The Supremacy of God in Preaching – Part 3

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TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

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Samuel Johnson

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For other persons named Samuel Johnson, see Samuel Johnson (disambiguation).

Samuel Johnson LLD MA

Samuel Johnson c. 1772,
painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Born	18 September 1709 (O.S. 7 September) Lichfield, England
Died	13 December 1784 (aged 75) London, England
Occupation	essayist, lexicographer, biographer, poet
Spouse(s)	Elizabeth Jervis Porter

Samuel Johnson (18 September 1709 [O.S. 7 September] – 13 December 1784), often referred to as **Dr. Johnson**, was an English author who made lasting contributions to English literature as a poet, essayist, moralist, novelist, literary critic, biographer, editor and lexicographer. Johnson was a devout Anglican and political conservative, and has been described as "arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history".[1] He is also the subject of "the most famous single work of biographical art in the whole of literature": James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*.[2]

Johnson was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire, and attended Pembroke College, Oxford for a year, before his lack of funds forced him to leave. After working as a teacher he moved to London, where he began to write essays for *The Gentleman's Magazine*. His early works include the biography *The Life of Richard Savage*, the poems *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and the play *Irene*.

After nine years of work, Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* was published in 1755; it had a far-reaching impact on Modern English and has been described as "one of the greatest single achievements of scholarship".[3] The *Dictionary* brought Johnson

popularity and success. Until the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 150 years later, Johnson's was viewed as the pre-eminent British dictionary.[4] His later works included essays, an influential annotated edition of William Shakespeare's plays, and the widely read novel *Rasselas*. In 1763, he befriended James Boswell, with whom he later travelled to Scotland; Johnson described their travels in *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. Towards the end of his life, he produced the massive and influential *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, a collection of biographies and evaluations of 17th- and 18th-century poets.

Johnson had a tall and robust figure, but his odd gestures and tics were confusing to some on their first encounter with him. Boswell's *Life*, along with other biographies, documented Johnson's behaviour and mannerisms in such detail that they have informed the posthumous diagnosis of Tourette syndrome (TS),[5] a condition unknown in the 18th century. After a series of illnesses he died on the evening of 13 December 1784, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. In the years following his death, Johnson began to be recognised as having had a lasting effect on literary criticism, and even as the only great critic of English literature.[6]

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[edit] Biography

[edit] Early life and education

Main article: Samuel Johnson's early life

Born on 18 September 1709 to Michael Johnson, a bookseller, and his wife, Sarah Ford,[7] Samuel Johnson often claimed that he grew up in poverty. Since both families had money, it is uncertain what happened between Michael and Sarah's marriage and the birth of Samuel just three years later to provoke such a change in fortune.[8] Johnson was

born in the family home above his father's bookshop in Lichfield, Staffordshire and,[7] because his mother Sarah was 40 when she gave birth, a "man-midwife" and surgeon of "great reputation" named George Hector was brought in to assist.[9] He did not cry and, with doubts surrounding the newborn's health, his aunt claimed "that she would not have picked such a poor creature up in the street".[10] As it was feared the baby might die, the vicar of St Mary's was summoned to perform a baptism.[11] Two godfathers were chosen: Samuel Swynfen, a physician and graduate of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Richard Wakefield, a lawyer, coroner, and Lichfield town clerk.[12]

Johnson's health improved and he was put to wet-nurse with Joan Marklew. He soon contracted scrofula,[13] known at that time as the "King's Evil" because it was thought royalty could cure it. Sir John Floyer, former physician to Charles II, recommended that the young Johnson should receive the "royal touch",[14] which he received from Queen Anne on 30 March 1712. However, the ritual was ineffective, and an operation was performed that left him with permanent scars across his face and body.[15] With the birth of Johnson's brother, Nathaniel, a few months later, Michael was unable to keep on top of the debts he had accumulated over the years, and his family was no longer able to live in the style to which it had been accustomed.[16]

> “When he was a child in petticoats, and had learned to read, Mrs Johnson one morning put the common prayer-book into his hands, pointed to the collect for the day, and said, 'Sam, you must get this by heart.' She went up stairs, leaving him to study it: But by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her. 'What's the matter?' said she. 'I can say it,' he replied; and repeated it distinctly, though he could not have read it over more than twice.[17]”
>
> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

Johnson demonstrated signs of great intelligence as a child, and his parents, to his later disgust, would show off his "newly acquired accomplishments".[18] His education began at the age of three, and came from his mother who had him memorise and recite passages from the Book of Common Prayer.[19] When Johnson turned four, he was sent to a nearby school, and, when he reached the age of six, he was sent to a retired shoemaker to continue his education.[20] A year later, Johnson was sent to Lichfield Grammar School, where he excelled in Latin.[21] During this time, Johnson started to exhibit the tics that would influence how people viewed him in his later years, and which formed the basis for the posthumous diagnosis of Tourette syndrome.[22] He excelled at his studies and was promoted to the upper school at the age of nine.[21] During this time, he befriended Edmund Hector, nephew of his "man-midwife" George Hector, and John Taylor, with whom he remained in contact for the rest of his life.[23]

At the age of 16, Johnson was given the opportunity to stay with his cousins, the Fords, at Pedmore, Worcestershire.[24] There he became a close friend of Cornelius Ford, who employed his knowledge of the classics to tutor Johnson while he was not attending school.[25] Ford was a successful, well-connected academic, but was also a notorious alcoholic whose excesses contributed to his death six years after Johnson's visit.[26] Having spent six months with his cousins, Johnson returned to Lichfield, but Mr. Hunter, the headmaster, "angered by the impertinence of this long absence", refused to allow him

to continue at the grammar school.[27] Unable to return to Lichfield Grammar School, Johnson was enrolled into the King Edward VI grammar school at Stourbridge.[25] Because the school was located near Pedmore, Johnson was able to spend more time with the Fords, and he began to write poems and verse translations.[27] However, he spent only six months at Stourbridge before returning once again to his parents' home in Lichfield.[28]

During this time, Johnson's future was uncertain as his father was deeply in debt.[29] To earn money, Johnson began to stitch books for his father, and it is possible that Johnson spent most of his time in his father's bookshop reading various works and building his literary knowledge. They remained in poverty until Sarah Johnson's cousin, Elizabeth Harriotts, died in February 1728 and left enough money to send Johnson to college.[30] On 31 October 1728, a few weeks after he turned 19, Johnson entered Pembroke College, Oxford.[31] The inheritance did not cover all of his expenses at Pembroke, but Andrew Corbet, a friend and fellow student at Pembroke, offered to make up the deficit.[32]

Johnson made friends at Pembroke and read much. In later life, he told stories of his idleness.[33] He was later asked by his tutor to produce a Latin translation of Alexander Pope's *Messiah* as a Christmas exercise.[34] Johnson completed half of the translation in one afternoon and the rest the following morning. Although the poem brought him praise, it did not bring the material benefit he had hoped for.[35] The poem later appeared in *Miscellany of Poems* (1731), edited by John Husbands, a Pembroke tutor, and is the earliest surviving publication of any of Johnson's writings. Johnson spent the rest of his time studying, even over the Christmas vacation. He drafted a "plan of study" called "Adversaria", which was left unfinished, and used his time to learn French while working on his knowledge of Greek.[36]

After thirteen months, poverty forced Johnson to leave Oxford without a degree, and he returned to Lichfield.[30] Towards the end of Johnson's stay at Oxford his tutor, Jorden, left Pembroke and was replaced by William Adams. He enjoyed Adams as a tutor, but by December, Johnson was already a quarter behind in his student fees, and he was forced to return home. He left behind many books that he had borrowed from his father because he could not afford to transport them and as a symbolic gesture in that he hoped to return to the school soon.[37]

