual weather-vane shifted dramatically from the physical to the life sciences – to botany, zoology, and entomology. A quick look at John Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (1704-9) shows that science at the beginning of the eighteenth century meant physico-mathematical or 'Newtonian' science; the second edition of 1723 devotes less than two hundred words to its entry for Botany. A century later, Abraham Rees's *Cyclopaedia of Arts and Sciences* (1802-19) devotes more than four thousand words to the genus *Chrysanthemum* alone.

The new science was welcomed by the natural theologians, who saw it as a source of fresh evidence for design and purpose, and by those – the *philosophe* Diderot for one, and Buffon for another – who welcomed the shift from gravitation to grasses as a move away from an abstract reality towards a more substantial one.¹³ The burgeoning reality of the living world opened new prospects. But it was, and still

remains, a bewildering, complex reality, one far less willing than Newton's clockwork universe to offer up its secrets. How was one to proceed? Who or what held the key?

Buffon shared with Linnaeus a conviction about nature's unity and the desire to find it. But while Linnaeus simply followed tradition, Buffon confronted the challenge as a writer approaches the blank page. He cautiously chose Newton as guide. In his *Discours sur la manière d'étudier et de traiter l'histoire* he stated his mission:

... one must attempt to rise up to something grander [by] combining of observations, realising of data, relating them to one another through their power of analogy, and attempting to arrive at the high level of knowledge where we can judge that the particular effects depend upon more general effects. ... what is necessary is the quality of mind that permits us to grasp distant relationships ... ¹⁴

Natural history's proper starting point was the precise description of natural objects *and their history* [my italics] and the determination of the relationships that pertain between these objects and ourselves. Gather facts, generalise, formulate law, verify by experiment. Nature was to Buffon clearly a bewildering, infinite series of unique individuals, underlying which there must be some unity, a unity which man was not necessarily capable of comprehending, and on which he might so easily impose non-existent analogies and arbitrary relationships. If Buffon accepted the continuity of the *Scala Naturae*, it was only because it embodied less artifice than the *discontinuity*, the arbitrary relationships, so readily perceived or imagined by Linnaeus and the other *nomenclateurs*.

There is another powerful distinction between Buffon and Linnaeus. Linnaeus made comparisons between contemporaneous entities while Buffon took a historical approach. Buffon's approach bore fruit. At first Buffon dismissed species as mental constructs imposed on Nature by man (for which read: Linnaeus) and the only biological entity he was prepared to believe in was the individual. But as his historical approach took shape, he came to accept that parents and offspring could be placed in the same category if they met the criterion of *interfertility*. In this he went further than his predecessor John Ray, and helped lay the groundwork for an objective biological species concept: as he stated, 'a species is a constant succession of similar individuals that can reproduce together.' In Linnaeus's conception, as we shall see later, *species* was nothing more than a logical category.

Buffon then tried his historical method on the problem of *generation*. In one way it was a good choice. The theory of spontaneous generation had given way to theories of preformation or *emboîtement*, and these in turn were collapsing under the weight of recent evidence.¹⁵ Generation was thus a vexed issue waiting for authority to pronounce upon it. True to Newtonian principles, Buffon noted the facts – among them Maupertuis’s brilliant statistical work showing that both parents were materially involved in determining the character of their offspring – and built them into a grand theory, mirroring Newton’s contention that natural phenomena

may all depend upon certain forces by which the particles of bodies, by some causes hitherto unknown, are either mutually impelled towards one another and cohere in regular figures or are repelled and recede from one another.

He made a sharp distinction, not between plants and animals, but between the *animate* and the *inanimate*; all matter could be divided into *organic* matter and *inorganic* matter. Organic matter is made up of vital, identical and indestructible *primary particles*. Organisms are made up of units, which are minute replicas of themselves and develop and grow like crystals. The units from which a particular organism is made were created within the organism out these *primary particles* which are absorbed from the environment and put together by some kind of guided process of self-assembly, then driven by chemical affinity to attach themselves to existing units, and so on.

This was grander than a theory of reproduction. It explained growth, regeneration and, with a little modification, sexual reproduction and materials cycling in nature. When an organism dies, its units break up into primary particles which enter the soil or air and are then taken up by plants, where they re-form into plant units which allow the plant to grow. An animal eats the plant, the plant material is broken back down into primary particles by digestion and these are then assembled into animal units, and so on. When a sexual organism reaches maturity, it takes in *surplus* organic particles which gather in the various organs, where they’re organised into units, replicating in miniature each particular organ. These excess units are then sent to the reproductive organs and end up in the seminal fluid, which Buffon claimed is produced in females as well as males. The two fluids merge at mating and assembly begins. The theory thus takes account of Maupertuis’s finding that children inherit characters from both parents.

There was an obvious problem with the theory: what guides the *primary particles* to form self-assembling units specific to a given organism? In answer, Buffon contrived what he termed the *moule interieur*, the internal mould, a force tailored to a given organism, but universal as regards the kind of action it performed. Needless to say, the theory didn't endure in any detailed sense. We are inclined now to wince at the occult quality of Buffon's *moule interieur*, but then it was no more occult than Newton's gravitational action-at-a-distance. Newton's force, though, could be calculated and measured; Buffon's could not. What's more, in trying to explain complex self-organisation, he was – given the chemistry of the time – attempting the impossible. Two hundred years later we'd still like to know how a fertilised egg smaller than a pinhead manages to become a sentient adult organism able to be stopped in its tracks on hearing Mozart's Piano Concerto in A, and fully aware that it is doing so. For all that, Buffon's theory was impressive. It was grounded in scientific reality, sound in its Newtonian approach, brilliant in its conception of materials cycling, prophetic insofar as its idea of self-assembly anticipated the *Cell Theory*.

So Buffon contrives a grand theory that in a certain sense is still convincing, while Linnaeus clings to tradition and fails to overturn a faulty paradigm. Why is it then that the popular literature portrays Linnaeus as innovator and Buffon as populariser?¹⁶ This is just one of a number of misconceptions regarding these two figures. A more conspicuous one is the belief that Linnaeus inaugurated modern biological classification: a view held, according to the zoologist Alec Panchen, by the majority of biologists, with blatant disregard for the facts.¹⁷

Linnaeus's work was the culmination of the classical 'Aristotelian' approach to taxonomy, not the foundation of a new era. His taxonomic method is directly based on a system of knowledge that dates back to Plato and Aristotle's method of logical division, the so-called *Tree of Porphyry* (Panchen, p. 16ff). The *Tree of Porphyry* is a hierarchical scheme showing the logical progression from Material to Man. At its crown is *Substance*, the most inclusive rank, the *summum genus*. Travelling down the trunk, there follow three intermediate ranks, *Body*, *Living thing*, and *Animal*, each of which, being subordinate to the *summum genus*, is termed a *subalternum genus*. Then follows the *infima species*, Man, at the base. The *Tree* is dichotomous and inclusive. Each rank or *taxon* is divided into two *taxa* which occupy the rank below. In its traditional form it is asymmetrical, in that at every dichotomous division the only *taxon* to be defined and named is the one

leading to Man. Each division is carried out on the basis of some character or characters (*differentiae*) that separate the two subordinate taxa unambiguously. Thus when the *subalternum genus* *Animal* is divided into *rational* and *irrational*, the *differentia* in question is the capacity (or otherwise) for reason. The resulting *rational* taxon is the *infima species* Man.

Genus and *species* (originally *genos* and *eidos*) are logical categories, not biological entities, and do not denote any particular level in the scheme. If mammals, say, were divided into *felines* and *others*, mammals would be the *genus*, *felines and others* the *species*. If in turn *felines* were then divided into *cats* and *others*, then *felines* would be the *genus* and *cats and others* the *species*.

The criteria for making the divisions, the *differentiae*, are closely tied to the idea of *essences*. There has been much historical disputation over the application of this method of logical division to biological classification and it centres on the *essential* nature of the *differentiae*. In Aristotle's conception, the *taxa* at every rank were regarded as in a sense real, corresponding to phenomena in nature. Any *genos* or *eidos* had an *essence*, an existence in reality transcending that of the individual entity, and of which the individual entity was but an imperfect expression, being of this world and thus subject, so to speak, to modification by 'accidents' in the translation. The *essence* was the very being of something whereby it is what it is, the real internal, but generally unknown constitution of things on which their *discoverable* qualities depend. In the traditional logical method, the definition of *genus* was really a statement of its *essence*, and the *differentia* a statement of the *essential difference* by which it could be subdivided into *species*. The fact that the *differentiae* had to be based on these *essences* gave rise to what is called *Aristotle's Problem*: that *essence* can be known only in what Aristotle would call *the taxonomy of analysed entities*; to claim to know the *essence* of some totally unknown new organism required an act of faith.

When Linnaeus's system is viewed in this context, it becomes quite clear that his formalised diagnoses correspond to Aristotle's *differentiae*, and that the entities of *genus* and *species* enshrined in his binomial nomenclature correspond to Aristotle's *genos* and *eidos*. His categories of Class, Order, Genus, Species also originate from the *Tree of Porphyry*. Linnaeus differentiated the *Tree's subalternum genus* into two consecutive ranks so that his series of categories for logical division were *Genus Summum* (=class), *Genus intermedium*(=order), *Genus*

proximum (=genus), *Species*. His *genus* and *species* were therefore logical, not biological, in nature. This explains the otherwise curious fact that he was just as comfortable applying his binomial nomenclature to minerals as he was to plants and animals. It also explains Linnaeus's belief in the 'naturalness' of what he was doing. So long as he adhered to his method and had faith that it was *essentialist*, he could labour content in the belief that he was grouping and differentiating entities on the basis of *real* attributes.

Linnaeus's *essentialism* also explains why he opted for the differential weighting of characters. He used only the reproductive organs of higher plants because they enshrined the very essence of the plant. He was never reluctant to reiterate that the 'fructifying parts' were the basis of his Method:

The systematic division of the plants should take as its basis the primary structure. Therefore, as Nature confirms that the fructification is the only systematic foundation of Botany, it can thus be demonstrated to be the absolute foundation.¹⁸

He is noticeably reluctant though to provide the rationale for this. Such is his prestige that we look to him for originality, and it comes as something of a surprise when we read his remark that 'Orthodox Systematists take their method from the true foundation in the fructifying parts', and then realise that he was simply following a practice 'accepted by the greatest systematists as the prop and mainstay of Botany'.

Foremost among Linnaeus's precursors was the sixteenth-century botanist Cesalpino. It was he, not Linnaeus, who 'solved' *Aristotle's Problem* by identifying reproduction as the characteristic most directly linked to the essence of the (higher) plants. Cesalpino's authority was strongly endorsed in the seventeenth century by one of Buffon's forebears at the Jardin du Roi, the botanist Tournefort. This was all the philosophical justification the Linnaeans needed. Cesalpino's theoretical conclusions, as Phillip Sloan remarks, became incorporated into eighteenth-century botany 'without further attention to the philosophical arguments that had initially justified them'.¹⁹

What isn't so easy to fathom is Linnaeus's apparent indifference to the dissenting voices. John Ray, for one, began as an orthodox taxonomist, before changing tack and seriously challenging the differential weighting of characters and use of reproductive characters championed by Cesalpino; yet Linnaeus, who 'probably had a better

working command of the botanical literature than any other naturalist of the eighteenth century', consistently overlooks Ray's change of direction (Sloan, 8).

It wasn't as if Ray was acting on a whim. When he abandoned the orthodox position, Ray was responding to philosophical currents set in motion by Robert Boyle's corpuscular theory and John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Buffon came under the same influences. A barbed comment in Buffon's discourse on method, clearly aimed at Linnaeus, offers a clue to the direction those currents took:

le grand défaut de tout [les systèmes de Botanique] est une erreur de Métaphysique dans les principe même des ces méthodes. ...

Here we have the real basis for Buffon's grievance with the *nomenclateurs*. Buffon's *erreur de Métaphysique* is a reference to one of Locke's assertions:

When, therefore, we quit particulars the generals that rest [remain] are only creatures of our own making; their general nature being nothing but the capacity they are put into, by the understanding, of signifying or representing many particulars. For the signification they have is nothing but a relation that, by the mind of man, is added to them. ... What kind of signification do general words have? ... That then which general words signify is a sort of things; and each of them does that by being a sign of an abstract idea in the mind; to which idea, as things existing are found to agree, so they come to be ranked under that name, or, which is all one, be of that sort. Whereby it is evident that the essences of the sorts, or, if the Latin word pleases better, species of things, are nothing else but abstract ideas.²⁰

In *species of things* we have a clear echo of Buffon's remark that species were made by the mind of man, not the hand of God (i.e., Nature).

