THE MEETING OF HECTOR AND ACHILLES:
A SPORTFUL COMBAT

A STUDY OF THE BOSWELL PAPERS
AND THE LIFE OF JOHNSON

THE EYES OF GENIUS:
A STUDY OF GREATNESS IN ART

by

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ABSTRACTS

THE MEETING OF HECTOR AND ACHILLES:
A SPORTFUL COMBAT

This paper aims at reaching the basis of human relationships in Troilus and Cressida through a detailed examination of language and imagery. The play in structure resembles a tapestry. The tapestry must be seen with a "double-vision." Each group of images is called a "family." Each single image is called a "member." "Families" of imagery tell "stories," and the "stories" develop into a "history" of the relationship between Hector and Achilles.

The "history" develops "story" by "story" beginning with the conversation between Ulysses and Nestor (II,1,310-392) in which major "families" occur--"sex-family," "eating-family," "merchant-family," "eye-family." Hector's challenge is, figuratively, a sexual proposition. Equations are suggested between martial combat and sexual union; eating and sexual union; man and phallus; sex-identities, male and female. A conflict is established between aspiration and appetite. The theme of prostitution is introduced, showing the confusion between internal and external values.

The confrontation between Hector and Achilles shows the lewdness of Achilles and the innocence of Hector. Hector is a victim of the war. Hector being dragged behind Achilles' horse is the "history's" climax. The figurative and the literal action converge.

Helen, and therefore prostitution, is at the
ABSTRACT (cont.)

motivational center of the play. The action must be seen in terms of the individual, society and the cosmos. Troilus and Cressida is a metaphor for degree's "untuned string." Ulysses resembles Pandarus. Achilles resembles both Pandarus and Cressida. Both Troilus and Cressida are ruled by appetite. Both war and love are "enterprises."

Language is prostituted to "purpose." Identities are confused. Sight is confused with insight. There is a figurative chorus. Imagery is at once pertinent and incidental to characters. Troilus and Cressida is neither comedy nor tragedy. Pandarus is the presiding spirit.

A STUDY OF THE BOSWELL PAPERS
AND THE LIFE OF JOHNSON

Of the eighteen volumes comprising the Boswell Papers, Volume Six is concerned exclusively with the genesis of The Life of Johnson. It is the purpose of this paper to review the selection of original materials provided in this source, and to discover how they compare with the finished Life.

The materials which Boswell had before him when he began the Life are divided by Geoffrey Scott into the following categories: Notes, Journals, "papers apart" and Notebooks. In comparing the original materials with the finished production, I have divided my examination into the following five topics: I. General method of transcription from the Journals; II. Diffusion of Notes into
ABSTRACT (cont.)

the Life; III. Suppression and assertion of act or opinion; IV. Dramatic technique, the scene and the seeing; V. Final effect.

I. The Journals are not primarily concerned with Johnson's life, but with Boswell's. Incidents and anecdotes are artlessly recorded. Whole sections may be transcribed verbatim from the Journals into the Life. There are minor stylistic changes. Boswell sometimes shifts his anecdotes in time. Dialogue is frequently "polished," but it remains accurate in substance.

II. The process of "diffusion" is seen, for example, by comparing the Note of 19 April 1773 with the corresponding entry in the Life.

III. Facts are selected, at times, to protect Johnson, but more frequently to protect Boswell. The omission of Boswell's voice keeps Johnson in the spotlight.

IV. Boswell tried to tell the "whole truth" of Johnson's character. The slightest "characteristickal" trait was not to be overlooked. He chose the right detail to animate his subject, and to make the reader see the scene.

V. Boswell was faithful to his original fragments. In writing the Life, he was preserving his own image for posterity.
ABSTRACT (cont.)

THE EYES OF GENIUS:
A STUDY OF GREATNESS IN ART

This paper provides a general look at some of the principal statements upon which John Ruskin based his conception of great art and great artists. General terms of description, such as "truth," "beauty" and "imagination," are briefly defined, and are used as keys to an overview of Ruskin's esthetic philosophy. The second half of the paper is concerned with discussing inconsistencies emerging from the first half, and in presenting some of the more practical problems to which Ruskin applied his theories.