He eventually received a degree: just before the publication of his *Dictionary* in 1755, Oxford University awarded Johnson the degree of Master of Arts.[38] He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1765 by Trinity College Dublin and in 1775 by Oxford University.[39] In 1776, he returned to Pembroke with Boswell and toured the college with his previous tutor Adams, who was then its Master. He used that visit to recount his time at the college, his early career, and to express his later fondness for Jorden.[40]

[edit] Early career

Little is known about Johnson's life between the end of 1729 and 1731; it is likely that he lived with his parents. He experienced bouts of mental anguish and physical pain during

years of illness;[41] his tics and gesticulations associated with Tourette syndrome became more noticeable and were often commented upon.[42] By 1731 Johnson's father was deeply in debt and had lost much of his standing in Lichfield. Johnson hoped to get an usher's position which became available at Stourbridge Grammar School, but as he did not have a degree his application was passed over on 6 September 1731.[41] At about this time, Johnson's father became ill and developed an "inflammatory fever" which led to his death in December 1731.[43] Johnson eventually found employment as undermaster at a school in Market Bosworth, run by Sir Wolstan Dixie, 4th Baronet who allowed Johnson to teach without a degree.[44] Although Johnson was treated as a servant,[45] he found pleasure in teaching despite thinking it boring. After an argument with Dixie he quit the school, and by June 1732 he had returned home.[46]

Johnson continued to look for a position at a Lichfield school. After being turned down for a position in Ashbourne, he spent his time with his friend Edmund Hector, who was living in the home of the publisher Thomas Warren. At the time Warren was starting his *Birmingham Journal*, and he enlisted Johnson's help.[47] This connection with Warren grew, and Johnson proposed a translation of Jeronimo Lobo's account of the Abyssinians.[48] Johnson read Abbé Joachim Le Grand's French translations, and thought that a shorter version might be "useful and profitable".[49] Instead of writing the whole work himself, he dictated to Hector, who then took the copy to the printer and made any corrections. Johnson's *A Voyage to Abyssinia* was published a year later.[49] He returned to Lichfield in February 1734, and began an annotated edition of Poliziano's Latin poems, along with a history of Latin poetry from Petrarch to Poliziano; a *Proposal* was soon printed, but a lack of funds halted the project.[50]

Johnson remained with his close friend Harry Porter during a terminal illness,[51] which culminated when Porter died on 3 September 1734, leaving his wife Elizabeth Jervis Porter (otherwise known as "Tetty") widowed at the age of 45, with three children.[52] Some months later, Johnson began to court her. The Reverend William Shaw claims that "the first advances probably proceeded from her, as her attachment to Johnson was in opposition to the advice and desire of all her relations".[53] Johnson was inexperienced in such relationships, but the well-to-do widow encouraged him and promised to provide for him with her substantial savings.[54] They married on 9 July 1735, at St. Werburgh's Church in Derby.[55] The Porter family did not approve of the match, partly because Johnson was 25 and Elizabeth was 21 years his elder, and Elizabeth's marriage to Johnson so disgusted her son Jervis that he severed relations with her.[56] However, her daughter Lucy had accepted Johnson from the start, and her other son, Joseph, accepted the marriage later.[57]

In June 1735, while working as a tutor for Thomas Whitby's children, Johnson had applied for the position of headmaster at Solihull School.[58] Although Walmesley gave his support, Johnson was passed over because the school's directors thought he was "a very haughty, ill-natured gent., and that he has such a way of distorting his face (which though he can't help) the gent[s] think it may affect some lads".[59] With Walmesley's encouragement, Johnson decided that he could be a successful teacher if he ran his own school.[60] In the autumn of 1735, Johnson opened Edial Hall School as a private academy

at Edial, near Lichfield. He had only three pupils: Lawrence Offley, George Garrick, and the 18-year-old David Garrick, who later became one of the most famous actors of his day.[59] The venture was unsuccessful and cost Tetty a substantial portion of her fortune. Instead of trying to keep the failing school going, Johnson began to write his first major work, the historical tragedy *Irene*.[61] Biographer Robert DeMaria believed that Tourette syndrome likely made public occupations like schoolmaster or tutor almost impossible for Johnson to hold; this may have led Johnson to "the invisible occupation of authorship".[22]

Johnson left for London with his former pupil David Garrick on 2 March 1737, the day Johnson's brother had died. He was penniless and pessimistic about their travel, but fortunately for them, Garrick had connections in London, and the two were able to stay with his distant relative, Richard Norris.[62] Johnson soon moved to Greenwich near the Golden Hart Tavern to finish *Irene*.[63] On 12 July 1737 he wrote to Edward Cave with a proposal for a translation of Paolo Sarpi's *The History of the Council of Trent* (1619), which Cave did not accept until months later.[64] In October 1737 Johnson brought his wife to London, and he found employment with Cave as a writer for *The Gentleman's Magazine*.[65] His assignments for the magazine and other publishers during this time were "almost unparalleled in range and variety", and "so numerous, so varied and scattered" that "Johnson himself could not make a complete list".[66] The name *Columbia*, a poetic name for the United States coined by Johnson, first appears in a 1738 weekly publication of the debates of the British Parliament in the Magazine.[67][68]

In May 1738 his first major work, the poem *London*, was published anonymously.[69] Based on Juvenal's Satire III, it describes the character Thales leaving for Wales to escape the problems of London,[70] which it portrays as a place of crime, corruption, and neglect of the poor. Johnson could not bring himself to regard the poem as earning him any merit as a poet.[71] Alexander Pope claimed that the author "will soon be déterré" (brought to light, become well known), but this would not happen until 15 years later.[69]

In August, Johnson's lack of an MA degree from Oxford or Cambridge led to his being denied a position as master of the Appleby Grammar School. In an effort to end such rejections, Pope asked Lord Gower to use his influence to have a degree awarded to Johnson.[10] Gower petitioned Oxford for an honorary degree to be awarded to Johnson, but was told that it was "too much to be asked".[72] Gower then asked a friend of Jonathan Swift to plead with Swift to use his influence at the University of Dublin to have a Masters degree awarded to Johnson, in the hope that this could then be used to justify an MA from Oxford,[72] but Swift refused to act on Johnson's behalf.[73]

Between 1737 and 1739, Johnson befriended Richard Savage.[74] Feeling guilty about living on Tetty's money, Johnson stopped living with her and spent his time with Savage. They were poor and would stay in taverns or sleep in "night-cellars" except for nights that they would roam the streets because they lacked the necessary funds.[75] Savage's friends tried to help him by attempting to persuade him to move to Wales, but Savage ended up in Bristol and again fell into debt. He was committed to debtors' prison and died in 1743. A year later, Johnson wrote *Life of Mr Richard Savage* (1744), a "moving" work

which, in the words of the biographer and critic Walter Jackson Bate, "remains one of the innovative works in the history of biography".[76]

[edit] *A Dictionary of the English Language*

See also: A Dictionary of the English Language, The Rambler, The Vanity of Human Wishes, and Irene (play)

In 1746, a group of publishers approached Johnson about creating an authoritative dictionary of the English language;[69] a contract with William Strahan and associates, worth 1,500 guineas, was signed on the morning of 18 June 1746.[77] Johnson claimed that he could finish the project in three years. In comparison, the Académie Française had forty scholars spending forty years to complete its dictionary, which prompted Johnson to claim, "This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman".[69] Although he did not succeed in completing the work in three years, he did manage to finish it in nine, justifying his boast.[69] According to Bate, the *Dictionary* "easily ranks as one of the greatest single achievements of scholarship, and probably the greatest ever performed by one individual who labored under anything like the disadvantages in a comparable length of time".[3]