Locke formulated his metaphysical assertion from his views on the nature of perception. Particular objects of ordinary experience are constructs out of discrete sensory impressions, as a result of which we attach to something a nominal essence only possibly indicative of its real essence. Locke was nonetheless well acquainted with natural history and the taxonomic literature of his time, and stated the implications of his assertion as they applied to biological classification with a clarity that any natural philosopher of the time could have understood:

From whence it is easy to observe, that the essences of the sorts of things, and, consequently, *the sorting of things*, is the workmanship of the understanding that abstracts and makes those general ideas.

I would not here be thought to forget, much less deny, that Nature, in the production of things, makes several of them alike: there is nothing more obvious, especially in the races of animals, and all things propagated by seed. But yet I think we may say the sorting of them under names is the workmanship of the understanding, taking occasion, from the similitude it observes amongst them, to make abstract general ideas, and set them up in the mind, with names annexed to them. ... So they come to be of that species, have that denomination, or are put into that [class]. (Locke, III, iii, 12-13)

Locke was not questioning the existence of essences, only our ability to perceive them. He was saying, and providing a rigorous basis for saying, that genera, species, essences and classes are human creations: that, in his view, the *nomenclateurs* were indeed cataloguers masquerading as scientists:

This is that which in short I would say ... The great business of genera and species, and their essences, amounts to no more than this: that men making abstract ideas ... with names annexed to them, do thereby enable themselves to consider things ... as it were in bundles, for the easier and readier improvement and communication of their knowledge, which would advance but slowly were their words and thoughts confined only to particulars. (Locke, III, iii, 20)

Buffon was aware of these assertions, understood and acted on them, but then Buffon was a *philosophe*. Tournefort too was aware of the arguments but seems not to have understood them. Where Linnaeus sat isn't clear.

Locke's influence split naturalists into two camps: the Cesalpino-Linnaeus tradition and the Ray-Buffon-Lamarek-Adanson tradition; and the split persists as a theoretical gulf in taxonomic biology to this day. We see it in the current disputes between the adherents of cladistics, phenetics, and other approaches to modern taxonomy. This might all seem like so much academic hair-splitting until we realise, as Alec Panchen (3) forcefully reminds zoologists, that biological systematics provides the set of observations for which theories of evolution are the explanation, a point which is being pushed into the background in biological education by the hype and commercial clatter surrounding the world of molecular biology. Linnaeus was at least accurate about one thing: classification was and is a vital preoccupation of biology.

A final word. In the year 2009 it will be Samuel Johnson's turn to share the scholarly limelight with Darwin and *The Origin of Species*, and I would like to conclude with a few words about Johnson and natural

history, while leaving a fuller account to another day. We think of Johnson first and foremost as lexicographer and moralist, and thanks to his dictum that ‘we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance’, some think of him as having been indifferent, if not hostile, to scientific curiosity. As Richard Schwartz observes, Johnson did not intend his remark to mean that moral growth and scientific curiosity should be mutually exclusive.²¹ Here are just three examples of Johnson making excursions into the world of natural history.

His translation of Fontenelle’s eulogy of the Parisian doctor and botanist Lewis (Louis) Morin (in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1741) brought him into contact with Tournefort and the practice of immortalising fellow botanists in plant names: ‘a plant is a monument of a more durable nature than a medal or obelisk.’

His preface to Dodsley’s *Preceptor* (1748) makes it clear that he knew not just Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and the works of Aristotle well enough to commend them to young minds, but the works of the naturalists John Ray, Rondoletius and Aldrovandus as well.

He made direct contact with Buffon’s world, of course, when he and the Thrales visited the Cabinet et Jardin du Roi in Paris on their travels in France in 1775.

In none of these instances are we able to gauge any personal opinion, but he more than makes up for this deficiency in his ‘Review of Soame Jenyns’s *A Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*’ (1756). Here he attacks the conception of the *Scala Naturae* so forcefully that, as Lovejoy observes (254), he might well have provoked the overthrow of the principle of continuity in the late eighteenth century if his arguments ‘had been duly considered by his contemporaries’.

For some reason his arguments were overlooked. The conception of a *Scala Naturae* survived the eighteenth century and was carried into the nineteenth by Lamarck and the German school of *Naturphilosophie*. We see it in popular literature, in Thomas Bewick’s memoirs, for example, when he remarks about women:

I have often wondered how any man could look healthy, beautiful, sensible and virtuous women in the face without considering them as the link between men and angels.²²

It can be found in serious biological literature right up to the time of Darwin. The French zoologist Henri Milne-Edwards had already

abandoned it when he visualised vertebrate affinities not as a linear series but as a cluster of inter-nested ovals, with what we would now call a Venn diagram. Remarks in his textbook *Zoologie* show a clear awareness that there are real gaps in nature – ‘on rencontre une sorte de *lacune* dans cette série’ – and that the links between types are indeed interrupted – ‘les connexions entre deux types sont interrompues’; but for all that his remarks are still couched in the language of the scale of being.²³ In a certain sense, the conception survives to the present in quantum mechanics and in our notion that the history of life on earth is one of progression and increasing complexity. All of which accords with Whitehead’s aphorism that the European philosophical tradition ‘consists of a series of footnotes to Plato’.

Notes

1. See for example Arthur Lovejoy, ‘Buffon and the Concept of Species’, in Bentley Glass, ed., *Forerunners of Darwin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1959). Lovejoy carefully analyses the plethora of opinions on Buffon as Darwin’s predecessor and concludes that he did as much to support as deny transformism, while consistently rejecting the idea.
2. Robert Wilson, ed., *Species: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).
3. *Adresse des Naturalistes, a l’Assemblée Nationale. Procès-verbal. N^o. 371* (Paris, l’Imprimerie Nationale, 1790), 2. From the original publication in the author’s possession.
4. Roger Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2001).
5. See the Introduction to Lisa Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999).
6. C. Linnaeus, *A Dissertation on the Sexes of Plants* [trans. Sir J. E. Smith] (London, 1760), 15.
7. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letters on the Elements of Botany*, transl. Thomas Martyn (London, 1785), 9.

8. Philip C. Ritterbush, *Overtures to Biology: The Speculations of Eighteenth-Century Naturalists* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), 109-22.
9. See introduction to John Donne, *The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters*, ed. W. Milgate (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), xxviii. The poem describes the progress of the soul by metempsychosis from apple to mandrake, to bird, and so on to man and the woman Themech.
10. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1936), 227.
11. Joseph Addison, *Evidences of the Christian Religion. To which are added, Discourses against Atheism and Infidelity* (London: C. Cook, 1800?), 72. This is presumably the work to which Johnson refers in his *Life of Addison*: 'He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Christian Religion*, of which part was published after his death ...'
12. Henri Daudin, *De Linné à Lamarck: Méthodes de la classification et idée de série en botanique et en zoologie* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1926).
13. See R. J. White, *The Anti-Philosophers: A study of the philosophes in eighteenth-century France* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 49-57.
14. Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle, Générale et Particulière* (1749), qtd. in Jacques Roger, *The Life Sciences in Eighteenth-Century French Thought*, trans. Robert Ellrich (Stanford, CA.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998), 430.
15. An excellent account of the history of this field can be found in Elizabeth Gasking, *Investigations into Generation, 1651-1828* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).
16. See for example Peter Gay, et al., *Age of Enlightenment* (Amsterdam: Time-Life, Nederland, 1979), 22.
17. Alec L. Panchen, *Classification, Evolution, and the Nature of Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 115.
18. C. Linnaeus, *Systema naturae* (Leyden, 1735); excerpt as tr. by Phillip Sloan (see next note), 5.
19. A full account of Linnaeus's dependence on Cesalpino and his attitude to Ray is found in Phillip R. Sloan, 'John Locke, John Ray, and the Problem of the Natural System', *The Journal of the History of Biology*, 5: 1 (Spring 1972), 1-53.
20. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1694), III, iii, 11.

21. Richard B. Schwartz, *Samuel Johnson and the New Science* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1971), 123; the dictum quoted is from Johnson's *Life of Milton*.
22. Thomas Bewick, *Memoirs of Thomas Bewick, by Himself* (1862), qtd, in John Rayner, *A Selection of Engravings on Wood by Thomas Bewick* (London: Penguin, 1947), 24.
23. Henri Milne-Edwards, *Zoologie*, in *Cours Elémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle par Mm. Milne Edwards, A. de Jussieu et Beudant* – 7th edition (Paris, 1855), 270-76.

John Law and Dr Johnson: on Money, Trade and Gambling

Barrie Sheppard

When we came to Highgate Hill and had a view of London, I was all life and joy. I repeated Cato's soliloquy on the immortality of the soul and my soul bounded forth to a certain prospect of happy futurity. I sung all manner of songs, and began to make one about an amorous meeting with a pretty girl, the burthen of which was as follows:

*She gave me this, she gave me that
And tell me, had she not tit for tat?*

So said James Boswell, upon his first glimpse of London in November 1762. About seventy years earlier, another Scotsman came to London: this one was from Edinburgh, and not an aristocrat, but rather the son of a goldsmith and moneylender. He might well have had thoughts similar to Boswell's, for he too was one taken by the prospects of the joys that life in London could offer – its beautiful women, its theatres, its adventures for the beau seeking excitement, and above all, its gaming houses.

But unlike Boswell, this Scotsman had to flee London in 1694, an escaper from the King's Bench Prison where he was serving a life sentence for murder. He had killed a rival on the meadowlands that bordered Bloomsbury Square on its western side, a favourite duelling spot of the time. Apparently – and I say apparently because the precise details of the killing are not clear – our man had inadvertently become involved in a squabble and had killed his rival after he had lunged at him with a sword – but the details of the skirmish are not clear.

What is clear, though, is that our man was tried for murder and, after the trial, no amount of petitioning to King William could achieve a pardon. So John Law – that was his name – did well to escape the gallows. He didn't escape the sentence, but afterwards he did escape the gaol, to live a life of exile in Europe. The details of his escape from prison are also not clear. Legend has it that he got hold of tools, broke his irons, and drugged his guards, and thus made his escape. Probably nearer the truth is that he had powerful friends outside the gaol, who bribed underkeepers to drug the guards, file away his manacles and set him free into the hands of friends who whisked him away to France.

This John Law is now famous in the economic history of the early eighteenth century.

Following his escape from prison, Law spent ten years in Europe developing his understanding of finance by studying, in particular, the banking systems of Amsterdam and Italy; this financial knowledge added to what he already knew of the financial innovations in London that took place at the end of the seventeenth century: namely, the formation of the Bank of England in 1694. The name 'Bank of England', by the way, was the title given to the subscription list that financed King William's wars in France at the time. Investors were invited to make loans guaranteed by the crown at eight per cent interest. Subscribers invested a total of 1.2 million pounds sterling and were issued with bank notes – receipts – which they could use to redeem their money, or part of it, at any time. These bank notes began to circulate as paper money.

Law became a financial wizard, with a knowledge of economics backed by a prodigious talent for mathematics. Because of his passion for gambling, he put this talent to the study of probability theory, which he mastered and employed at the gaming tables with telling effect. With his understanding of the laws of probability, and because of the great speed with which he could calculate odds on the spot, he took all before him, particularly in a game resembling modern-day blackjack. He was also shrewd enough to know that by playing as banker, he had a decided advantage, which he took.

By 1705, Law had had ten years of accumulated knowledge of economics under his belt, and a personal fortune of 20,000 pounds from gambling, money lending and foreign exchange dealings.

In that same year he returned to his native Scotland with a scheme to revive the Scottish economy, which at that time was suffering the effects of the disastrous attempt to establish a colony in Panama. The purpose of the Panama venture was to establish a trading company in the manner of the Dutch VOC (East India Company) and England's East India Company. The colony failed, and took the Scottish economy with it. To revive it, Law proposed something resembling a Building Society. The plan was to print paper money backed by the value of land – Scottish land.