The chief elements in Ruskin's philosophy are represented by the ideas "to see clearly" and "to tell plainly." Ruskin looked upon nature as the Divine work of art. The artist's task is to create an object worthy of love. Through the imagination, the artist must "deepen" our natural impressions, as well as provide the greatest possible amount of moral and spiritual "truth." The sense of beauty is a moral attribute. The great artist gives us the opportunity of seeing through the eyes of genius.

Ruskin's immediate aim in Modern Painters was a justification of the works of J.M.W. Turner. Ruskin argues with the critics of the Grand Style. Turner's critics were blind to the true appearance of nature. Imitation cannot be the basis of great art.

Ruskin had to resolve the confusion between imitation
ABSTRACT (cont.)

and expression raised by the critics. He contradicts himself, overstates his case, runs into absurdities. Ruskin thought the supremacy of Turner's genius lay in his ability properly to unite expression with a faithful representation of physical forms. Ruskin enriches a particular painting or a natural scene with the sense of wonder.
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PAPER I.

THE MEETING OF HECTOR AND ACHILLES:

A SPORTFUL COMBAT
This paper aims at a detailed examination into the basis of human relationships in *Troilus and Cressida*. If I come to my subject with any prejudice, it must include, on the one hand, a distrust of all generalizations unaccompanied by specific and extensive reference to the text; and on the other, a conviction that an understanding of the play must begin with Shakespeare's use of language and imagery. By concentrating on language and imagery, I do not propose to arrive at any novel conclusions about the play's meaning; however, such notions as are commonly held I hope to enforce with a more than usual attention to particulars.

A thorough reading will show that *Troilus and Cressida* resembles in structure a vastly ornate tapestry of interdependent, interacting threads. To unravel one thread must in time unravel them all; and it is virtually impossible,
therefore, to discuss imagery without touching, say, character, theme and plot. Tracing the threads at one point in the tapestry will inevitably lead to the recognition of identifiable figures, however obscured by paradox and irony. If we shift our vision to a distant point, similar figures will appear. But more surprising than this, the fabric viewed as a whole will bear a marked resemblance to the portions we have just seen in miniature. If this be true, that the converging threads of imagery, character, plot and theme in the small are shaped to reflect figures in the large, my task is infinitely simplified, for I need not cover the entire play to draw valid conclusions. My principal difficulty will be in maintaining a kind of "double-vision"; that is, a suitable perspective derived from the simultaneous fixing of one eye on the miniature figure, the other on the large.

Even a cursory look at the play will show that within a given number of consecutive lines, certain images fall into definable groups. Each of these groups I shall call a "family," and will assign names to them. Taken in isolation each related image, whether single word or phrase, may be said to constitute a "member" of a "family." At times, "members" of a single "family" are gathered closely together, and at times they occur far apart. When they are densely placed they frequently respond to each other in such a way as to give the impression of cohesive movement; that is, for a certain duration they interact and develop into a self-perpetuating shape which I shall call a "story."
Just as one "family" or a combination of "families" may be gathered to tell a "story," individual "stories," occurring at separate points in the full length of the play, develop into a "history." But this phenomenon is clearly evident only in regard to the relationship between Hector and Achilles. "Stories" do not, of course, follow a straight-lined, forward-moving logic; they emerge organically, as it were, out of loosely patterned fragments. "Members" of a "family," and "families" connected with "stories" may be found anywhere and and everywhere on the tapestry. Once the peculiar attributes defining a "family" of images are established in our minds, related "members" are easily recognized.

As the title of the paper would suggest, I shall use the relationship between Hector and Achilles as a focal point, but, having described major "families" and several "stories," I intend to move on to other characters and relationships in order that it may be seen how consistently image patterns apply both to the martial and the love plots.