Johnson's dictionary was not the first, nor was it unique. It was, however, the most commonly used and imitated for the 150 years between its first publication and the appearance of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1928. Other dictionaries, such as Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum*, included more words,[4] and in the 150 years preceding Johnson's dictionary about twenty other "English" dictionaries had been produced.[78] However, there was open dissatisfaction with the dictionaries of the period. In 1741, David Hume claimed: "The Elegance and Propriety of Stile have been very much neglected among us. We have no Dictionary of our Language, and scarce a tolerable Grammar".[79] Johnson's *Dictionary* offers insights into the 18th century and "a faithful record of the language people used".[4] It is more than a reference book; it is a work of literature.[78]

For a decade, Johnson's constant work on the *Dictionary* disrupted his and Tetty's living conditions. He had to employ numerous assistants for the copying and mechanical work, which filled the house with incessant noise and clutter. He was always busy with his work, and kept hundreds of books around.[80] John Hawkins described the scene: "The books he used for this purpose were what he had in his own collection, a copious but a miserably ragged one, and all such as he could borrow; which latter, if ever they came back to those that lent them, were so defaced as to be scarce worth owning".[81] Johnson was also distracted by Tetty's health, as she started to show signs of a terminal illness.[80] To accommodate both his wife and his work, he moved to Gough Square near his printer, William Strahan.[82]

In preparation for the work, Johnson wrote a *Plan* for the *Dictionary*. This *Plan* was patronised by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, to Johnson's displeasure.[83] Chesterfield did not care about praise, but was interested by Johnson's abilities. Seven years after first meeting Johnson to go over the work, Chesterfield wrote two anonymous essays in *The World* recommending the *Dictionary*.[84] He complained that the English language lacked structure and argued in support of the dictionary. Johnson did not like the tone of the essay, and he felt that Chesterfield had not fulfilled his obligations as the work's patron.[85] Johnson wrote a letter expressing this view and harshly criticising Chesterfield, saying "Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind: but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it."[86] However, Chesterfield accepted this without any ill will and, impressed by the language, kept the letter displayed on a table for anyone to read.[86]

During his work on the dictionary, Johnson made many appeals for financial help in the form of subscriptions: patrons would get a copy of the first edition as soon as it was printed in compensation for their support during its compilation. The appeals ran until 1752. The *Dictionary* was finally published in April 1755, with the title page acknowledging that Oxford had awarded Johnson a Master of Arts degree in anticipation of the work.[87] The published dictionary was a huge book. Its pages were nearly 18 inches (46 cm) tall, and the book was 20 inches (51 cm) wide when opened; it contained 42,773 entries, to which only a few more were added in subsequent editions, and sold for the extravagant price of £4 10s, the equivalent of about £350 today.[88] An important innovation in English lexicography was to illustrate the meanings of his words by literary quotation, of which there are around 114,000. The authors most frequently cited include Shakespeare, Milton and Dryden.[89] It was years before "Johnson's Dictionary", as it came to be known, turned a profit. Author's royalties were unknown at that time, and Johnson, once his contract to deliver the book was fulfilled, received no further monies from its sale. Years later, many of its quotations would be repeated by various editions of the *Webster's Dictionary* and the *New English Dictionary*.[90]

Besides working on the *Dictionary*, Johnson also wrote various essays, sermons, and poems during these nine years.[91] He decided to produce a series of essays under the title *The Rambler* that would run every Tuesday and Saturday for twopence each. Explaining the title years later, he told his friend, the painter Joshua Reynolds: "I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. *The Rambler* seemed the best that occurred, and I took it".[92] These essays, often on moral and religious topics, tended to be more grave than the title of the series would suggest; his first comments in *The Rambler* were to ask "that in this undertaking thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others".[92] The popularity of *The Rambler* took off once the issues were collected as a volume; they were reprinted nine times during Johnson's life. Writer and printer Samuel Richardson, enjoying the essays greatly, questioned the publisher as to who wrote the works; only he and a few of Johnson's

friends were told of Johnson's authorship.[93] One friend, the novelist Charlotte Lennox, includes a defence of *The Rambler* in her novel *The Female Quixote* (1752). In particular, the character Mr. Glanville says, "you may sit in Judgment upon the Productions of a *Young*, a *Richardson*, or a *Johnson*. Rail with premeditated Malice at the *Rambler*; and for the want of Faults, turn even its inimitable Beauties into Ridicule" (Book VI, Chapter XI). Later, she claims Johnson as "the greatest Genius in the present Age".[94]

> "His necessary attendance while his play was in rehearsal, and during its performance, brought him acquainted with many of the performers of both sexes, which produced a more favourable opinion of their profession than he had harshly expressed in his Life of Savage ... He for considerable time used to frequent the Green Room, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom, by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle than to be found there. Mr David Hume related to me from Mr Garrick, that Johnson at last denied himself this amusement, from considerations of rigid virtue; saying, "I'll come no more behind your scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities".[95]"
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> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

However, not all of his work was confined to *The Rambler*. One such work, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, was written with such "extraordinary speed" that Boswell claimed Johnson "might have been perpetually a poet".[96] The poem is an imitation of Juvenal's *Satire X* and claims that "the antidote to vain human wishes is non-vain spiritual wishes".[97] In particular, Johnson emphasises "the helpless vulnerability of the individual before the social context" and the "inevitable self-deception by which human beings are led astray".[98] The poem was critically celebrated but it failed to become popular, and sold less than *London*.[99] In 1749, Garrick made good on his promise that he would produce *Irene*, but its title was altered to *Mahomet and Irene* to make it "fit for the stage".[100] The show eventually ran for nine nights.[101]

Tetty Johnson spent most of her time in London ill, and in 1752 she decided to return to the countryside while Johnson was busy working on his *Dictionary*. She died on 17 March 1752, and, at word of her death, Johnson wrote a letter to his old friend Taylor, which according to Taylor "expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read".[102] He wrote a sermon in her honour, to be read at her funeral, but Taylor refused to read it, for reasons which are unknown. This only exacerbated Johnson's feelings of being lost, and his despair after the death of his wife, and John Hawkesworth had to take over organising the funeral. Johnson felt guilty about the poverty in which he believed he had forced Tetty to live, and blamed himself for neglecting her. He became outwardly discontent, and his diary was filled with prayers and laments over her death until his own. She was his primary motivation, and her death hindered his ability to complete his work.[103]

[edit] Later career

See also: The Plays of William Shakespeare, The Idler (1758–1760), and The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia

On 16 March 1756, Johnson was arrested for an outstanding debt of £5 18s. Unable to contact anyone else, he wrote to the writer and publisher Samuel Richardson. Richardson, who had previously lent Johnson money, sent him six guineas to show his good will, and the two became friends.[104] Soon after, Johnson met and befriended the painter Joshua Reynolds, who so impressed Johnson that he declared him "almost the only man whom I call a friend".[105] Reynolds' younger sister Frances observed during their time together "that men, women and children gathered around him [Johnson], laughing" at his gestures and gesticulations.[106] In addition to Reynolds, Johnson was close to Bennet Langton and Arthur Murphy. Langton was a scholar and an admirer of Johnson who persuaded his way into a meeting with Johnson which led to a long friendship. Johnson met Murphy during the summer of 1754 after Murphy came to Johnson about the accidental republishing of the *Rambler* No. 190, and the two became friends.[107] Around this time, Anna Williams began boarding with Johnson. She was a minor poet who was poor and becoming blind, two conditions that Johnson attempted to change by providing room for her and paying for a failed cataract surgery. Williams, in turn, became Johnson's housekeeper.[108]