The idea wasn't new; a number of writers during the second half of the seventeenth century, Daniel Defoe among them, had suggested that land was the 'best bottom for banks'. But Law's scheme didn't get

off the ground because, at the time, the Scots were preoccupied with union with England, which they saw as a solution to their economic woes.

What was it that John Law knew that gives him a firm place in the history of economics?

First, Law knew about money: what money is and what it isn't. He realised that money has no intrinsic value. He knew that its value lies in its function to facilitate the buying and selling of goods and services, and allowing the separation of the buying of goods from the selling of other goods. Money's value lies in its stable *exchange* value. Money, said Law, is not the value *for* which goods are exchanged, but the value *by which* they are exchanged. Its value lies in the value it represents, rather than in any intrinsic value of its own.

This is now obvious to us, but it was a hard lesson to learn in the eighteenth century. Gold and silver, from which coinage was made, and which was scarce, carried such a mystique that it was easy – too easy – to ascribe value to it in itself.

When the bubble of Law's Mississippi Company burst – as it had to, because the paper money supporting it was not backed by tradable commodities (I will return to this later) – the Frenchman, Saint Simon, one of Law's enemies, wrote:

They tried to convince the nation that from the days when Abraham paid 400 shekels of silver, current coin, for Sarah's sepulchre, to the present day, the wisest nations of the earth had been under the grossest error and delusion as to money and the metals of which it was made; that paper was the only profitable and necessary medium, and that we could not do a greater harm to foreign nations, jealous of our grandeur and our advantages, than to pass over all our silver and precious stones to them.

For Saint Simon, as for most thinkers at the time, only silver and gold was worthy enough to be money – a fact dignified by the holy scriptures since Abraham's time. Well, the truth is that France could have passed over all its gold and silver to foreign nations if the return was a commodity of equal, or better still, of greater value. How much richer, for example, could Australia become if we could trade all of our gold and silver for the world's brightest thousand men and women?

Second, John Law knew about credit. He knew well what J. K. Galbraith, in his *History of Economics*, called the miracle of banking: that is, the discovery of credit. If money (gold or silver in the form of

coin) is lodged in a bank vault for safe-keeping, the owner can take away a bank receipt, which he can then use as a form of currency. The banker can then lend portion of the depositor's sum to others in the form of bank notes representing the coin, and profit from the transaction by charging interest. This can go on, providing the banker keeps sufficient in reserve; and providing some outside circumstance doesn't cause the original depositor to call in all of his money, everything works well. More paper money can be in circulation of a representative value greater than the original amount deposited in coin – paper money which can be used to finance industry and trade, the fruits of which can in turn be represented by more paper money. And so money – wealth – is created.

This use of paper money as credit in Law's time overcame the problem of the limited supplies of gold and silver. It was no scam, of course, because it was not the gold and silver in banks that was intrinsically valuable, but the goods and services being generated by the industry and trade of the nation. The gold and silver in the bank were just commodities given value by the demand for them, in the same way that any tradable products and services are. It doesn't matter if there is no gold and silver in the banks, provided the face value of the paper money in circulation roughly matches the goods and services trading in the nation's economy. Getting that match right is crucial of course: if there is too little money, then deflation occurs and trade is stifled. If too much money is in circulation, then inflation occurs.

On his discovery of the miracle of credit, John Law himself said:

If Spain had ceded the Americas to the English, they would not have profited as much from them as they have from the use of credit. ... My banking project ... will not bring the least prejudice to the King nor to the people; it is the quickest and most harmless method of restoring good faith, and confidence in commerce; it is the true foundation of power in a state and the way by which one must begin to establish order.

Third, John Law knew about the interdependence of trade and money. He knew that 'Trade and money depend mutually on one another: when trade decays, money lessens; and when money lessens, trade decays.'

A fourth thing Law knew – related not to banking theory, but to the promotion and acceptance of his ideas – was the importance of style. He knew that he would never be successful if he didn't present himself as a successful man. On his side, he had certain natural

endowments. He was very handsome. Women fell about him because of his good looks, his dress, his impeccable manners, and his sexual charisma. He didn't have to go down to Green Park in London and pick up a wench to roger in a tavern room, as did our Boswell. Men, too, were charmed by Law – by his ability to explain complex subjects simply and articulately, by his wit, and by his gambling successes. To these advantages he added very visible signs of success: a grand house, carriages and the rest. But he was much more than just charm.

Law attempted to present his schemes for economic revival in gold- and silver-strapped England in 1704 to Queen Anne, but she wasn't impressed by his theories; nor did the fact that he was a convicted felon, and a notorious gambler to boot, help either. He was hardly a man to trust with the nation's finances. He did, however, succeed in persuading the French to adopt his system.

France's Problems in 1715

In 1715, France was in the grip of crippling debt, and the government could neither repay the debt in coin, nor afford the interest repayments on the debt. France's problem stemmed from the lack of available money. Law believed he had the solution to the nation's economic woes. It was to increase the money supply, and to issue credit. This meant putting paper money into circulation. Even though there was a shortage of gold and silver in the government coffers, money had to be printed. A national bank was needed to issue paper money.

Law could not persuade the Duke of Orléans, France's Regent, to set up a national bank, so he set up his own private Banque Générale in 1718. The following year he formed the Mississippi Company, a trading company established and given monopoly trading rights to the putative wealth of France's enormous possessions in North America, and intended to rival, in wealth creation, the Dutch East India Company. In England, at the same time, there existed the smaller South Sea Company, a company riding on the prospects of a monopoly of all trade from the Spanish possessions in the South Seas following the War of Spanish Succession.

To facilitate the economic activity to be generated by the Mississippi Company, Law's bank printed paper money. Then, when the Regent came on side and endorsed it with huge deposits of coin, French investors came in behind Law's Banque Générale and it became the national bank – the Banque Royale of France. Under Law's direction, the bank printed paper money on a scale never before seen. The

economy of France revived, and Law eventually rose to the position of Comptroller General of Finances. He put France on the path to economic recovery, and himself on the path to huge personal wealth and power.

And succeed he did, as did France, for a time. The value of shares in his Mississippi Company skyrocketed, all backed by the promised, fabulous trade that was to come from the vast resources of France's American possessions – Louisiana. France became gripped by speculative fever. Massive fortunes were made overnight. Share prices soared by the minute. In a matter of months, shares in the Mississippi Company rose from 150 to 10,000 livres. And still the French bought them.

All levels of French society were involved: aristocrats, bureaucrats, shopkeepers, servants, peasant farmers and their farm labourers. Speculators bought shares with the paper money borrowed from the bank, and then sold them for massive profits. Peasant women sold their children to buy Mississippi Company shares. Servants sent to the seamy Quincampoix – Paris's Wall Street – with instructions to sell the master's shares for X number of livres, their current price, sold them for X plus N, and pocketed tidy sums for themselves. Canny investors sold their shares and invested the returns in land, which skyrocketed also in value because of the vast amount of paper money in circulation. Paris was in a frenzy. And it was all made possible by the invention of credit and the advent of paper money. It is estimated that by the end of 1719, France was 5.2 billion livres wealthier on paper – in bank notes and share certificates – than it was before Law's scheme was adopted.

Here is Defoe describing Paris's Quincampoix, where all this trading took place:

Nothing can be more diverting than to see the hurry and clutter of the stock jobbers in Quincampoix Street; a place so scandalously dirty, as if it had not been the sink of the city but of the whole of the kingdom. ... The inconvenience of the darkest and nastiest street in Paris does not prevent the crowds of people of all qualities ... coming to buy and sell their stocks in the open place; where without distinction, they go up to the ankles in dirt, every step they take.

Here is Defoe, in his *Reformation of Manners* (1702), on similar speculation in England, speculation that reached its maddest pitch with the South Sea Bubble, which burst in 1720:

Some in clandestine companies combine,
Erect new stocks to trade beyond the line;
With air and empty names beguile the town,

And raise new credits first, then cry 'em down:
Divide the empty nothing into shares,
To set the town together by the ears.
The sham projectors and the brokers join,
And both the cully merchant undermine;
First he must be drawn and then betrayed,
And they demolish the machine they made:
So conjuring chymists, with their charm and spell,
Some wondrous liquid wondrously exhale:
By when the gaping mob their money pay,
The cheat's dissolved, the vapour flies away.

But John Law was no cheat. The Mississippi Company failed and the bubble burst; not, however, because of Law's theories about money and credit, but because the colony in Louisiana failed. There was no wealth produced there to back the paper money and share certificates he put into circulation. Nor was there any regulation of the share market to prevent sham dealing, and every attempt Law made to prevent the descent failed.

He was vilified, of course, was forced to leave France, and spent the remaining few years of his life attempting to establish his integrity. He died in Venice in 1729.

The second part of this paper will deal with Johnson under three headings:

- Johnson on money
- Johnson on trade and wealth
- Johnson on gambling

Johnson on Money

In his *Dictionary*, Johnson defines *bank-bill* this way: 'a note for money laid up in a bank, at the sight of which the money is paid.' Note the phrase, *note for money*. Under the entry for *money*, Johnson says, 'metal coined for the purpose of commerce.' Note the metal *coined*; there's no mention of printing it.

Johnson's *Dictionary* was published in 1755, some sixty-one years after the formation of the Bank of England, and thirty-five years after the crash of the Mississippi Company in France and the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in England. It is clear from both of his definitions, for *money* and *bank-bill*, that for Johnson, at least, money still means coins minted from gold, silver and copper. Bank bills don't figure as money. A

comment to Boswell, upbraiding him for an improper use of a term, reveals the same view:

He [Johnson] found fault with me [says Boswell] for using the phrase to *make* money. 'Don't you see (said he) the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to *coin* it: you should say, *get* money.' The phrase, however, is, I think, pretty current. (*Life* III: 196, 23 Sept. 1777)

Note the insistence that to make money is to 'coin it'; again there's no suggestion that it might be printed. Money is coin.

This insistence makes plain that John Law's revolution in credit and banking had not broken the hold that gold and silver has for Johnson's concept of money. The view expressed here – that money is coin, and that bank bills are not – raises the question: was this just a personal view, a prejudice, a blindness? Or were his *Dictionary* entries reflecting the general view of his time – that is, that because England had had its collective economic fingers burnt by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, and because of its knowledge of what had happened in France, there was a deep-seated distrust of paper as a means of exchange, a distrust so deep that it prevented the shift in understanding needed to break the hold that money, as minted gold and silver, had on the minds of eighteenth-century Britons?

I'm not sure if Johnson's *Dictionary* entries on money and bank bills reflect just his personal view, or a general view. I don't know enough about commerce in the eighteenth century to answer this question. However, I would hazard a guess that his definitions reflect the general view.

The rejection of the idea that bank bills could constitute money would be understandable – it would be understandable if the blame for the collapse of those two giant trading schemes was attributed to the use of paper money, and not to the ethics of many of the company directors who concealed the failure of the economic activity that was supposed to back the printed money – such as the trade that would have resulted had the South Sea Schemes and the Mississippi Companies been successful. After all, without paper money, there would have been little or no trading in company stock, and therefore no crash. John Law, and others, knew that the collapse wasn't due to the use of paper money; but the general populace wouldn't have seen beneath the surface.

Johnson on Trade and Wealth

On the question of the relation between trade and wealth, Johnson shows complete blindness. Here he is talking of trade to Boswell, during a dinner at the Mitre Tavern on 26 October 1769.

It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into the nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come from commodities; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is a considerable profit in pleasure, as it gives to one nation the productions of another; as we have wines and fruits, and many other foreign articles, brought to us. (*Life* II: 98)

To say that commodities come only from commodities (you will note that I have added 'only' – justly, because it is clearly implied), is to ignore the profit element in trade. It is to suggest that trade is merely the swapping of commodities of equal value. This, in one sense, is true, of course, because if you swap gold coins for spices and silks, you are in fact swapping commodities: for gold is no more or less a commodity than silk or nutmeg. But if you then sell on the commodities you import at a profit throughout Europe, you do indeed create wealth. You make money because you make goods, and you print money to represent the value of the goods and services produced. For what other reason did the Dutch set up the VOC, and the English the East India Company, if not to make the great wealth they did?

Trade certainly did bring the kinds of pleasures Johnson cites, but it brought with it accumulation of great wealth for the traders, and therefore for their nations. That was the motive and, as we know, nations went to war to protect the wealth their trade created. Furthermore, if, as a trader, you then use the profit gained from your trade to finance further economic activity, producing further goods and services, which you sell at a profit, you make more wealth for which money will have to be made, either minted or printed, to represent the value of the additional goods and services brought into the nation by your economic activity.