The reader will soon discover that, according to my interpretation, sexual appetite is a primary motive in the action of the play, and on the figurative level, the predominant theme. Now, although I am fairly convinced that this reading is generally consistent with Shakespeare's intention, in the specific images here to be examined it must be assumed that I am working entirely from possibilities, not certainties. Also, I would have the reader observe, that, in order to hasten my arguments forward and to keep them always in
plain view, when approaching a specific image for the first time I have frequently passed over alternate, and in many instances, the most obvious possibilities of meaning. Despite these omissions, at every step in the progress of my discussion I have kept before me a vision of the large context of the play, without which—and this is the principal danger in doggedly pursuing one argument—the explication of specific images, indeed, the overall discussion will inevitably seem exaggerated. Imagery does not constitute the whole play; nor does sexual innuendo. Still, there can be no question that images do occupy an important place in *Troilus and Cressida*, and that many of them are sexually suggestive. Since an examination of any of Shakespeare's plays must be informed by the spirit of exploration, aside from inciting indignation, this present effort will be sufficiently rewarded if it succeeds in firing curiosity.

I

For a study of the fatal meeting between Hector and Achilles, we may best begin with a conversation involving Ulysses and Nestor (II,1,310-392). At this point on the tapestry, nearly all the major "families" of images converge. Hector has just issued his challenge, inviting to personal combat any Grecian who is willing to stand up for the honor of his lady. The challenge is obviously intended for Achilles, but Ulysses has a scheme in mind to send Ajax instead. He calls Nestor aside:
Ulyss. Nestor!

Nest. What says Ulysses?

Ulyss. I have a young conception in my brain; 

Bo you my time to bring it to some shape.

Nest. What is't?

Ulyss. This 'tis:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots. The seeded pride
That hath to this maturity blown up
In rank Achilles must or now be crow'd
Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like
To overbulk us all.

Nest. Well, and how?

Ulyss. This challenge that the gallant Hector
sends,

However it is spread in general name,
Relates in purpose to Achilles.

Nest. The purpose is perspicuous even as sub-
stance,

Whose grossness little characters sum up;
And, in the publication, make no strain
But that Achilles, were his brain as barren
As banks of Lybia,—though, Apollo knows,
'Tis dry enough,—will, with great speed of judge-
ment,

Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose
Pointing on him.

Ulyss. And wake him to the answer, think you?

Nest. Yes, 'tis most meet. Who may you else
oppose
That can from Hector bring his honour off,
If not Achilles? Though 'tis be a sportful combat,
Yet in this trial much opinion dwells;
For here the Troyans taste our dear'st repute
With their fin'st palate; and trust to me, Ulysses,
Our imputation shall be oddly pois'd
In this wild action; for the success,
Although particular, shall give a scantling
Of good or bad unto the general;
And in such indexes, although small pricks
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen
The baby figure of the giant mass
Of things to come at large. It is suppos'd
He that meets Hector issues from our choice;
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,
As 'twere from forth us all, a man distill'd
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,
What heart from hence receives the conquering part
To steal a strong opinion to themselves?
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,
In no less working than are swords and bows
Directive by the limbs.

Ulyss. Give pardon to my speech:
Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,
And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not
The lustre of the better yet to show,
Shall show the better.

The first definable "family" of images occurs between lines 312 and 319. As well as referring to the disposition of Ulysses' scheme and Achilles' pride, a "story" develops relating to sexual reproduction--conception, gestation and birth. Ulysses has a "young conception" in his brain, a plan in the foetal stage whose articulation would bring it to an identifiable "shape" (312-313). Having established the subject of one short "story" in our minds, we are now prepared for the appearance of the same or related "families."

In lines 316 to 319, the focal point of imagery is shifted from the general disposition of Ulysses' thoughts to their literal object, Achilles--but the figurative drift remains the same.