To occupy himself, Johnson began to work on *The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review*, the first issue of which was printed on 19 March 1756. Philosophical disagreements erupted over the purpose of the publication when the Seven Years' War began and Johnson started to write polemical essays attacking the war. After the war began, the *Magazine* included many reviews, at least 34 of which were written by Johnson.[109] When not working on the *Magazine*, Johnson wrote a series of prefaces for other writers, such as Giuseppe Baretti, William Payne and Charlotte Lennox.[110] Johnson's relationship with Lennox and her works was particularly close during these years, and she in turn relied so heavily upon Johnson that he was "the most important single fact in Mrs Lennox's literary life".[111] He later attempted to produce a new edition of her works, but even with his support they were unable to find enough interest to follow through with its publication.[112] To help with domestic duties while Johnson was busy with his various projects, Richard Bathurst, a physician and a member of Johnson's Club, pressured him to take on a free slave, Francis Barber, as his servant.[113]

These efforts, however, consumed only a small portion of his time; his work on *Edition of Shakespeare* took up the rest. On 8 June 1756, Johnson published his *Proposals for Printing, by Subscription, the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare*, which argued that previous editions of Shakespeare were edited incorrectly and needed to be corrected.[114] However, Johnson's progress on the work slowed as the months passed, and he told music historian Charles Burney in December 1757 that it would take him until the following March to complete it. Before that could happen, he was arrested again, for a debt of £40, in February 1758. The debt was soon repaid by Jacob Tonson, who had contracted Johnson to publish *Shakespeare*, and this encouraged Johnson to finish his edition to repay the favour. Although it took him another seven years to finish, Johnson completed a few volumes of his *Shakespeare* to prove his commitment to the project.[115]

In 1758, Johnson began to write a weekly series, *The Idler*, which ran from 15 April 1758 to 5 April 1760, as a way to avoid finishing his *Shakespeare*. This series was shorter and lacked many features of *The Rambler*. Unlike his independent publication of *The Rambler*, *The Idler* was published in a weekly news journal *The Universal Chronicle*, a publication supported by John Payne, John Newbery, Robert Stevens and William Faden.[116] Since *The Idler* did not occupy all Johnson's time, he was able to publish his philosophical novella *Rasselas* on 19 April 1759. The "little story book", as Johnson described it, describes the life of Prince Rasselas and Nekayah, his sister, who are kept in a place called the Happy Valley in the land of Abyssinia. The Valley is a place free of problems, where any desire is quickly satisfied. The constant pleasure does not, however, lead to satisfaction; and, with the help of a philosopher named Imlac, Rasselas escapes and explores the world to witness how all aspects of society and life in the outside world are filled with suffering. They return to Abyssinia, but do not wish to return to the state of constantly fulfilled pleasures found in the Happy Valley.[117] *Rasselas* was written in one week to pay for his mother's funeral and settle her debts; it became so popular that there was a new English edition of the work almost every year. References to it appear in many later works of fiction, including *Jane Eyre*, *Cranford* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. Its fame was not limited to English-speaking nations: *Rasselas* was immediately translated into five languages (French, Dutch, German, Russian and Italian), and later into nine others.[118]

By 1762, however, Johnson had gained notoriety for his dilatoriness in writing; the contemporary poet Churchill teased Johnson for the delay in producing his long-promised edition of Shakespeare: "He for subscribers baits his hook / and takes your cash, but where's the book?"[119] The comments soon motivated Johnson to finish his *Shakespeare*, and, after receiving the first payment from a government pension on 20 July 1762, he was able to dedicate most of his time towards this goal.[119] Earlier that July, the 24-year-old King George III granted Johnson an annual pension of £300 in appreciation for the *Dictionary*.[39] While the pension did not make Johnson wealthy, it did allow him a modest yet comfortable independence for the remaining 22 years of his life.[120] The award came largely through the efforts of Sheridan and the Earl of Bute. When Johnson questioned if the pension would force him to promote a political agenda or support various officials, he was told by Bute that the pension "is not given you for anything you are to do, but for what you have done".[121]

On 16 May 1763, Johnson first met 22-year-old James Boswell—who would later become Johnson's first major biographer—in the bookshop of Johnson's friend, Tom Davies. They quickly became friends, although Boswell would return to his home in Scotland or travel abroad for months at a time.[122] Around the spring of 1763, Johnson formed "The Club", a social group that included his friends Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith and others (the membership later expanded to include Adam Smith and Edward Gibbon). They decided to meet every Monday at 7:00 pm at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho, and these meetings continued until long after the deaths of the original members.[123]

> During the whole of the interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson shewed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr Barnard, 'Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen.'[124]
>
> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

On 9 January 1765, Murphy introduced Johnson to Henry Thrale, a wealthy brewer and MP, and his wife Hester. They struck up an instant friendship; Johnson was treated as a member of the family, and was once more motivated to continue working on his *Shakespeare*.[125] Afterwards, Johnson stayed with the Thrales for 17 years until Henry's death in 1781, sometimes staying in rooms at Thrale's Anchor Brewery in Southwark.[126] Hester Thrale's documentation of Johnson's life during this time, in her correspondence and her diary (*Thraliana*), became an important source of biographical information on Johnson after his death.[127]

Johnson's edition of *Shakespeare* was finally published on 10 October 1765 as *The Plays of William Shakespeare, in Eight Volumes ... To which are added Notes by Sam. Johnson* in a printing of one thousand copies. The first edition quickly sold out, and a second was soon printed.[128] The plays themselves were in a version that Johnson felt most true to the original based on his analysis of the manuscript editions. Johnson's revolutionary innovation was to create a set of corresponding notes that allow readers to identify the meaning behind many of Shakespeare's more complicated passages or ones that may have been transcribed incorrectly over time.[129] Included within the notes are occasional attacks upon rival editors of Shakespeare's works and their editions.[130] Years later, Edmond Malone, an important Shakespearean scholar and friend of Johnson's, stated that Johnson's "vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his authour than all his predecessors had done".[131]

In February 1767 Johnson was granted a special meeting with King George III. This took place at the library of the Queen's house, and it was organised by Barnard, the King's librarian.[132] The King, hearing that Johnson would visit the library, commanded Barnard to introduce him to Johnson.[133] After a short meeting, Johnson was impressed with both the King himself and their conversation.[124]

[edit] Final works

See also: A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets

On 6 August 1773, eleven years after first meeting Boswell, Johnson set out to visit his friend in Scotland, to begin "a journey to the western islands of Scotland", as Johnson's 1775 account of their travels would put it.[135] The work was intended to discuss the social problems and struggles that affected the Scottish people, but it also praised many of the unique facets of Scottish society, such as a school in Edinburgh for the deaf and mute.[136] Also, Johnson used the work to enter into the dispute over the authenticity of

James Macpherson's Ossian poems, claiming they could not have been translations of ancient Scottish literature on the grounds that "in those times nothing had been written in the Earse [i.e. Gaelic] language".[137] There were heated exchanges between the two, and according to one of Johnson's letters, MacPherson threatened physical violence.[138] Boswell's account, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1786), was a preliminary attempt at a biography before his *Life of Johnson*. Included were various quotes and descriptions of events, including anecdotes such as Johnson swinging around a broadsword while wearing Scottish garb, or dancing a Highland jig.[139]