Commenting, elsewhere, on the acquisition of wealth, Johnson says:

As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer: but trade processes what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. (*Life* II: 430, 16 March 1776)

It could only be said, as Johnson says here, that trade does not bring a vast deal of money into a nation, if wealth is counted in terms of the possession of gold and silver coinage. On that view, wealth could only be increased if a nation sold goods for gold and silver, and bought goods elsewhere, without expending the precious metals. The wealth of a nation produced by trade would be limited to the extent of its store of gold and silver, if the only valid means of exchange were gold and silver coinage. That's why France was in trouble when John Law appeared on the scene.

The notion that trade makes or creates wealth appears to be out of Johnson's ken. What he doesn't realise is that the production of tradable goods within a nation produces wealth within that nation, providing there is money of one kind or another to facilitate the buying and selling of the goods produced. We make money by producing goods and services. We print (or mint) money to represent the value of those goods and services and to facilitate their exchange. John Law knew, and we now know, that being wealthy is the ability to acquire more and more commodities by having ready access to an abundant supply of the exchange medium – money as either coin or paper, the stable value of which others have confidence in. Money without goods and services is useless – valueless. Too much money for the available goods and services, of course, devalues the money, producing inflation. Without goods and services, wealth doesn't exist. But the means by which those goods and services are exchanged doesn't have to be money minted out of precious metals. This, Johnson did not understand.

He didn't understand what John Law knew fifty or so years earlier: namely, that trade and money interact, and that supplies of gold and silver are not essential for a money supply to exist. Paper will do as well, provided commodities exist that people want, and are of an agreed value that is represented by money, paper or coin, printed or minted, which then can facilitate the exchange of those commodities.

Johnson on Gambling

Johnson's *Rambler* essays numbers 181 and 182 deal with gambling. Number 182 deals with the attempts of those without either industry or genius to become rich by taking tickets in lotteries; and with lotteries, we might include gambling on the price of stocks:

Every man wishes to be rich, but very few have the powers necessary to raise such a fortune, either by new discoveries, or by superiority of skill, in any necessary employment; and among lower understandings, many want the firmness and industry requisite to regular gain and gradual acquisitions.

From this lack of firmness and industry,

proceeds the common inclination to experiment and hazard, and that willingness to snatch all opportunities of growing rich by chance,...

But this willingness to snatch at opportunities offered by chance, takes, he says,

possession of the mind, is seldom driven out either by time or argument, but continues to waste life in perpetual delusion, and generally ends in wretchedness and want.

And it is not just those addicted to lotteries who fall prey to the dangers of gambling, for

there are multitudes whose life is but a continual lottery, who are always within a few months of plenty and happiness, and how often soever they are mocked with blanks, expect a prize from the next adventure.

No doubt, those caught up in the frenzy of speculation on South Sea Company stocks in Britain and on Mississippi stocks in France can be included here amongst those in danger of being 'mocked with blanks'.

Rambler 181 is a moral tale, which tells the story of the decline of an industrious though humble draper, who succumbs to the temptation to make his fortune by gambling, scientifically, on the lottery. He dabbles in probability to increase his chances, buying forty tickets. Then, writing his numbers on dice and spending five hours each day throwing them until he had clocked up 300,000 throws, he discovered that one of his numbers came up five times more than any of the others. But, alas, the study was fallacious, says Johnson; for the first day presented the hopeful ticket, 'a detestable blank', and the draper went on to lose thirty pounds in the venture. The story ends with the pious words of one of Johnson's fictitious *Rambler* characters, the clergyman Eumathes:

There are few minds sufficiently firm to be trusted in the hands of chance.

We know that John Law had a mind that was 'sufficiently firm', but then he knew much more about the laws of probability than did Johnson. To be fair, though, the odds of winning a lottery would be far longer than those for winning at blackjack, particularly when you

played as banker, as the canny John Law did. For Johnson, the gambler should, in the words of his pious clergyman of *Rambler* 181,

return to the rational and manly industry, and consider the mere gift of luck as below the care of a wise man.

To turn, in conclusion, to *Rambler* number 182: like other *Rambler* essays, it begins with a general account of a moral issue, then narrows to the less general, in this case to gambling, and finally to a particular example; namely, that of attempting to make a fortune by the gamble of securing a profitable marriage. Johnson then proceeds by introducing a fictional character to carry his story, with its attendant moral.

The character is Leviculus, whose quest is to achieve the marriage that will make him wealthy. Before embarking on a description of Leviculus's stratagems, Johnson tells us what Leviculus doesn't do: he doesn't '[w]alk the Exchange with a face of importance, or associate himself with those who were most eminent for their knowledge of the stocks.' No, Leviculus at once threw off the solemnity of the stocks for another kind of gamble, the seduction of a wealthy woman. Does this tell us that Johnson wasn't averse to the idea of trading on the stock exchange, providing, presumably, one wasn't caught up in a mad destructive addiction? We might say, perhaps, that, for him, a judicious involvement in stock trading to improve one's fortune was preferable to the absurdity of gambling on a marriage to make oneself wealthy.

References

Janet Gleeson, *The Moneymaker: The Remarkable True Story of John Law – Philanderer, Gambler, Murderer... and the Father of Modern Finance* (London: Bantam Press, 1999)

James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934-64)

Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, Nos. 181, 182

John Kenneth Galbraith, *A History of Economics: The Past as the Present* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991)

The Elocutionist and the Lexicographer: Benjamin Suggitt Nayler reads Samuel Johnson

Wallace Kirsop

In its number for 1 July 1875, *The Harbinger of Light*, a Melbourne Spiritualist monthly that ran from 1870 to 1956, published an obituary for B. S. Nayler, a ‘veteran labourer in the cause of Freethought and Spiritualism’, who had died on the preceding 23 June and been buried three days later in the Melbourne General Cemetery.¹ The details given are generally accurate but, apart from the misleading claim that Nayler was ‘for some time English Professor to the University of Amsterdam’, they do little to suggest the complexities of his life, which began in Darlington, County Durham, in 1796.

From 1869, Nayler had been an adherent – in Victoria – of what he preferred to call Spiritism; this was, naturally enough, what most interested *The Harbinger of Light* and its proprietor W. H. Terry. Indeed, after making his last public appearance on the platform of the Temperance Hall – but not to advocate teetotalism – on 13 June, Nayler was (the obituary reports) ‘in our establishment four days before his death’ and ‘his faculties were clear and bright’. The obituarist – presumably Terry – notes that ‘within a fortnight of his death, he published a pamphlet criticising the creeds of modern Christendom, and proposing a scheme for the establishment of an Association of Freethinkers’. All efforts to unearth this booklet have so far failed, but its existence is also attested in an 1875 pamphlet issued anonymously by Hugh Junor Browne, the future father-in-law of Alfred Deakin.²

The *Harbinger of Light* obituary gives most space to an account of Nayler’s funeral, which was, in ‘accordance with the known wishes of the departed’, ‘exempt from any of the ordinary insignia of mourning’. A hundred people, including the Choir of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, accompanied the body to its grave – which is still unmarked, in the tiny Unitarian section of the cemetery. Was Alfred Deakin there? The choir sang hymns by Longfellow and Byron, and eulogies were pronounced. The main one was by Nayler’s executor, John Ross (1833–1920), whom the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* characterises as a ‘co-operative and radical’, noting that he was the President of the Spiritualist organisation at the time.³

The speech was conventional enough, with appropriate recognition of Nayler’s wife of fifty years, the Dutch artist Maria Elisabeth

Liernur, who had died in Stawell in July 1874. However, one has to read a little between the lines:

Mr Ross spoke of Mr Nayler as a man of very remarkable character. He left this world in his 80th year, and according to usual notions he might be considered as a relic of the past, to which all his sympathies might be supposed to be confined. Not so with Mr. Nayler. Never behind the age, but generally in advance, he was ever the champion of reform, and everything human had his warmest sympathies. A friend of old and young, ever ready to form new associations with the freshness of a youthful mind. Those who knew him through his vigorous and uncompromising writings only, might form a harsh opinion of his character, but those who have had the great privilege of knowing him in the privacy of his own home, proved his to be a heart overflowing with the genuine 'milk of human kindness.' (*Harbinger*, 856)

Let us forget the clichés. Nayler was a lifelong radical, and never less so than in his Australian years, between 1865 and 1875. He was also a ferocious polemicist, quite unafraid of criticising the high and mighty, during a writing career that lasted more than half a century. In Melbourne – and in the time he spent lecturing at the Spiritualist Lyceum in Stawell between September 1872 and early 1875 – he was a generation or two older than almost all his associates. In a society where youth counted and had its way – Deakin succeeded Ross as President of the Spiritualists in 1876 at the age of twenty – a septuagenarian was very old indeed. The ageist theme is one that historians of colonial Australia could well explore.

What has all this to do with Johnson, if one leaves aside Nayler's having taught English in Amsterdam? The point is that there were several Naylers, for the greater confusion of reference works. To see the whole of his career is not easy because of the dispersion of the sources. I first encountered the name in the early 1970s, when I was working on the Australian – but especially the Victorian – book trade in the 1860s. Nayler was the author of a number of works recorded by Ferguson and by Morris Miller, and his books had been sold by auction in Melbourne in 1870. The name had impinged on my consciousness, so that I made a note when, in April 1974, I discovered a couple of Nayler titles in a list of Australian pamphlets given to Stanford University by the founder's Melbourne brother. Thirty years later, browsing among recent books on book history in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, I happened on Lisa Kuitert's paper 'B. S. Nayler and the emergence of the remainder trade' in *The Bookshop of the World: the role of the Low Countries in the*

book-trade 1473–1941.⁴ Now, remainders and discounts interest me greatly as an historian of books, so I looked further. Although there was no mention of Australia, my memory told me this was somebody I had encountered before. Ferguson quickly confirmed this, but since the BnF does not own ADB – pardon the acronyms – further research had to wait for a telephone call to Melbourne. What one could call a fragment of the whole, complicated Nayler is in the complementary *Biographical Register*.

The fatal step had been taken: I had first to come to terms with a considerable literature produced in The Netherlands in both Dutch and English, then to try to complete the record in Australia and in the United Kingdom. The first product of the research pursued here and on the other side of the world during another visit in late 2005 is now on hand in an article in *The La Trobe Journal* entitled ‘Life Before and After Bookselling: The Curious Career of Benjamin Suggitt Nayler’. It is so far from being the end of the story that, within the last ten days, I have received out of the blue most helpful e-mails from Professor Kees Schoneveld, from whose published work on Nayler as an apostle of the English language and of English literature in The Netherlands I had already profited considerably. The research continues, and, despite the Internet’s unexpectedly prompt capture of my recent article, many things are still out of reach of modern technologies.

Samuel Johnson emerged as an important theme once I tried to look at all of Nayler. Nonetheless, to make sense of the connection it is necessary first to give an outline of Nayler’s life. After that, his Johnsonian dimension can be developed, and some conclusions, or at the very least paths to explore, can be suggested.

A prefatory word about sources is perhaps desirable, even if the secondary literature – on Australian Spiritualism by F. B. Smith and Al Gabay, and, more especially, on the Dutch years by or under the direction of Professor Schoneveld – has to be relegated to a footnote.⁵ Report and hearsay are about Nayler at least as dubious as they are about other subjects, so it is particularly important to identify and gather all the available primary evidence. The official record – baptismal registers, marriage and death certificates, wills and probate papers, census returns – is an indispensable first step. Beyond it lie Nayler’s personal manuscripts, notably a long correspondence after 1848 with the Dutch writer and art critic Josephus Albertus Alberdingk Thym, a transcript of his dealings in the 1820s with a partner and later employee in bookbinding, copies kept of other letters to writers, and that critical nineteenth

century backup, the local newspaper. However, Nayler lived in various parts of the British Isles, including Wales, as well as in The Netherlands and in Australia. Many of the relevant publications have not so far been digitised or even microfilmed. Finally, there are the books and pamphlets Nayler had printed between the early 1820s and the mid 1870s. His writing has some of the characteristics one can associate with autodidacts, to wit, a certain diffuseness and over-abundant appeals to authorities. In his old age, reminiscences became quite prominent. The biographer should not complain, because material is provided not only for verification but also for the reconstructing of networks of friends and acquaintances. Despite all the present gaps a schematic account is possible.