The beginning proverb--"Blunt wedges rive hard knots"--seems to function in at least two ways. First it estimates the effectiveness of Ulysses' scheme--the scheme being a "blunt wedge," Achilles' pride resembling in toughness a "hard knot"; and secondly, the proverb brings to mind possible sexual counterparts to "wedge" and "knot," the phallus and the womb. The sexual suggestion is supported by the "members" following: "seeded pride," "maturity blown up," "cropp'd," "shedding," "breed" and "nursery." Paraphrased, the "story" starting with "seeded pride" on line 316, and continuing to the end of line 319, might read: The already fertilized pride that has reached this stage of pregnancy
in lewd Achilles, must now be aborted, for the child once born is sure to procreate a nursery of offspring who, being themselves equally proud, will oppress us all. The act of abortion suggested by "cropp'd" produces an alternate "member" to "blunt wedges." The "blunt wedge" could be the instrument of abortion, a knife; or, relating to Ulysses' plan, the sword of Ajax. In any case, we shall continue to find the "sword" and the phallus figuratively inter-changeable.

Nestor picks up and sustains the sexual drift when he says that Hector's "purpose is perspicious even as substance, / Whose grossness little characters sum up" (324-325). We know we are dealing again with the "sex-family" when we let "purpose" refer to the phallus. The import of the interacting "members" to follow might read: Hector's "purpose" is as conspicuous as sperm, and "grossness" may be taken to have three possible references: to the size of Hector's "purpose," to its nature as being rank, or to the numerical sum of its potential "characters." The figurative meaning given here to "purpose" occurs again in lines 330-331--"Hector's purpose / Pointing on him," where it is made clearly apparent that any word or phrase can be transformed into an active "member" by virtue of its context. The verb "pointing" is essential to the meaning of the noun "purpose."

A repetition of the word "brain" equated with "womb" is seen in Nestor's remark on Achilles: "Were his brain as barren / As banks of Lybia" (327). By the time Nestor
asks Ulysses whether or not Achilles will "wake" to an
answer, we should have come to recognize that, on the figura-
tive level, Hector's challenge is a sexual proposition, and
"sportful combat" means either some form of violent amorous
play, or just plain copulation.  The element of physical
danger is evident enough in literal combat. As for the sex-
ual drift, the lines preceding "sportful combat" strongly
suggest castration: "Who may you else oppose / That can
from Hector bring his honour off / If not Achilles?" (333-
335). The "story" takes shape if we make "his" refer to
Hector, give "honour" the same meaning as we gave "purpose,"
and look to the verb again as the key "member"--"bring off"
would be the act of castration. There is an alternative,
however; with Hector again the antecedent of "his," "bring
off" could mean "orgasm." But the former usage is the more
likely.

Emasculation is further suggested by another "family"
of images occurring in lines 337-338. This "family" is con-
cerned with the processes of eating, particularly mastication
and digestion. As illustrated by the present context,
its close relation to the "sex-family" usually carries an
overtone of violence. We shall have occasion to return to
this "family" later.

Nestor's speech from lines 333 to 356 is one long vari-
ation on the theme of copulation, gestation and birth.
Possible references to the phallus are made in the figures
--"pricks" (343), "conquering part" (352), "limbs" (354),
and "instruments" (354). Even "imputation" (339) falls within this group because of the verb "oddly pois'd" and the phrase "wild action" immediately following (340). In other words, the phallus ("imputation") shall be erect ("oddly pois'd") in this sexual union ("wild action"). The "members" that follow would support this reading: "small pricks / To their subsequent volumes" (343-344); "The baby figure of the giant mass / Of things to come at large" (345-346).

Along with "sportful combat," "wild action" and "taste our dearest repute/ With their finest palate," "meets" is another "member" suggesting copulation. Whenever Shakespeare uses a word more than twice within a limited number of lines, we may be fairly certain a pun is intended. "Meets" occurs first in line 344, and twice again in line 358: "Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector." 9

Returning to line 347, "choice" may also be taken to mean copulation, this time in the sense that "choice" is "the mutual act of our souls," inspired by "merit" ("makes merit her election" 347-348). A "story" emerges to the effect that the offspring of this "choice" will issue from a collective womb—"doth boil / As 'twere from forth us all, a man distilli'd / Out of our virtues" (349-350). The internal logic of this "story" is upset by the word "miscarrying" (351) used to describe defeat in the "sportful combat" with Hector. We might make some sense of the word if we connect it with "seeded pride." Of course, a confusion persists because "a man distilli'd" could hardly be
accused of "miscarrying" unless the word is used to refer not to the man but, abstractly, to the scheme of sending someone to meet Hector: the plan as a whole could "miscarry."