In the 1770s, Johnson, who had tended to be an opponent of the government early in life, published a series of pamphlets in favour of various government policies. In 1770 he produced *The False Alarm*, a political pamphlet attacking John Wilkes. In 1771, his *Thoughts on the Late Transactions Respecting Falkland's Islands* cautioned against war with Spain.[140] In 1774 he printed *The Patriot*, a critique of what he viewed as false patriotism. On the evening of 7 April 1775, he made the famous statement, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."[141] This line was not, as widely believed, about patriotism in general, but the false use of the term "patriotism" by John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (the patriot-minister) and his supporters; Johnson opposed "self-professed Patriots" in general, but valued what he considered "true" patriotism.[142]

The last of these pamphlets, *Taxation No Tyranny* (1775), was a defence of the Coercive Acts and a response to the Declaration of Rights of the First Continental Congress of America, which protested against taxation without representation.[143] Johnson argued that in emigrating to America, colonists had "voluntarily resigned the power of voting", but they still had "virtual representation" in Parliament. In a parody of the Declaration of Rights, Johnson suggested that the Americans had no more right to govern themselves than the Cornish people. If the Americans wanted to participate in Parliament, said Johnson, they could move to England and purchase an estate.[144] Johnson denounced English supporters of American separatists as "traitors to this country", and hoped that the matter would be settled without bloodshed, but that it would end with "English superiority and American obedience".[145] Years before, Johnson had advocated that the English and the French were just "two robbers" who were stealing land from the natives, and that neither deserved to live there.[109] After the signing of the 1783 Peace of Paris treaties, marking the colonists' defeat of the British, Johnson was "deeply disturbed" with the "state of this kingdom".[146]

> “ Mr Thrale's death was a very essential loss to Johnson, who, although he did not foresee all that afterwards happened, was sufficiently convinced that the comforts which Mr Thrale's family afforded him, would now in great measure cease.[147] ”
>
> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

On 3 May 1777, while Johnson was trying to save Reverend William Dodd from execution, he wrote to Boswell that he was busy preparing a "little Lives" and "little Prefaces, to a little edition of the English Poets".[148] Tom Davies, William Strahan and Thomas Cadell had asked Johnson to create this final major work, the *Lives of the English Poets*, for which he asked 200 guineas, an amount significantly less than the

price he could have demanded.[149] The *Lives*, which were critical as well as biographical studies, appeared as prefaces to selections of each poet's work, and they were quite larger than originally expected.[150] The work was finished in March 1781 and the whole collection was published in six volumes. As Johnson justified in the advertisement for the work, "my purpose was only to have allotted to every Poet an Advertisement, like those which we find in the French Miscellanies, containing a few dates and a general character."[151]

Johnson was unable to enjoy this success because Henry Thrale, the dear friend with whom he lived, died on 4 April 1781.[152] Life changed quickly for Johnson, and Hester Thrale became interested in the Italian singing teacher Gabriel Mario Piozzi, which forced Johnson to move on from his previous lifestyle.[153] After returning home and then travelling for a short period, Johnson received word that his friend and tenant Robert Levet, had died on 17 January 1782.[154] Johnson was shocked by the death of Levet, who had resided at Johnson's London home since 1762.[155] Shortly afterwards Johnson caught a cold which turned into bronchitis, lasting for several months, and his health was further complicated by "feeling forlorn and lonely" by Levet's death being accompanied by that of Johnson's friend Thomas Lawrence and his housekeeper Williams.[156]

[edit] Final years

Although he had recovered his health by August, he experienced emotional trauma when he was given word that Hester Thrale would sell the residence that Johnson shared with the family. What hurt Johnson the most was the possibility that he would be left without her constant company.[157] Months later, on 6 October 1782, Johnson attended church for the final time in his life, to say goodbye to his former residence and life. The walk to the church strained him, but he managed the journey unaccompanied.[158] While there, he wrote a prayer for the Thrale family:

> To thy fatherly protection, O Lord, I commend this family. Bless, guide, and defend them, that they may pass through this world, as finally to enjoy in thy presence everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.[159]

Hester Thrale did not completely abandon Johnson, and asked him to accompany the family on a trip to Brighton.[158] He agreed, and was with them from 7 October until 20 November 1782.[160] On his return, his health began to fail him, and he was left alone following Boswell's visit on 29 May 1783 until he travelled to Scotland.[161]

On 17 June 1783, Johnson's poor circulation resulted in a stroke[162] and he wrote to his neighbour, Edmund Allen, that he had lost the ability to speak.[163] Two doctors were brought in to aid Johnson; he regained his ability to speak two days later.[164] Johnson feared that he was dying, and wrote:

> The black dog I hope always to resist, and in time to drive, though I am deprived of almost all those that used to help me. The neighbourhood is impoverished. I had once Richardson and Lawrence in my reach. Mrs. Allen is dead. My house has lost Levet, a man who took interest in everything, and therefore ready at conversation. Mrs. Williams is so weak that she can be a

companion no longer. When I rise my breakfast is solitary, the black dog waits to share it, from breakfast to dinner he continues barking, except that Dr. Brocklesby for a little keeps him at a distance. Dinner with a sick woman you may venture to suppose not much better than solitary. After dinner, what remains but to count the clock, and hope for that sleep which I can scarce expect. Night comes at last, and some hours of restlessness and confusion bring me again to a day of solitude. What shall exclude the black dog from an habitation like this?[165]

By this time he was sick and gout-ridden. He had surgery for gout, and his remaining friends, including novelist Fanny Burney (the daughter of Charles Burney), came to keep him company.[166] He was confined to his room from 14 December 1783 to 21 April 1784.[167]

His health had begun to improve by May 1784, and he travelled to Oxford with Boswell on 5 May 1784.[167] By July, many of Johnson's friends were either dead or gone; Boswell had left for Scotland and Hester Thrale had become engaged to Piozzi. With nobody to visit, Johnson expressed a desire to die in London and arrived there on 16 November 1784. On 25 November 1784, he allowed Burney to visit him and expressed an interest to her that he should leave London; he soon left for Islington, to George Strahan's home.[168] His final moments were filled with mental anguish and delusions; when his physician, Thomas Warren, visited and asked him if he were feeling better, Johnson burst out with: "No, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death."[169]

> “ A few days before his death, he had asked Sir John Hawkins, as one of his executors, where he should be buried; and on being answered, "Doubtless, in Westminster Abbey," seemed to feel a satisfaction, very natural to a Poet.[170] ”
>
> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

Many visitors came to see Johnson as he lay sick in bed, but he preferred only Langton's company.[169] Burney waited for word of Johnson's condition, along with Windham, Strahan, Hoole, Cruikshank, Des Moulins and Barber.[171] On 13 December 1784, Johnson met with two others: a young woman, Miss Morris, whom Johnson blessed, and Francesco Sastres, an Italian teacher, who was given some of Johnson's final words: "*Iam Moriturus*" ("I who am about to die").[172] Shortly afterwards he fell into a coma, and died at 7:00 pm.[171]

Langton waited until 11:00 pm to tell the others, which led to John Hawkins' becoming pale and overcome with "an agony of mind", along with Seward and Hoole describing Johnson's death as "the most awful sight".[173] Boswell remarked, "My feeling was just one large expanse of Stupor ... I could not believe it. My imagination was not convinced."[172] William Gerard Hamilton joined in and stated, "He has made a chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which *nothing has a tendency to fill up*. -Johnson is dead.- Let us go to the next best: There is nobody; *-no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson*."[171]

He was buried on 20 December 1784 at Westminster Abbey with an inscription that reads:

Samuel Johnson, LL.D.
Obiit XIII die Decembris,
Anno Domini
M.DCC.LXXXIV.
Ætatis suæ LXXV.[174]