Although Nayler was born in Darlington on 11 March 1796 and baptised in St Cuthbert's Church there on the following 6 April, he was effectively a Yorkshireman. Both his parents – Matthew, described as a skinner or furrier, and Mary, née Merryweather – came from Yorkshire and moved to York in 1819 after a downturn in the father's business.⁶ More significant, Nayler's father and his maternal grandfather George Merryweather were Methodist lay preachers. Indeed – but obviously before Benjamin's birth – John Wesley himself was in the habit of staying in the family homes in Darlington and Yarm. Several letters to Merryweather appear in Wesley's published correspondence. The original of one of them is in the Library of Queen's College at the University of Melbourne along with commonplace books of Merryweather and of one of Nayler's sisters. There is no prize for guessing how they came to Australia. The real problem is discovering what happened to the rest of the mass of manuscript material Nayler brought here with him. The Methodist connection – later renounced, but never forgotten – was central to Benjamin's whole life, one bathed in theological reflection and disputation, following the example of both his parents.

Much of what happened between 1796 and 1817 or thereabouts is obscure. Benjamin had his schooling at the ancient Houghton-le-Spring Grammar School in another part of County Durham. The master was William Rawes, not the Quaker writer but an Anglican clergyman whose son became a leading Catholic acolyte of Cardinal Manning. When did Nayler leave school? There is no evidence of his serving an apprenticeship, and he may have worked as a bookkeeper in the family business. The disdain for classical learning and for universities that is strongly expressed in some of the Australian pamphlets suggests Nayler may have abandoned relatively early a way closed in any case to

Dissenters. But the Anglican–Methodist mixture was, of course, ambiguous. At all events, when Benjamin is free at his majority to do what he wants to do, he goes to London to study elocution with the best teachers, including Sarah Siddons and ‘Orator’ Thelwall. He spends two or three years becoming very well acquainted with the London theatre world and laying the basis of what will become his main professional commitment for much of the rest of his life.

A visit to Amsterdam for health reasons in 1820 turned into a residence of twenty-eight years until 1848, with frequent return visits to Britain. On the one hand, Nayler was a teacher of English language and literature to adults, including university professors and future ministers of state, and an organiser of English literary societies in both Amsterdam and Leiden. On the other, he launched into the book trade, becoming at various times a bookbinder, a bookseller, a publisher and an auctioneer. He was a pioneer of the new style of book-selling popularised in London by James Lackington, and he ended up alienating many members of a guild that was not at all interested in free trade and open competition.

Thus, when Nayler and Co. (the ‘Co.’ being Mrs Nayler, whom he married first at the British Embassy in 1824, then in a civil ceremony the following year) ceased business and moved to London, the couple had lost a lot of money.⁷ Yet there was a solid achievement in the literary societies and their propagation of English culture and in the publishing ventures. The Nayler list included a number of important Dutch authors, as well as editions of English writers like Byron, Thomas Moore and Sterne, and many books and pamphlets in English and Dutch by Nayler himself. These last included *An appeal to the judgments of the Dutch and French inhabitants of the city of Amsterdam, on the subject of the English language* (1822, 138 pp.), *A rhetorical grammar: wherein the common improprieties in reading and speaking are exposed, and the true sources of elegant pronunciation pointed out* (1822, 92 pp.), *A collection of one hundred pieces of English literature: fifty in prose and fifty in verse: accompanied with a variety of notes for the use of the inhabitants of the Netherlands* (1830, 237 pp.), *Memoir of the life and writings of Walter Scott: the wizard of the North, the great unknown, the author of Waverly* (1833, 118 pp.), *Select scenes from the British drama: adapted to public and private reading for ladies and gentlemen: to which is prefixed an essay on pronunciation and delivery* (Utrecht: Petit, 1848) and *A memoir of Miss Smithson: leading actress of the English tragedians in Amsterdam 1829* (1829, 16 pp.), apropos of

the future Mme Hector Berlioz, whom Nayler had met in London before he moved to Amsterdam. Nayler claimed later to have been offered chairs at Dutch universities, something that is not absurd when one knows how foreign languages were taught in most places before the 1880s. What is certain is that the couple enjoyed friendship and support in their adversity from the university and literary milieu.

Making a new career in London was not easy, but with the aid of elocution and art the Naylers restored their fortunes somewhat, even if they had had to sell some of their books and paintings. Benjamin succeeded in publishing in 1850, and anonymously, *An Essay on the Science of Pronunciation*, about which the crowded title-page declared

This Essay is penned by 'a plain, blunt, man;' an adept at imparting hard, intelligible truths – a novice in the smooth, ambiguous phrasology of adulation; better versed in censuring palpable errors, than in praising dubious excellences.⁸

While working as 'the accredited Elocutionist to the largest and most celebrated Institutions in London', he continued writing, producing in 1854 a volume rather extravagantly entitled *Time and Truth: reconciling the Moral and Religious World to Shakespeare, the greatest Poet and Dramatist, the greatest Moral-philosopher and Philanthropist that ever lived in the tide of times: whose greatness, like an Alpine-avalanche, continues increasing and increasing and increasing, as the wonderful revelations of his overwhelming Genius roll down the steep of time!* Yet, as the work of someone brought up in a household where Shakespeare was forbidden, this long essay is far from being the least interesting work in the critical canon.

A year or two later Nayler was an 'Accountant' in Milford in Pembrokeshire. He tried his hand at organising Penny Readings, continued to lecture on public platforms and to write letters to newspapers on questions of the day. Two more books appeared: in 1859, *Bones for Sabbatarians to Pick. An Appeal from the Prejudices to the Judgements of the Thinking Inhabitants of Pembrokeshire on the Sabbath Question*, and then in 1864, *A discussion among upwards of 250 Theological Inquirers, Clergymen, Dissenting Ministers, and Laymen; on the Unity, Duality, and Trinity, of the Godhead: with Digressions on the Creation, Fall, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Infallibility of the Scriptures, Inspiration, Miracles, Future Punishments, Revision of the Bible, etc. The Press corrected by Ranley, the Reporter of the Discussion.* All the fictitious participants in this veritable Renaissance extravaganza bear the names of English writers and public figures. Is it significant that Henry

Handel Richardson had Richard Mahony read it on a train trip to Ballarat?⁹

In 1865, Nayler's bronchitis drove the couple to leave Wales and to resettle in Australia on 12 September, six months short of Benjamin's seventieth birthday. Professor Schoneveld tells me that Nayler confided to Thym that he had intended to become the partner of a broker. However, the money was lost, and husband and wife fell back again on teaching elocution and the practice of art.

Their Australian decade was a busy and difficult one. Before his 1869 conversion to Spiritualism, Benjamin gave public lectures on pet topics and published the texts – some of them already tried out on English platforms – as pamphlets. His stance was decidedly liberal, radical, progressive. Nayler was against capital punishment and strict Sunday observance: the 'Continental Sunday' he had experienced in The Netherlands held no terrors for him. He was for the emancipation of women, for educational reform – with special commendation of the Dutch model – and for public readings, but not at all in the deplorable way they were conducted in Melbourne.

He rejoiced in the scientific and technological advances of the nineteenth century, including phrenology and animal magnetism, and he allowed that there was greater freedom of expression. At the same time he noted that freethinkers like E. W. Cole, whom he met in the Eclectic Association and later in the Spiritualist movement, were still subject to prejudice and obstacles.

Before and after his conversion to Spiritualism, Nayler was always ready for a conflict in the press and by pamphlet: with Bishop Perry, whom he judged a poor speaker and a woolly thinker, on Genesis and geology; with Archdeacon Stretch, Henry Gyles Turner and the Reverend Henry Higginson, another Unitarian, on the solidity of his new creed. It is likely that most of these efforts were financed by Nayler himself, who could call on the professional publisher's know-how he had acquired in Amsterdam.

Hiring halls and paying printers were a strain on a diminished budget, so it is not surprising that an Art Union in 1867 dispersed much of the couple's collection of paintings, watercolours, lithographs and prints. In 1870 it was the turn of the books. By then Nayler had published *The Glowworm*, Australia's first Spiritualist magazine, for at least two numbers. The title had been dreamt up for an earlier and very likely stillborn venture in Britain – before the conversion. Overall the

septuagenarian's literary activity was directed towards his various political and ideological causes.

There was one exception, the volume entitled *Commonsense Observations on the Existence of Rules (not yet reduced to System, in any Work extant) regarding the English Language; [...] followed by a treatise, entitled Pronunciation Made Easy [...]*, published in Melbourne and Ballarat by Evans Brothers in 1869, and later distributed in London by Trübner and Co., who had handled the two books Nayler wrote in Wales. The dedication, dated on Nayler's seventy-third birthday, is to Joseph Bosworth, the Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, and a friend made in The Netherlands forty years before.

On turning over your Letters, I perceive from one, dated February 6th 1834, that you then hoped my journey to England was for the purpose of Publishing what you were pleased to designate my 'great work', on Spelling, Pronunciation, and Delivery; towards which I had 26,000 examples of *sounds* and *accentuations* from our Poets, when you first consulted it – more than doubled since that time. The body of the work remains in the same state, but additional examples, in prose and verse, have swelled it to more than twice the size. Should I be spared a little longer, it may, perhaps, see the light. (Nayler, *Commonsense*, [v])

Nothing further appeared, and Nayler's professional library was sold off in the following year. Had the Spiritualist vocation taken over? Certainly there is evidence that Nayler was helping Terry compile catalogues for his bookshop in Russell Street as well as contributing to *The Harbinger of Light*. But where are the letters and manuscripts? It is an archive whose disappearance one can all the more easily regret because of the interest of the surviving fragments at Queen's College and in the State Library of Victoria.

The end was Spiritualist, as we have seen. The destitute widower was discreetly supported by, in particular, Thomas Welton Stanford, who was left the remaining paintings and drawings for an art collection which the great University has, as it now seems to recognise, foolishly sold off. It is the memory of Nayler, 'serial agitator' as they say these days, friend of littérateurs and professors, acquaintance of public figures whom he badgered and lobbied, link between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, that has to be exhumed in a footnote to the singular adventure of colonial Australia.

And now at last the Johnson connection. There was one definite personal link – through Sarah Siddons. Indeed, as we can explore later, we all now fit into a pattern of six degrees of separation that takes us back to the Doctor and even beyond.¹⁰ However, what mattered for Nayler was something much more substantial.

The documents available to me are only part of the story – for one simple reason. Very few of the Dutch publications are held outside The Netherlands, where the British and Australian books and pamphlets are essentially ignored. (Professor Schoneveld has a copy of *Time and Truth* that once belonged to a leading member of Brisbane’s Johnsonian Club around 1879–80.) The great northern hemisphere libraries of the English-speaking world are all but bereft of the Australian corpus. All in all, by combining the resources of the Baillieu Library’s McLaren collection and of the State Library of Victoria one comes closest to a sense of Nayler’s thought and its trajectory. However, a sampling will suffice to show what Johnson meant for him.

Nayler’s Sammelband¹¹ in the State Library contains some notices and programs for 1826–27 for the ‘English Society, for the Promulgation and Proper delivery of the English language’ in Amsterdam. There were parallel operations in Leiden, where Nayler, a man of industry and zeal, took care not to repeat himself. Proceedings proper began at 8 pm with ‘a short Lecture, followed by a Course of Readings and Recitations, wherein the Members are requested to take an active part’. Nayler and his collaborators were announced as the readers. On 24 January 1827, Benjamin was to read ‘An Imitation of *Lopez de Vega* from JOHNSON’; on 31 January ‘On the Opening of Drury Lane, in 1747’; on 7 February ‘On the Knowledge of the World’ and ‘Character of *Addison*’; and on 14 February ‘*Dryden* and *Pope* compared’.