Thus far, sex-identity, and the stages and processes of copulation, gestation and birth have been patently confused, and if we cannot reconcile this condition with common logic, we should at least accept it as being a significant force in the overall structure of our microcosm. The sexual ambiguity invoked by "miscarrying" is brought home to us if we re-examine the "story" in lines 316 to 319. I said it was concerned with conception, gestation, and finally abortion. But if we let "pride" signify "phallus," the whole picture changes. That is, the "pride" which is composed of "seed" is erect ("to maturity blown up"), and must be "cropp'd" before it is given a chance to procreate ("shedding," "breed") a numerous offspring ("nursery") of its own kind ("like evil"). This possible variation demonstrates how changeable "members" tend to be, how the complexion of even one "member" can affect the entire "family" or "families" among which it occurs.

The present "story" (316-319) relates, then, to both sexes, moves toward separate points (abortion, castration), is joined at the center by a single "member" ("pride"), and, like a magnetic field, draws into its circumference single "members" or even whole "families" of imagery.

The fusion or confusion of sex-identity culminates in the lines that follow "miscarrying":
What heart from hence receives the conquering part
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,
In no less working than are bows,
Directive by the limbs. (351-356)

"Conquering part," "limbs," "instruments," and "swords" have
already been equated with the phallus. But it is significant
that "conquering part" may be taken equally to mean "victor-
ious opponent," the suggestion being that in the projected
"sportful combat" a man becomes indistinguishable from his
sexual organ. Since "limbs" are the "instruments" whose
power wields the "swords" and "bows," the more virile "part"
must win, and matters of right and wrong, justice and injust-
tice, even man himself, are reduced to one common denominator
--sexual potency. But the irony of this statement gains in
strength as the "history" between Hector and Achilles unfolds.
Of the two warriors, Hector is the more virile in the field;
yet the battle of "parts" shows Achilles the victor--and the
logic of Nestor's assertion is turned on its head. The para-
dox stems from Nestor's blindness to treachery as a directive
element, not only in the progress of the war, but in the dis-
position of Achilles' "part," a "part" in which virility is
inversely proportionate to licentiousness. The correspon-
dence between lewd sexual appetite and treachery applies al-
so to Cressida and her betrayal of Troilus. But more of
this later. Observing sexual appetite to be a governing
force in the war, the following equations should be borne
in mind--between martial combat and sexual union; eating and
sexual union; man and phallus; and frequently between
sex-identities, male and female.

I said earlier that although images may occur close together, developing into a "story," "members" of any "family" may be found in isolation or in small "clusters" anywhere on the tapestry. Such is the case with the "eating-family," lodged as it is in a territory densely populated by the "sex-family" (337-338). It will be seen in time that all "families" overlap, intermarry, and blend; that all are related both to each other and to dominant themes. In the total society of images, each "family's" purpose and importance will vary according to the nature of its environment. The processes of eating and sexuality, for example, are united in being two distinct forms of animal appetite. In the present context (337-338), however, eating is so perfectly absorbed into the general tone of sexual violence that clear-cut distinctions are obscured. When the "members" of "families" are concrete, as in the "story" describing mastication, this tendency towards blending, or fusion, is fairly simple to grasp. But when Shakespeare uses an abstract "member," such as "purpose" (which is loosely called an image), in conjunction with a graphic "member," such as "pointing," the consequent fusion is more complex, and at the same time, more vitally relevant to the overall thematic structure of the play. For it is thereby established in our minds that the most distant, and essentially hostile, categories of experience are being purposefully drawn together. Once polarities are fused by equating "honour" with the phallus--
"bring his honour off" (334),--the source of passion and appetite, and the means of its proper regulation must inevitably be at war, until and unless one subdues the other. Sexual appetite and moral aspiration cannot live together on equal terms. In fact, once they are fused, perhaps the battle is already decided--in favour of appetite.