[edit] Critical theory

Main article: Samuel Johnson's literary criticism

Johnson's works, especially his *Lives of the Poets* series, describe various features of excellent writing. He believed that the best poetry relied on contemporary language, and he disliked the use of decorative or purposefully archaic language.[175] In particular, he was suspicious of the poetic language used by Milton, whose blank verse he believed would inspire many bad imitations. Also, Johnson opposed the poetic language of his contemporary Thomas Gray.[176] His greatest complaint was that obscure allusions found in works like Milton's *Lycidas* were overused; he preferred poetry that could be easily read and understood.[177] In addition to his views on language, Johnson believed that a good poem incorporated new and unique imagery.[178]

In his smaller poetic works, Johnson relied on short lines and filled his work with a feeling of empathy, which possibly influenced Housman's poetic style.[179] In *London*, his first imitation of Juvenal, Johnson uses the poetic form to express his political opinion and, as befits a young writer, approaches the topic in a playful and almost joyous manner.[180] However, his second imitation, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, is completely different; the language remains simple, but the poem is more complicated and difficult to read because Johnson is trying to describe complex Christian ethics.[181] These Christian values are not unique to the poem, but contain views expressed in most of Johnson's works. In particular, Johnson emphasises God's infinite love and shows that happiness can be attained through virtuous action.[182]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Apollo_and_the_muses,_inflicting_penance_on_Dr_Pomposo,_round_Parnassus%27_(Samuel_Johnson)_by_James_Gillray.jpg
A caricature of Johnson by James Gillray mocking him for his literary criticism; he is shown doing penance for Apollo and the Muses with Mount Parnassus in the background.

When it came to biography, Johnson disagreed with Plutarch's use of biography to praise and to teach morality. Instead, Johnson believed in portraying the biographical subjects accurately and including any negative aspects of their lives. Because his insistence on accuracy in biography was little short of revolutionary, Johnson had to struggle against a society that was unwilling to accept biographical details that could be viewed as tarnishing a reputation; this became the subject of *Rambler* 60.[183] Furthermore, Johnson believed that biography should not be limited to the most famous and that the lives of lesser individuals, too, were significant;[184] thus in his *Lives of the Poets* he chose both great and lesser poets. In all his biographies he insisted on including what others would have considered trivial details to fully describe the lives of his subjects.[185] Johnson considered the genre of autobiography and diaries, including his own, as one having the

most significance; in *Idler* 84 he explains how a writer of an autobiography would be the least likely to distort his own life.[186]

Johnson's thoughts on biography and on poetry coalesced in his understanding of what would make a good critic. His works were dominated with his intent to use them for literary criticism. This was especially true of his *Dictionary* of which he wrote: "I lately published a Dictionary like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, *for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism, or elegance of style*".[187] Although a smaller edition of his *Dictionary* became the standard household dictionary, Johnson's original *Dictionary* was an academic tool that examined how words were used, especially in literary works. To achieve this purpose, Johnson included quotations from Bacon, Hooker, Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser, and many others from what he considered to be the most important literary fields: natural science, philosophy, poetry, and theology. These quotations and usages were all compared and carefully studied in the *Dictionary* so that a reader could understand what words in literary works meant in context.[188]

Not being a theorist, Johnson did not attempt to create schools of theories to analyse the aesthetics of literature. Instead, he used his criticism for the practical purpose of helping others to better read and understand literature.[189] When it came to Shakespeare's plays, Johnson emphasised the role of the reader in understanding language: "If Shakespeare has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without observing them".[190]

His works on Shakespeare were devoted not merely to Shakespeare, but to understanding literature as a whole; in his *Preface* to Shakespeare, Johnson rejects the previous dogma of the classical unities and argues that drama should be faithful to life.[191] However, Johnson did not only defend Shakespeare; he discussed Shakespeare's faults, including his lack of morality, his vulgarity, his carelessness in crafting plots, and his occasional inattentiveness when choosing words or word order.[192] As well as direct literary criticism, Johnson emphasised the need to establish a text that accurately reflects what an author wrote. Shakespeare's plays, in particular, had multiple editions, each of which contained errors caused by the printing process. This problem was compounded by careless editors who deemed difficult words incorrect, and changed them in later editions. Johnson believed that an editor should not alter the text in such a way.[193]

[edit] Character sketch

Main articles: Samuel Johnson's politics and Samuel Johnson's ethical views

> “After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it *thus*.'[194] ”
>
> – Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

Johnson's tall and robust figure combined with his odd gestures were confusing to some; when William Hogarth first saw Johnson standing near a window in Samuel Richardson's house, "shaking his head and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner", Hogarth thought Johnson an "ideot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson".[195] Hogarth was quite surprised when "this figure stalked forwards to where he and Mr. Richardson were sitting and all at once took up the argument ... [with] such a power of eloquence, that Hogarth looked at him with astonishment, and actually imagined that this ideot had been at the moment inspired".[195] Not everyone was misled by Johnson's appearance; Adam Smith claimed that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive",[196] while Edmund Burke thought that if Johnson were to join Parliament, he "certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there".[197] Johnson relied on a unique form of rhetoric, and he is well known for his "refutation" of Bishop Berkeley's immaterialism and his claim that matter did not actually exist but only seemed to exist:[198] during a conversation with Boswell, Johnson powerfully stomped a nearby stone and proclaimed of Berkeley's theory, "I refute it *thus*!"[194]

Johnson was a devout, conservative Anglican and a compassionate man who supported a number of poor friends under his own roof, even when unable to fully provide for himself.[39] Johnson's Christian morality permeated his works, and he would write on moral topics with such authority and in such a trusting manner that, Walter Jackson Bate claims, "no other moralist in history excels or even begins to rival him".[199] However, Johnson's moral writings do not contain, as Donald Greene points out, "a predetermined and authorized pattern of 'good behavior'", even though Johnson does emphasise certain kinds of conduct.[200] He did not let his own faith prejudice him against others, and had respect for those of other denominations who demonstrated a commitment to Christ's teachings.[201] Although Johnson respected John Milton's poetry, he could not tolerate Milton's Puritan and Republican beliefs, feeling that they were contrary to England and Christianity.[202] He was an opponent of slavery on moral grounds, and once proposed a toast to the "next rebellion of the negroes in the West Indies".[203] Beside his beliefs concerning humanity, Johnson is also known for his love of cats,[204] especially his own two cats, Hodge and Lily.[204] Boswell wrote, "I never shall forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat."[205]

Although Johnson was also known as a staunch Tory, he admitted to sympathies for the Jacobite cause during his younger years but, by the reign of George III, he came to accept the Hanoverian Succession.[202] It was Boswell who gave people the impression that Johnson was an "arch-conservative", and it was Boswell, more than anyone else, who determined how Johnson would be seen by people years later. However, Boswell was not around for two of Johnson's most politically active periods: during Walpole's control over British Parliament and during the Seven Years' War. Although Boswell was present with Johnson during the 1770s and describes four major pamphlets written by Johnson, he neglects to discuss them because he is more interested in their travels to Scotland. This is compounded by the fact that Boswell held an opinion contradictory to two of these pamphlets, *The False Alarm* and *Taxation No Tyranny*, and so attacks Johnson's views in his biography.[206]

In his *Life of Samuel Johnson* Boswell referred to Johnson as Dr Johnson so often that he would always be known as Dr Johnson, even though he hated being called such. Boswell's emphasis on Johnson's later years depicted him only as an old man who involved himself in taverns, but this depiction is appealing.[207] Although Boswell, a Scotsman, was a close companion and friend to Johnson during many important times of his life, like many of his fellow Englishmen Johnson had a reputation for despising Scotland and its people. Even during their journey together through Scotland, Johnson "exhibited prejudice and a narrow nationalism".[208] Hester Thrale, in summarising Johnson's nationalistic views and his anti-Scottish prejudice, said: "We all know how well he loved to abuse the Scotch, & indeed to be abused by them in return."[209]

[edit] Health

Main article: Samuel Johnson's health

Johnson had several health problems, including childhood tuberculous scrofula, gout, testicular cancer, and a stroke in his final year that left him unable to speak; his autopsy indicated that he had pulmonary fibrosis along with cardiac failure probably due to hypertension, a condition then unknown. Although Johnson overall was probably as healthy as others of his generation,[210] he displayed signs consistent with several diagnoses, including depression and Tourette syndrome (TS).