Nearly half a century after the events, Nayler recalled, in his 1866 pamphlet of thirty-two closely-printed pages *Penny Readings; both What they Unfortunately now Are, in Melbourne and its Vicinity, and What they Ought to Be – namely, Institutions for Elevating the Unlettered masses*, a sample syllabus:

I have all my Lectures (from 14 Nov. 1821, to the present time) and on looking them over today, I find the following twenty-four Lectures to have been delivered in twelve consecutive weeks, during the winter season of 1822–1823, when twelve might have sufficed. (*Penny Readings*, 2)

In Amsterdam he talked about general topics in rhetoric and pronunciation, then:

I delivered, in the other City, twelve Lectures on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, Swift, Byron, Young, Goldsmith, Johnson, Cowper and Byron	}	The delivery of these 12 Lectures, at that critical period of my life, did me a world of good; they gave me a fillip, which has not yet lost its effect: I know that I had some wide-awake, satirical Professors among my constant hearers; and that spurred me to the acquisition of an intimate Knowledge of my subjects – <i>all</i> those esteemed Critics are <i>now</i> , where Knowledge is not known! (<i>Penny Readings</i> , 2)
---	---	---

Later, he is strong in his condemnation of the contempt and condescension shown by Melbourne organisers for their public and insists on the standards he tried to maintain:

I have catered for *the same* Public, winter after winter, for upwards of a quarter of a century, without exhausting the rich stores of our literature – I never was driven to the necessity of giving a single Reading from either of the two daily hackneyed Melbourne favourites, Dickens and Tennyson – during 45 years' Public Reading, I have not yet read One piece from these considerably over-rated ephemeral writers, whose works will perish with them. (6)

Dickens is finally allowed some talent, but Tennyson is damned remorselessly. A list of model reading passages includes, from Johnson, 'On the Knowledge of the World' and 'Dryden and Pope in Parallelism'.

Nayler and Co. appear in the index to David Fleeman's Johnson bibliography as the publishers of a Dutch translation of the 'Life of Dr Herman Boerhaave', of which the original appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1739.¹² Fleeman did not see the work in question and relied on an article by C. W. Schoneveld in the volume *The Age of Boerhaave* to give an account of it.¹³ The translator was Jacob Geel, Librarian of the University of Leiden, and his version was issued in 1836. Geel was quite closely linked to Nayler, who published his translation of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* in 1837.

What texts of Johnson did Benjamin Nayler know? The 1870 auction catalogue is the only substantial document we have on a library that suffered a number of vicissitudes. Even in March 1870, the seller, who wrote the catalogue as a practised professional, notes:

Mr Nayler is aware, that several of his Books have been sold in Melbourne by Auction – but, without his knowledge; even several works which had his Name written on the Titlepage, and crowded with comments and marginal references, have been brought to the Hammer by ——— SOMEBODY unknown to him.¹⁴

The Johnsoniana included are:

23. Boswell's Life of Johnson. Complete in 4 vol. 8vo.
42. Johnson's *Dictionary*. 11th edition. Bound in 5 Interleaved 4to. volumes, containing many Manuscript insertions.
110. [a mixed lot with] Sermons, attributed to Dr. Johnson. One vol. 8vo. in calf.
186. Works of SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D. 12 vol. 8vo. Bound in half-russia. This is the notable edition printed by Bentley.
187. Boswell's Life of Johnson, edited by Croker – together with *Johnsoniana*. Complete in 10 vol. cloth, with 50 Engravings. (Catalogue, 4, 5, 8, 12)

Not a bibliophile's selection, but a working – and clearly much used – collection.

The point is confirmed in the book on Shakespeare, *Time and Truth*. Nayler's own well set-out index picks out all the references to Johnson. The tone is almost uniformly favourable:

According to Dr Johnson (whom I always mention with respect, never with fashionable contumely), Shakespeare was the *Poet of Nature*. (16)

The 'Prologue' of 1747 is cited at the head of chapter III. Then, I am here reminded of Johnson's good sense, in checking and restraining his *alterations* of the text of Shakespeare, and of inserting his conjectures in the margin. (64)

A long quotation follows from 'Johnson's Works, vol. X, p. 185–188. Ed. of 1823'. Again on the theme of the 'poet of nature', Nayler introduces a citation with

Johnson (whom Knight undervalues) informs us, on p. 135 of the 10 vol. of his sterling works – (82)

A few pages further on the 'Colossus of English Literature' is called upon to buttress Nayler's view that all peoples should study their own

languages, not least through major authors, and that neglect of this has led to poverty of expression in newspapers and on the public platform. Naylor even ventures to repeat a passage from his *Essay on the Science of Pronunciation* of 1850.

On the definition of ‘genius’ Naylor rejects Johnson’s view – ‘Genius is only the power of using to any certain purpose, the materials which diligence procures’ – and that of Goethe. He plumps for the over-riding importance of the ‘*inventive* faculty’ and asserts

Johnson was not a *genius*, but, a man of great attainments (112)

Yet this is a rare criticism justified by Naylor’s ‘right of private judgement’ (one that he learned from a grandfather who argued with John Wesley himself). Later still, objecting to a passage in Johnson’s ‘Preface to Shakespeare’, Naylor expostulates:

No, no, Doctor; you have overcharged your complaint, and the knowledge you possessed was *not present* to your mind, while penning that paragraph: had another said half as much to the depreciation of Shakespeare, on that point, in your hearing, Bozzy would have recorded an able defense [not *defence*] from your lips. (125)

In a way contrite, Naylor throws in – quite characteristically – an aside:

Here I shall take the opportunity of not simply expressing my high respect for Dr Johnson, but, of entering my Protest against the present fashionable outcry made by the very men, who, probably, might never have discovered his *defects*, had it not been for the light which he imparted to them. Johnson, whatever he was besides, was a *true* man. He did not, as Carlyle observes, engrave *Truth* on his watch-seal, but he stood by *truth*, spoke and wrote by it, worked and lived by it. And I like Carlyle the better for his appreciation and estimation of Johnson. It may be unfashionable to write thus reverently of a man who is now disesteemed by so many men; who is abused by writers of some reputation; but, I throw fashion to the dogs, as Macbeth would have thrown inefficient physic, and I hesitate not to avow *my reverence* for Johnson, for the lessons of moral-philosophy and wisdom and goodness he has taught me: I have read all his works, more than once, and I acknowledge myself under lasting obligations to Johnson; nor am I afraid nor ashamed to confess it in the face of all his Disparagers. (125–26)

He then goes on to reject the criticisms of Macaulay, Knight, Symmons, Hazlitt ‘and a whole string of puny critics’, while welcoming the support of Beaumont and Carlyle.

Johnson, in name or in person, continues to crop up in Nayler's writings. 'Dr S. Johnson', along with 'W. Blackstone, Esq.', 'Mr. O. Goldsmith, *Student*', 'Dean Swift', 'Rev. T. G. Smollett', 'Rev. W. Scott', 'A. Pope, Esq.', 'Mr. Dekker, *Student*' and innumerable other figures from English literature, is one of the imaginary disputants in *A Discussion [...] on the Unity, Duality, and Trinity, of the Godhead*. In *Penny Readings* Johnson is cited as an author who knew poverty – in the general argument against condescension. However, in a prefiguration of 'tough love', 'we may thank his Poverty for the stores of Riches he has left us': a pension would have reinforced his 'constitutional indolence' (11).

When one turns from literature and advocacy to Nayler's professional writings, one finds Johnson more soberly assessed. In *A New-Chum's Advice to Public Speakers and Public Readers [...]* of 1866, Johnson is one of the guarantors of Walker's status as 'the best Reader in England' (20). Three years later, in *Commonsense Observations*, where a major theme is succinctly expressed in the index as 'Of all the Dictionaries on Orthography and Orthoepy, WALKER's is immeasurably the best, and Webster's demonstrably the worst', Johnson rates a brief mention:

To call in Johnson as an authority on Orthoepy, reflects discredit on Webster, who ought to have known, that Johnson was a Lexicographer who paid but very little attention to Pronunciation (62).

Curiously, it is 'Appendix II *On the Spellings of words*' of *Time and Truth* that fills in eight spare pages – anathema to the canny publisher – with some remarks inspired by Nayler's unremitting study ('a subject [...] on which I have, probably, *read more*, than any one of my Readers'). Johnson's *Dictionary*, of not yet a century before, is judiciously assessed:

Johnson did much, very much, towards settling the Spelling of our tongue; and he is entitled to this Nation's thanks for what he did; but, he left much still to be done; he did not carry it to *perfection* – that was impossible – he even fell into several *errors*, and his gigantic work exhibits numerous *oversights*. Those who write and talk about his work (or any other) being a STANDARD, only prove that they know very little about the *nature* of Language. The English is a *living* tongue, *mutable* in its very nature, not admitting of a STANDARD. (225).

On this point the maverick and the eccentric can hardly be faulted.

At the simplest level we – collectively, in a number of countries – need to do more to document Nayler’s life and works. That is the first and most obvious path to explore. There is, however, more. Despite his prejudices and his outmoded terminology, Nayler is a privileged witness of the evolution of the English language and not least of its pronunciation. Now that we speak more freely about a long eighteenth century running to 1840, it is easier to grasp what was happening in a period of industrialisation and emigration. Detail – and there is much of it in Nayler, for example about pronunciations like [k j a ɪ n d] – will help us to understand what was happening in different classes and in different parts of the country, or indeed of the English-speaking world. There is plenty of work for historical linguists, and Johnsonian studies can profit from it too.

Notes

1. *The Harbinger of Light*, no. 59 (1 July 1875), 855–56. Since, as is indicated below in the body of the text, a more detailed – but by no means exhaustive – study of Nayler appeared in number 78 (Spring 2006), of *The La Trobe Journal*, pp. 11–37, readers are directed to this for a full apparatus of references. In the present article I limit myself to economical citation of documents used, especially those that have emerged since 2006.
2. *Short Address to the Clergy of All Denominations and to Earnest Enquirers after Truth* (Melbourne: E. Purton & Co., Printers, 1875), 56.
3. *ADB*, v. 6: 61–62.
4. *The Bookshop of the World: the role of the Low Countries in the book-trade 1473–1941*, ed. Lotte Hellinga, Alastair Duke, Jacob Harskamp and Theo Hermans (‘t Goy-Houten, Netherlands: HES & De Graaf, 2001), 277–284.
5. See *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 78, *passim*.
6. ‘Nayler M. gentleman, Coney street’ is listed in Edward Baines’s *History, Directory & Gazetteer of the County of York* (Leeds: Leeds Mercury Office, 1823), II: 93.
7. That – after a century and a half – there is a persistent trade memory of Nayler’s role is shown by the fact that a present-day remainder business in The Hague has adopted the style of ‘Nayler & Co.’
8. Spellings like ‘excelences’ reflect Nayler’s strongly held and sometimes idiosyncratic preferences.

9. See *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, Part II: *The Way Home*, ed. Clive Probyn and Bruce Steele (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2007), 195 and 265n.
10. For the author (whose audience came unavoidably into the framework of this fashionable conceit) the link is Rohan Rivett – Alfred Deakin – Nayler – Sarah Siddons – Johnson – Queen Anne (or many other famous eighteenth-century personages).
11. MS 7784, Box 649/10. This is the volume that contains transcriptions of Nayler's dealings with his bookbinding partner/employee John Teasdale.
12. J. D. Fleeman, *A Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, 2 v. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), I: 48–49.
13. See, now, *The Life of Dr Boerhaave* by Samuel Johnson & *Het Leven van Herman Boerhaave*, translation by Jacob Geel, edited with an introduction by C. W. Schoneveld (Leiden: Academic Press, 1994), and Cornelis W. Schoneveld, *Sea-Changes: Studies in Three Centuries of Anglo-Dutch Cultural Transmission* (Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996), esp. 94–104, 123–163.
14. Gemmell, Tuckett & Co., catalogue of 'upwards of 800 volumes of valuable books' for sale on 19 March 1870 (copies in the State Library of Victoria), 16.

Facing Up to Johnson

John Wiltshire and Daniel Vuillermin

[*John:*]¹ It is not very often that Virginia Woolf is quoted at the Johnson Society of Australia but we are going to begin this talk with a quotation from Mrs Woolf's novel *Orlando* (1928). This is the one where the hero becomes a heroine – or is it the other way around? At this moment, Orlando is a woman, and she is standing where many of us have stood, in Bolt Court off Fleet Street, looking into the windows of Dr Johnson's house:

[One night Orlando] stood half an hour watching three shadows on the blind drinking tea together in a house in Bolt Court. Never was any play so absorbing. She wanted to cry out, Bravo! For, to be sure, what a fine drama it was – what a page torn from the thickest volume of human life! There was the little shadow with the pouting lips, fidgeting his way and that on his chair, uneasy, petulant, officious; there was the bent female shadow, crooking a finger in the cup to feel how deep the tea was, for she was blind; and there was the Roman-looking rolling shadow in the big arm-chair – he who twisted his fingers so oddly and jerked his head from side to side and swallowed down the tea in such vast gulps. Dr Johnson, Mr Boswell, and Mrs Williams, those were the shadows' names. So absorbed was she in the sight, that she forgot to think how other ages would have envied her, though it seems probable that on this occasion they would. She was content to gaze and gaze. At length Mr Boswell rose. He saluted the old woman with tart asperity. But with what humility did he not abase himself before the great rolling shadow, who now rose to its full height and rocking somewhat as he stood there rolled out the most magnificent phrases that have ever left human lips; so Orlando thought them, though she never heard a word that any of the three shadows said as they sat there drinking tea.

Woolf is describing a scene already described by James Boswell. On 26 October 1769, for the first time, Boswell accompanied Johnson home to Bolt Court, where – as she had for many years – Mrs Williams made the tea. You may remember that Boswell, in one of his characteristic footnotes, retracts his accusation that Mrs Williams actually put her finger in the tea-cup! But Woolf does not take her picture of Johnson himself from Boswell. No such picture of Johnson as this exists in the *Life*. 'The Roman-looking rolling shadow in the big arm-chair ... who twisted his fingers so oddly', this figure is not from Boswell, but from the other source of our images of Johnson – Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In this paper we are taking up a rather large subject and concentrating on one aspect of it. The larger subject is Johnson as an icon. An icon is a religious image, of course, but also, in the current usage, it means a cultural treasure, a figure invested with high or even charismatic value. If Johnson is an icon, it is because of that mental ‘picture’, that set of un- or half-conscious assumptions with, say, Shakespeare or Proust or Jane Austen. Readers have a sense of the man, a sense that they ‘know’ him – know, what those words, that name, represents. It is a cluster of associations to which we ascribe meaning. Johnson in general culture is known mostly through Boswell’s memoir, and through a few, frequently repeated sayings. But it can be argued that Johnson has come down to us in a way that is almost unique among literary and cultural figures – has come down to us in a way that makes the term ‘icon’, with its visual associations, especially appropriate. Johnson, pre-eminently among cultural icons, is known to us – to Anglo-Saxon culture in general – not only through his words, but also through his embodiment.

That passage from *Orlando* is an example. So is this, from *Moby Dick*:

And here it be said [writes Melville – his topic dictionaries] that whenever it has been convenient to consult one in the course of these dissertations, I have invariably used a huge quarto edition of Johnson, expressly purchased for that purpose; because that great lexicographer’s uncommon personal bulk more fitted him to compile a lexicon to be used by a whale author like me.

It is in fact almost uncanny how invariably authors, when they summon up the idea of Johnson, summon up his figure, and often, as here, his hugeness, his bulk. And from the early days when he was called ‘Ursa Major’ – the great bear – Johnson was imaged as some big animal creature: here, the suitable reference of a whale author. Notions of Johnson’s greatness tend to merge with physical size and energy, and simultaneously, as for Melville, with the physical weight and vastness of his most famous work, the *Dictionary*.

An icon is pre-eminently a visual image. We are going to suggest that the icon of Dr Johnson is as much formed of residual memories of portraits of Johnson as it is of residual memories of Boswell, or of Johnson’s own work. If Johnson is known to posterity for his embodiment – which is our first claim – our second is that the portraits of Johnson by Reynolds contribute vitally to that culture image, that icon. Johnson’s embodied meaning is the fruit of a fusion between his own

writings, his own style, Boswell's rendering of his conversation, and the pictorial tradition. Pre-eminent in the pictorial tradition are the portraits of Johnson by Reynolds – of which there are no fewer than five.

Johnson's physicality represented a particular challenge to writers in the American transcendentalist tradition, more aligned with the philosophy of Berkeley than with Johnson's empiricism. Yet Hawthorne visited Lichfield, and wrote a wonderful account of the monument of Johnson in the market place:

The figure is colossal (though perhaps not much more so than the mountainous Doctor himself) and looks down upon the spectator from its pedestal of ten or twelve feet high, with a broad and heavy benignity of aspect, very like in feature to Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Johnson, but calmer and sweeter in expression. Several big books are piled up beneath his chair, and if I mistake not, he holds a volume in his hand, thus blinking forth at the world out of his learned abstraction, owl-like, yet benevolent at heart. The statue is immensely massive, a vast ponderosity of stone, not finally spiritualised, nor, indeed, fully humanised, but rather resembling a great stone-boulder than a man. You must look with the eyes of faith and sympathy, or, possibly you might lose the human being altogether, and find only a big stone within your mental grasp.

And here is another American in that tradition, the essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes:

I feel more intimately acquainted with [Johnson] than I do with many of my living friends. I can hardly remember when I did not know him. I can see him in his bushy wig, exactly like that of the Reverend Dr Samuel Cooper (who died in December 1783) as Copley painted him, – he hangs there on my wall over the revolving bookcase. His ample coat too, I see, with its broad flaps and many buttons and generous cuffs, and beneath it the long, still more copiously buttoned waistcoat, arching in front of the fine, crescentic, semi-lunar Falstaffian prominence, involving no less than a dozen of the above-mentioned buttons, and the strong legs with their sturdy calves, fitting columns of support to the massive body and solid capacious brain enthroned over it. I can hear him with his heavy tread as he comes into the Club, and a gap is widened to make room for his portly figure. 'A fine day,' says Sir Joshua. 'Sir,' he answers, 'it seems propitious, but the atmosphere is humid and the skies are nubulous,' at which the great painter smiles, shakes his trumpet, and takes a pinch of snuff.

It is Boswell's biography that encourages these writers to feel a sense of intimacy with Johnson, but memories of Reynolds's portraits

clearly fuse with this imagined intimacy. In these passages we see clearly how the image of Johnson's body – 'strong', 'sturdy', 'massive' – segues imperceptibly into an image, or figure, of Johnson's intellect – the 'solid capacious brain' and how the two, coalescing, become what we term an icon. Which pictures of Reynolds these writers are referring to, though, is not altogether clear. Wendell Holmes does not remember the same portrait as the one which embodied Johnson for Woolf, though.



[*Daniel:*] Sir Joshua Reynolds's portraits of Dr Johnson form a highly varied series, a collection of personal character studies. For today's talk I will be focusing on only two of these works: Reynolds's first portrait of Johnson painted c.1756 and a later portrait painted in 1769 – the one to which Virginia Woolf refers.

Though the Johnson and Reynolds association had uncertain beginnings, Reynolds was nevertheless moved to paint a portrait of Johnson. This is evinced by Reynolds undertaking his first portrait of Johnson in c.1756.² By this time the first edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* had been published, yet he was still pursuing journalism in order to make a living. This first portrait depicts a scene of serenity with Johnson slightly reclining upon a large cross-patterned chair. His right arm rests straight along the side of his stout torso with a quill poised in his hand, while the other clenches at several sheets of paper upon a small side table. The expression upon Johnson's face shows a 'delicate moral texture ... a noble expression – thoughtful [and] intelligent'. As Richard Wendorf indicates, the overall composition of this painting is reminiscent of the work formerly attributed to Rembrandt's *The Apostle Paul* and perhaps alludes to Raphael's sketch of *Poetry*.

On 16 May 1763, when Boswell was sitting in Mr Davies' back-parlour, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop. This was the first occasion that Boswell met Johnson. Boswell dramatises the scene by having Davies, a former actor, advance towards him 'somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes."' However, when Johnson finally steps into the narrative of the *Life*, it is done so figuratively by use of Reynolds's c.1756 portrait. Boswell writes:

I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he

published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work.

It was in fact Boswell himself who commissioned the engraving. We know from Boswell's journals that his first impressions of Johnson were entirely distinct from those that Reynolds's portrait had conveyed to him. In his notes he describes Johnson as a 'man of most dreadful appearance. He is a very big man, is troubled with sore eyes, the palsy, and the King's Evil. He is very slovenly in dress and speaks with a most uncouth voice.' In this momentous and defining scene of their meeting, as it is recounted in the *Life*, Boswell suppresses Johnson's actual bodily being and manner. He does not merely conceal Johnson's 'huge uncouth figure', to replace it with a more dignified representation, but by means of this curious process of suppression and insertion Boswell elevates the painting above the status of an image to that of a veritable icon. This is not a case of augmenting the text by means of *ekphrasis* but constitutes the foundational image in Boswell's making of Dr Johnson.

Boswell perpetuated this iconic image of Johnson not only by including it as the frontispiece for the first edition of the *Life*, but also by neglecting to describe in any degree of detail the other images of Johnson. This can be exemplified by the use, in the *Life*, of Johnson's letter to Reynolds on 17 July 1777, concerning the exhibition of Johnson's portrait in his native Lichfield. Johnson writes:

When I came to Lichfield, I found that my portrait had been much visited, and much admired. Every man has a lurking wish to appear considerable in his native place; and I was pleased with the dignity conferred by such a testimony of your regard.

Although this letter is inserted into the text, Boswell does not indicate which portrait was exhibited in Lichfield, leaving the reader to assume that the painting referred to is Reynolds's c.1756 portrait. However, it is documented that this particular painting did not leave Reynolds's house for thirty-five years after he had completed it. By 1777, Reynolds had painted two other portraits of Johnson, the first of which, painted in 1769, was an exhibited piece which first appeared in 1770, together with a portrait of Oliver Goldsmith. It was perhaps this portrait that was exhibited in Lichfield.

This painting is the singular work of Reynolds's Johnson oeuvre.³ It is not the generic work of a professional portraitist but a deeply personal portrayal of a close friend, a closeness that is evinced by its intimate characteristics and the peculiarity of Johnson's gesture. This painting shows Johnson without his usual 'awkward garb and unpowdered wig on one side only of his head'. Instead, he has been 'dressed' by Reynolds in a cloak reminiscent of a toga and the soft short brown curls of Johnson's natural hair are revealed. This painting is an exception to the standard front-on pose often shown in portraiture. Reynolds depicts Johnson's head on an angle of profile that reveals the large double protrusion of his forehead, his somewhat deep-set eyes and a sizeable pointed nose. The background is filled with the appurtenances of a man of learning; a small pile of books, a scroll as well as a quill and inkwell which, together with his classical accoutrement, seeks to represent Johnson as a classical scholar.

This painting has been described by various critics as idealised yet realistic, an 'eloquent and tragic' portrayal of Johnson's idiosyncratic gesture. Frances Reynolds, sister of Sir Joshua, who was also an accomplished painter, describes this gesture of Johnson's hands:

Sometimes he would hold them up, with some of his fingers bent, as if he had been seized with the cramp, and sometimes at his Breast in motion like those of a jockey on full speed; and often would he lift them up as high as he could stretch over his head, for some minutes...

David Piper describes the Johnson of this painting as being depicted in a 'purely classic and heroic mould, minus wig and plus toga, a peripatetic philosopher, almost physically wrenching reason into words'. However, another reading of this painting proposes that this work, unlike Reynolds's other portraits of Johnson and indeed any other works in the same period, portrays above all Johnson's personal anguish, which he described as his 'vile melancholy'. Though the diagnoses of his malady can only ever be speculative, Johnson's melancholy is well documented. In the *Life*, Johnson tells Boswell of his 'mad and violent' youth and these bouts made him 'mad ... at least not sober'. In this portrait we view an agonised Johnson in the throes of an inner struggle.

This work is unconventional in so far as we observe an entirely different transaction between the sitter and the painter. Uncharacteristic of many portraits where the sitter, to varying degrees, appears to be aware, if not self-conscious, of being painted, this portrait shows a solitary Johnson who is self-absorbed and is seemingly unaware that he is

the focus of such attention. Reynolds shows the viewer a scene of Johnson's 'horror' of solitude, where he, when left alone or out of conversation, would fall into a reverie that was accompanied by this strange gesture. What we observe here is Johnson's mind preying upon itself.

Boswell never made use of the 1769 portrait to assist in his description of Johnson. He was unable to reconcile the melancholic, death-fearing man with the Johnson of his making. Though he was largely successful in creating a vivid and convincing image of Johnson from the moment he steps into the back-parlour at Mr Davies's, he was unable to gain any insight into or understanding of the inner workings of Johnson. Yet this was not perhaps his interest. Rather, Boswell discounted this aspect of Johnson for the sake of building his own image of Johnson as the autocratic sage. The result of this is that Boswell's Johnson is much like a traditional portrait painting: static, unified, and above all, abstract.