There are many accounts of Johnson suffering from bouts of depression and what Johnson thought might be madness. As Walter Jackson Bate puts it, "one of the ironies of literary history is that its most compelling and authoritative symbol of common sense—of the strong, imaginative grasp of concrete reality—should have begun his adult life, at the age of twenty, in a state of such intense anxiety and bewildered despair that, at least from his own point of view, it seemed the onset of actual insanity".[211] To overcome these feelings, Johnson tried to constantly involve himself with various activities, but this did not seem to help. Taylor said that Johnson "at one time strongly entertained thoughts of Suicide".[212] Boswell claimed that Johnson "felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible melancholia, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery".[213]

Early on, when Johnson was unable to pay off his debts, he began to work with professional writers and identified his own situation with theirs.[215] During this time, Johnson witnessed Christopher Smart's decline into "penury and the madhouse", and feared that he might share the same fate.[215] Hester Thrale Piozzi claimed, in a discussion on Smart's mental state, that Johnson was her "friend who feared an apple should intoxicate him".[127] To Hester Thrale, what separated Johnson from others who were placed in asylums for madness—like Christopher Smart—was his ability to keep his concerns and emotions to himself.[127]

Two hundred years after Johnson's death, the posthumous diagnosis of Tourette syndrome became widely accepted.[216] The condition was unknown during Johnson's lifetime, but Boswell describes Johnson displaying signs of TS including tics and other involuntary movements.[217][218] According to Boswell "he commonly held his head to

one side ... moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand ... [H]e made various sounds" like "a half whistle" or "as if clucking like a hen", and "... all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a Whale."[219] There are many similar accounts; in particular, Johnson was said to "perform his gesticulations" at the threshold of a house or in doorways.[220] When asked by a little girl why he made such noises and acted in that way, Johnson responded: "From bad habit."[219] The diagnosis of the syndrome was first made in a 1967 report,[221] and TS researcher Arthur K. Shapiro described Johnson as "the most notable example of a successful adaptation to life despite the liability of Tourette syndrome".[222] Details provided by the writings of Boswell, Hester Thrale, and others reinforce the diagnosis, with one paper concluding:

> [Johnson] also displayed many of the obsessional-compulsive traits and rituals which are associated with this syndrome ... It may be thought that without this illness Dr Johnson's remarkable literary achievements, the great dictionary, his philosophical deliberations and his conversations may never have happened; and Boswell, the author of the greatest of biographies would have been unknown.
> —JMS Pearce, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, July 1994.[223]

From early childhood, Johnson suffered from poor eyesight, especially in his left eye, which interfered with his education. There were somewhat contradictory reports about his eyesight from his contemporaries. He appeared to have been near-sighted, yet he did not use eyeglasses. His eyesight became worse with age; still, his handwriting remained quite legible.[224]

[edit] Legacy

Johnson was, in the words of Steven Lynn, "more than a well-known writer and scholar";[226] he was a celebrity. His activities and the state of his health in his later years were constantly reported in various journals and newspapers, and when there was nothing to report, something was invented.[227] According to Bate, "Johnson loved biography," and he "changed the whole course of biography for the modern world. One by-product was the most famous single work of biographical art in the whole of literature, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and there were many other memoirs and biographies of a similar kind written on Johnson after his death."[2] These accounts of his life include Thomas Tyers's *A Biographical Sketch of Dr Samuel Johnson* (1784);[228] Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785); Hester Thrale's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson*, which drew on entries from her diary and other notes;[229] John Hawkins's *Life of Samuel Johnson (1787)*, the first full-length biography of Johnson;[230] and, in 1792, Arthur Murphy's *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson*, which replaced Hawkins's biography as the introduction to a collection of Johnson's *Works*.[231] Another important source was Fanny Burney, who described Johnson as "the acknowledged Head of Literature in this kingdom" and kept a diary containing details missing from other biographies.[232] Above all, Boswell's portrayal of Johnson is the work best known to general readers. Although critics like Donald Greene argue about its status as a true

biography, the work became successful as Boswell and his friends promoted it at the expense of the many other works on Johnson's life.[233]

In criticism, Johnson had a lasting influence, although not everyone viewed him favourably. Some, like Macaulay, regarded Johnson as an idiot savant who produced some respectable works, and others, like the Romantic poets, were completely opposed to Johnson's views on poetry and literature, especially in regards to Milton.[234] However, some of their contemporaries disagreed: Stendhal's *Racine et Shakespeare* is based in part on Johnson's views of Shakespeare,[191] and Johnson influenced Jane Austen's writing style and philosophy.[235] Later, Johnson's works came into favour, and Matthew Arnold, in his *Six Chief Lives from Johnson's "Lives of the Poets"*, considered the *Lives* of Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, Swift, and Gray as "points which stand as so many natural centres, and by returning to which we can always find our way again."[236]

More than a century after his death, literary critics such as G. Birkbeck Hill and T. S. Eliot came to regard Johnson as a serious critic. They began to study Johnson's works with an increasing focus on the critical analysis found in his edition of Shakespeare and *Lives of the Poets*.[234] Yvor Winters claimed that "A great critic is the rarest of all literary geniuses; perhaps the only critic in English who deserves that epithet is Samuel Johnson".[6] F. R. Leavis agreed and, on Johnson's criticism, said, "When we read him we know, beyond question, that we have here a powerful and distinguished mind operating at first hand upon literature. This, we can say with emphatic conviction, really *is* criticism".[237] Edmund Wilson claimed that "The *Lives of the Poets* and the prefaces and commentary on Shakespeare are among the most brilliant and the most acute documents in the whole range of English criticism".[6] The critic Harold Bloom placed Johnson's work firmly within the Western Canon describing him as "unmatched by any critic in any nation before or after him...Bate in the finest insight on Johnson I know, emphasized that no other writer is so obsessed by the realization that the mind is an *activity*, one that will turn to destructiveness of the self or of others unless it is directed to labor."[238] It is no wonder that his philosophical insistence that the language within literature must be examined became a prevailing mode of literary theory during the mid-20th century.[239]

There are many societies formed around and dedicated to the study and enjoyment of Samuel Johnson's life and works. On the bicentennial of Johnson's death in 1984, Oxford University held a week-long conference featuring 50 papers, and the Arts Council of Great Britain held an exhibit of "Johnsonian portraits and other memorabilia". The London *Times* and *Punch* produced parodies of Johnson's style for the occasion.[240] In 1999, the BBC Four television channel started the Samuel Johnson Prize, an award for non-fiction.[241]

[edit] Major works

Essays, pamphlets, periodicals, sermons

1732–33	*Birmingham Journal*

1747	*Plan for a Dictionary of the English Language*
1750–52	*The Rambler*
1753–54	*The Adventurer*
1756	*Universal Visiter*
1756-	*The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review*
1758–60	*The Idler (1758–1760)*
1770	*The False Alarm*
1771	*Thoughts on the Late Transactions Respecting Falkland's Islands*
1774	*The Patriot*
1775	*A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*
	Taxation No Tyranny
1781	*The Beauties of Johnson*

Poetry

1728	*Messiah*, a translation into Latin of Alexander Pope's *Messiah*
1738	*London*
1747	*Prologue at the Opening of the Theatre in Drury Lane*
1749	*The Vanity of Human Wishes*
	Irene, a Tragedy

Biographies, criticism

1744	*Life of Mr Richard Savage*
1745	*Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth*
1756	"Life of Browne" in Thomas Browne's *Christian Morals*
	Proposals for Printing, by Subscription, the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare
1765	*Preface to the Plays of William Shakespeare*
	The Plays of William Shakespeare
1779–81	*Lives of the Poets*

Dictionary

1755	*Preface to a Dictionary of the English Language*
	A Dictionary of the English Language

Novellas

1759 *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*

J. I. Packer

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James Innell Packer (born July 22, 1926) is a British-born Canadian Christian theologian in the low church Anglican tradition. He currently serves as the Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is considered one of the most influential evangelicals in North America.[1]

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[edit] Biography

Born in Gloucester, England, the son of a clerk for the Great Western Railway, Packer won a scholarship to Oxford University. He was educated at Corpus Christi College, obtaining the degrees of Bachelor of Arts (1948), Master of Arts (1952), and Doctor of Philosophy (1955).