Since Katherine Balderston's 1949 essay on this subject, the speculative diagnosis and relevance of Johnson's torturous melancholy have been widely contested. Ultimately, however, even though Johnson suffered many severe physical and psychological maladies, they did not prevent him from leading a full physical, and often daring, experience of life. He was known to have jumped wittingly into dangerous waters and once kept a gang of four men at bay on a dark London street. Most importantly, his personal difficulties did not affect the quantity and eminence of his literary output.

Reynolds's series of Johnson portraits cannot, of course, be wholly representative of the historical Johnson. Rather, these works, alongside Boswell's *Life*, are vestiges which, handed down to posterity through a 'double tradition' or otherwise, contribute to the iconic makings of Dr Johnson. Though each of Reynolds's portraits varies from one another they do not and could not possibly encapsulate the whole of Johnson. The purpose of this paper has not been simply to compare these images of Johnson to infer that these two aspects, Johnson as the Boswellian sage and Johnson as the 'agoniste', are two sides of the same coin. What we are confronted by in these portraits are not simply issues of representation, but also Boswell's appropriation of a particular image of Johnson and the extent to which Reynolds's portraits are an integral yet often overlooked aspect of the iconic Dr Johnson.



[*John:*] There is another tradition that contributes to the icon of Johnson, and that is the caricature, or cartoon. Beginning from Gilray and continuing with Beerbohm, this finds its most recent incarnation or articulation in the TV series *Black Adder*. We haven't got time today to talk about that, but there is an interesting way in which the cartoon versions of Johnson interact with the version of Johnson which was for a hundred years the popular image of Johnson – the caricature of Johnson that Thomas Babington Macaulay drew in his review of Croker's *Boswell* in 1831. We hope to talk about the cartoons of Johnson in another paper, but for today, here is the conclusion of Macaulay's review:

As we close it, the club-room is before us, and the table on which stands the omelet for Nugent, and the lemons for Johnson. There are assembled those heads which live for ever on the canvas of Reynolds. There are the spectacles of Burke and the tall thin form of Langton, the courtly sneer of Beauclerk and the beaming smile of Garrick, Gibbon tapping his snuff-box and Sir Joshua with his trumpet in his ear. In the foreground is that strange figure which is as familiar to us as the figures of those among whom we have been brought up, the gigantic body, the huge massy face, seamed with the scars of disease, the brown coat, the black worsted stockings, the grey wig with the scorched foretop, the dirty hands, the nails bitten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and mouth moving with convulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling, we hear it puffing; and then comes the 'Why, sir!' and the 'What then, sir?' and the 'No, sir;' and the 'You don't see your way through the question, sir!'

Macaulay's imagined scene seems to be a synthesis of the various portraits by Reynolds which were painted for the Thrales' Streatham home and Boswell's *Life*. Nineteenth-century painters and engravers would follow in his wake, depicting Johnson in the company of his famous contemporaries, even in the company of Mrs Siddons – whom he admired. It was Macaulay's Johnson that was the dominant, perhaps even the hegemonic, icon throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. It was an image of Johnson that ignored, or deplored, his writings. Even Leslie Stephen, Woolf's father, had little to say for them. But this icon of Johnson ignored that side of the man that is depicted in Reynolds's portraits. Reynolds portrayed Johnson not just as the 'sage' but also as the suffering man, suffering both physical and mental or spiritual illness: he was able, as Boswell was not able, to

grasp that the power of Johnson has its roots in guilt and suffering, in personal anguish, thwarted aggression and sexual passion.

Johnson praised Dryden because he did not see life merely ‘through the spectacles of books’. If we too ‘see’ Johnson, if we have an inner sense of Johnson’s presence and importance, we see him not only through the spectacles of Boswell, but in the paintings of Reynolds.

Notes

1. This paper, which John and Daniel presented jointly, was illustrated by slides of the images discussed. It is the first of a number of papers presented at JSA Seminars by John and Daniel that explore representations of Johnson, and were preliminary chapters of John’s book, *The Making of Dr Johnson* (published mid 2009), to which Daniel contributed a chapter.
2. The 1756 portrait is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery (UK) and may be viewed on the Gallery’s web site. The easiest way to access it is to Google [NPG Johnson 1756 portrait](#), which will also bring up a reduced version of the 1769 portrait.
3. The full-size version of the 1769 portrait may be viewed on the English Wikipedia web site. Google [Johnson 1769 portrait Wiki](#) and then click on “File: Johnson 1769.jpg – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia”.

JSA Publications

The David Fleeman Memorial Lectures

- 1994 Ian Donaldson, *The Death of the Author and the Lives of the Poet* (pub. 1994)
- 1995 Wallace Kirsop, *Samuel Johnson in Paris in 1775* (pub. 1995)
- 1996 Peter Steele, *Flights of the Mind: Johnson and Dante* (pub. 1997)
- 1997 Clive Probyn, 'Pall Mall and the Wilderness of New South Wales': *Samuel Johnson, Watkin Tench, and Six Degrees of Separation* (pub. 1998)
- 1999 Kevin Hart, *How to Read a Page of Boswell* (pub. 2000)
- 2000 John Wiltshire, *Jane Austen's 'Dear Dr Johnson'* (pub. 2001)
- 2001 Michael Meehan, *The Journal of Richard Boxer Atkins*
- 2002 John Hardy, 'Johnson and the Truth'. Revisited (pub. in *Papers*, v.7, 2005)
- 2003 Bryan O'Connor, *Boswell and Rousseau: Liberty and Duty* (pub. in *Papers*, v. 8, 2006)
- 2004 Richard Wendorf, *Samuel Johnson Abandons the Capital*
- 2005 Chris Ackerley, *Human Wishes: Samuels Johnson and Beckett* (pub. in *Papers* v. 9, 2007)
- 2006 Alan Saunders, *Doing Philosophy with Samuel Johnson* (pub. in *Papers*, v. 10, 2008)
- 2007 Paul Tankard, *Reference Point: Samuel Johnson and the Encyclopaedias* (pub. in *Papers*. v. 11, 2009)
- 2008 Ann Blake, 'An Ornament of the Metropolis'? *Eighteenth Century Attitudes to the Theatre*

JSA Papers, volumes 1 – 11

Papers, v. 1 (1997)

- 1994: Nicholas Hudson, *Two Bits of Drudgery*
John Wiltshire, *Johnson in the Medical World*
- 1996: Paul Tankard, *Maecenas and the Ministry: Johnson and his Publishers, Patrons and the Public*
Bronwen Hickman, *The Women in Johnson's World*
Geoff Brand, *A Night with Venus and a Year with Mercury: The Germ Theory in the Eighteenth Century*
Henry Gordon-Clark, *Johnson and Savage*

Papers, v. 2 (1998)

- 1994: Nicholas Hudson, *Johnson and Political Correctness*
1995: Bryan O'Connor, *The Hypochondriack*
1996: Barrie Sheppard, *Johnson and the Cucumber*
1997: John Wiltshire, 'All the Dear Burneys, Little and Great'
Merrowyn Deacon, *Johnson and Music*

Papers, v. 3 (1999)

- 1991: John Wiltshire, *In Bed with Boswell and Johnson*
1997: Nicholas Hudson, *Johnson and Physick*
1998: Genny Gebhardt, 'A Violent Passion': *Pugnacity and Prize-fighting in Johnson's England*
Barrie Sheppard, *Johnson, Adam Smith and Peacock Brains*
Greg Veitch, *Johnson and the Industrial Revolution*
1999: Henry Gordon-Clark, *Was Johnson a Thief?*

Papers, v. 4 (2000)

- 1995: Nicholas Hudson, *Johnson and Natural Philosophy*
1997: Philip Harvey, *The Effect of Judgment: Johnson and his Lives of the Poets*
1998: Geoffrey Brand, *Hercules with the Distaff*
Merrowyn Deacon, *Hester Thrale: Is There Life after Johnson?*
1999: Rusi Khan, *Johnson on Life and Death*
John Wiltshire, *Johnson and Garrick: The Really Impossible Friendship*

Papers, v. 5 (2003)

- 1995: Paul Brown, *A New View of Johnson's Putative Psychological Disorder*
1998: Nicholas Hudson, *Johnson and the Animal World*
2000: John Wiltshire, *Johnson and Garrick: The Really Impossible Friendship, Pt. 2*
Barrie Sheppard, *Time, Then and Now*
Anthony Marshall, *Getting to Know the Doctor: A Bookseller Returns to the Johnsonian Fold*
Robert Kemp, *An Amazing Discovery*

Papers, v. 6 (2002)

- 2001: Paul Tankard, *The Great Cham and the English Aristophanes: Samuels Johnson and Foote*
Paul Brown, *William Cowper: Messenger of Grief*
Alan Frost, 'Very Little Intellectual in the Course': *Exploration and Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*
- 2002: Nicholas Hudson, *Johnson in America*
Clive Probyn, *Johnson and Romance*

Papers, v. 7 (2005)

- 2002 John Hardy, 'Johnson and the Truth,' *Revisited* (Fleeman Lecture)
- 2002: Genny Gebhardt, 'Rough Music': *Street Theatre in Johnson's England*
Bryan O'Connor, *Boszy and Women*
- 2004: Nicholas Hudson, *Mr Johnson Changes Trains*

Papers, v. 8 (2006)

- 2003 Bryan O'Connor, *Boswell and Rousseau: Liberty and Duty* (Fleeman Lecture)
- 2003: Jan Lowe, *The Man Who Could Write Anything: Oliver Goldsmith*
Chris Morris, 'Worse Than a Gaol': *Seafaring in the 18th Century*
Robert Kemp, *Johnson and Boswell, Inverted*

Papers, v. 9 (2007)

- 2005 Chris Ackerley, *Human Wishes: Samuels Johnson and Beckett* (Fleeman Lecture)
- 2002: Basil Stafford Jr, *Johnson and Painting*
- 2004: Philip Harvey, *Good Living: The Poetry of Samuel Johnson*
- 2005: Wal MacDougall, *Three 18th Century Lichfield Poets*

Papers, v. 10 (2008)

- 2006 Alan Saunders, *Doing Philosophy with Samuel Johnson* (Fleeman Lecture)
- 2004: Paul Tankard, *The False Formosan*
- 2005: Kate Burridge, 'Corruptions of Ignorance,' 'Caprices of Innovation': *Linguistic Purism and the Lexicographer*
John Wiltshire, *Fanny Burney, Boswell, and Johnson*

Papers, v. 11 (2009)

- 2007 Paul Tankard, *Reference Point: Samuel Johnson and the Encyclopaedias* (Fleeman Lecture)
- 2007: Geoff Brand, *On the Side of the Angels: Buffon, Linnaeus and The Great Chain of Being*
- 2002: Barrie Sheppard, *John Law and Dr Johnson: on Money, Trade and Gambling*
- 2007: Wallace Kirsop, *The Elocutionist and the Lexicographer: Benjamin Suggit Naylor reads Samuel Johnson*
- 2004: John Wiltshire and Daniel Vuillermin, *Facing Up to Johnson*

The Society produces a newsletter, *The Southern Johnsonian*, which is sent to members four times a year. It is also available on the Society's web site.

The Johnson Society of Australia Inc.

Patron:	Dr Gordon Turnbull <i>Chief Editor of 'The Boswell Papers'</i> <i>Yale University</i>
President:	Prof. John Wiltshire <i>La Trobe University</i>
Vice-President:	Prof. Clive Probyn <i>Monash University</i>
Hon. Secretary:	Barbara Niven
Hon. Treasurer:	Barrie Sheppard
Publications Editor:	Dr Paul Tankard <i>University of Otago</i>
Newsletter Editor:	Bryan Reid
Committee members:	Bronwen Hickman Denis Le Neuf

Membership of the JSA

Those wishing to join The Johnson Society of Australia Inc. should contact The Secretary at 44 Essex Street, Footscray, Melbourne, Victoria 3011, Australia or via e-mail to barbara.niven@bigpond.com and ask for an application form. An application form can also be found at the JSA website <http://www.jsaust.com>.