It was as a student at Oxford that he first heard lectures from C. S. Lewis, whose teachings would (though he never knew Lewis personally) become a major influence in his life. In a meeting of the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, Packer committed his life to Christian service.

He spent a brief time teaching Greek at Oak Hill Theological College in London, and in 1949 entered Wycliffe Hall, Oxford to study theology. He was ordained a deacon (1952) and priest (1953) in the Church of England, within which he was associated with the Evangelical movement. He was Assistant Curate of Harborne Heath in Birmingham 1952-54 and Lecturer at Tyndale Hall, Bristol 1955-61. He was Librarian of Latimer House, Oxford 1961-62 and Principal 1962-69. In 1970 he became Principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol, and from 1971 until 1979 he was Associate Principal of Trinity College,

Bristol, which had been formed from the amalgamation of Tyndale Hall with Clifton College and Dalton House-St Michael's.

In 1978, he signed the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, which affirmed a conservative position on Biblical inerrancy.

In 1979, Packer moved to Vancouver to take up a position at Regent College, eventually being named the first Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology, a title he held until his retirement. He is a prolific writer and frequent lecturer, but he is best known for his book, "Knowing God". He is a frequent contributor to and an executive editor of *Christianity Today*. In recent years, he has supported the ecumenical movement but believes that unity should not come at the expense of abandoning orthodox Protestant doctrine. Nonetheless, his advocacy of ecumenicism has brought sharp criticism from some conservatives, particularly after the publication of the book *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (ed. Charles Colson, Richard J. Neuhaus) in which Packer was one of the contributors.

Packer served as Theological Editor for the English Standard Version, an Evangelical revision of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

As of 2008, Packer is a parishioner of St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican church in Vancouver, which in February 2008 voted to leave the Anglican Church of Canada because the St. John's church believes that the ACC is no longer teaching in accordance with scripture. So, they joined the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone of America.[2] Packer, on 23 April, handed in his licence from the Bishop of New Westminster.[3]

A sample of his work: "The unceasing activity of the Creator, whereby in overflowing bounty and goodwill, He upholds His creatures in ordered existence, guides and governs all events, circumstances, and free acts of angels and men, and directs everything to its appointed goal, for His own glory".

[edit] Works

1. ***Fundamentalism and the Word of God*** (1958; reprinted 1984) ISBN 0-8028-1147-7
2. ***Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*** (1961 by Inter-Varsity Fellowship) (reprinted 1991) ISBN 0-8308-1339-X
3. ***Our Lord's Understanding of the Law of God*** *(1962)*
4. ***The Church of England and the Methodist Church: Ten Essays*** (1963)
5. ***God Speaks To Man: Revelation and the Bible*** (1965)
6. ***Tomorrow's Worship*** (1966)
7. ***Guidelines: Anglican Evangelicals Face the Future*** (1967)
8. ***Knowing God*** (1973, reprinted 1993) ISBN 0-8308-1650-X
9. ***I Want To Be A Christian*** (1977) ISBN 9780842318426
10. ***The Ten Commandments*** (1977) ISBN 9780842370042

11. ***The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem: An Analysis*** (1978) ISBN 9780946307005
12. ***The New Man*** (1978) ISBN 9780802817686
13. ***For Man's Sake!*** (1978) ISBN 9780853642176
14. ***Knowing Man*** (1979)
15. ***God Has Spoken*** (1979) ISBN 9780877846567
16. ***Beyond the Battle for the Bible*** (1980) ISBN 9780891071952
17. ***Freedom and Authority*** (1981: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy)
18. ***A Kind of Noah's Ark? : The Anglican Commitment to Comprehensiveness*** (1981) ISBN 9780946307098
19. ***God's Words: Studies of Key Bible Themes*** (1981) ISBN 9780877843672
20. ***Freedom, Authority and Scripture*** (1982) ISBN 9780851104454
21. ***Keep In Step With The Spirit: Finding Fullness In Our Walk With God*** (1984, reprinted 2005) ISBN 0-8010-6558-5
22. ***The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*** (1984)
23. ***Through the Year with J. I. Packer*** (1986) ISBN 9780340401415
24. ***Hot Tub Religion*** (1987) ISBN 9780842318549
25. ***Among God's Giants: Aspects of Puritan Christianity*** (1991) ISBN 9780860654520
26. ***Rediscovering Holiness*** (1992) ISBN 0-89283-734-9
27. ***A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*** (1994) ISBN 0-89107-819-3
28. ***Knowing Christianity*** (1995) ISBN 9780877880585
29. ***A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah*** (1995) ISBN 9780891077336
30. ***Decisions - Finding God's Will: 6 Studies for Individuals or Groups*** (1996) ISBN 9780851113760
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32. ***Life in the Spirit*** (1996) ISBN 9780340641743
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34. ***Meeting God*** (2001) ISBN 9781859994801
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36. ***Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*** (2002)
37. ***Faithfulness and Holiness: The Witness of J. C. Ryle*** (2002) ISBN 9781581343588
38. ***The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter*** (2003, based on his 1954 Oxford dissertation) ISBN 1-57383-174-3
39. ***Knowing God Through The Year*** (2004) ISBN 9780830832927
40. ***18 Words: The Most Important Words You Will Ever Know*** (2007)
41. ***Praying the Lord's Prayer*** (2007) ISBN 9781581349634

42. ***Affirming the Apostles' Creed*** *(2008) ISBN 9781433502101*
43. ***Collected Shorter Writings*** in four volumes

[edit] In the *Anglican Agenda* Series

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4. ***Taking Christian Unity Seriously*** (2007) ISBN 9780978165369

[edit] Collections

1. ***The J. I. Packer Collection,*** edited by Alister McGrath (1999) ISBN 9780830822874
2. ***Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer***

- ✓ ***Volume 1: Celebrating the Saving Work of God*** (1998) ISBN 9780853648963
- ✓ ***Volume 2: Serving the People of God*** (1998) ISBN 9780853649045
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- ✓ ***Volume 4: Honouring the People of God*** (1999) ISBN 9780853649052

[edit] Co-authored

1. ***The Spirit Within You: The Church's Neglected Possession*** with Alan Stibbs (1979) ISBN 9780801081422
2. ***The Bible Almanac*** with Merrill Tenney and William White (1980) ISBN 9780840751621
3. ***Christianity: The True Humanism*** with Thomas Howard (1985) ISBN 1-57383-058-5
4. ***New Dictionary of Theology*** with Sinclair B Ferguson and David F Wright (1988) ISBN 9780830814008
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