But returning to the main business at hand, another small group of images appears in lines 359 to 362. This is the "merchant-family" whose "members" describe the affairs of buying and selling. Unfolding his scheme, Ulysses says to Nestor:

Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,  
And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not,  
The lustre of the better yet to show,  
Shall show the better.

Important single "members" of the "merchant-family" occur in the lines following this passage, and conspire very neatly to illustrate the effect of "inter-marriage" among basically different "families":

Ulyss. What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,  
Were he not proud, we all should wear with him.  
But he already is too insolent;  
And we were better parch in Afric sun  
Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
Should he scepe Hector fair. If he were foil'd,  
Why then, we did our main opinion crush  
In taint of our best man. No, make a lott'ry;  
And, by device, let blockish Ajax draw  
The sort to fight with Hector; among ourselves  
Give him allowance as the worthier man;  
For that will physic the great Myrmidon  
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
His crest that prouder than blue iris bends.  
If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,  
We'll dress him up in voices. (I,iii,367-382)

Besides the "merchant-family," a neighboring group of
images refers to the organs and functions of sight. This is easily one of the most prominent "families" in the play, and shall pass under the heading of "eye-family." In the quotation above, the relationship between the "merchant-" and the "eye-family" is discovered in the very logic of merchandizing which, applied by Ulysses, assumes as its premise the adequacy of eye appeal to sell a product: "Dress him up" (382) with sufficient praise, and even Ajax, "our foulest wares" (359) may obtain a "lustre" (361) acceptable on the battlefield. The thematic significance of this philosophy lies in its tendency to confuse internal with external values--and, of course, between confusion and fusion there exists but a small margin of difference.

From the viewpoint of saleability, there is no need at Troy to distinguish between appearance and reality, between seeming and being, between what a man's virtues are reputed to be, and what in actuality they are. In a world where no one sees beneath the surface "lustre" of things, the counterfeit coin will pass readily for the genuine. Somehow, Achilles has been given a high "lustre" by the public eye which, like the sun, shines upon him: "he broils in loud applause" (379). In a similar fashion, the public eye illuminates Helen "the pearl." Ulysses is fully aware of the public's cupidity; he casually proposes, therefore, to externalize, or "wear," the awards attending achievement by internal virtues: "What glory our Achilles shares from Hector, / Were he not proud, we all should wear with him"
(367-368). The notion that one can "wear" glory obscures the difference between sight and insight.

In his speech a few moments before (I,111,74-137), Ulysses compared the eye of Agamemnon to "the planet Sol," whose function it is to maintain a salient order in the universe. By the same token, for any man the function of sight includes the apprehension of human values, their differences one from another, and their relative degrees of importance. In the proper recording of conduct, the eye is an instrument both of apprehension and of will. But in his conversation with Nestor, Ulysses shows himself to care nothing for authentic human identities or their respective values; his only concern is in a Greek victory. Because "folly and ignorance" reign in the Greek camp, Ulysses will continue to manipulate (however unsuccessfully) the so-called warriors upon whom, ironically, the victory depends. But the merchant's "wares" being human, both Achilles and Ajax emerge, figuratively, as prostitutes to be sold to Hector on the flesh-market (the battlefield),--with Ulysses their pimp.

Pursuing the "history" of Achilles and Hector, let us now leave this section--which I shall hereafter call "the primary source"--and move on to trace the occurrence of related "families" at distant points in the tapestry.

II

There is something definitely coquettish in Achilles' refusal even to acknowledge Hector's "proposition." We are reminded of the manner in which Cressida toys with Pandarus,
who tries his utmost to call her attention to Troilus among
the passing warriors (I,ii). She justifies her conduct
after Pandarus leaves:

But more in Troilus thousandfold I see
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be;
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing.
Things won are done, joy's soul lies in the doing.
That she belov'd knows nought that knows not this:
Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is.
(I,ii,310-315)

In an attempt to "wake" Achilles to an answer, Ulysses
directs several schemes aimed at appealing to the Myrmidon's
vanity. Agamemnon himself visits Achilles' tent, only to be
denied entrance, and his reply is couched in telling images:

Hear you, Patroclus.
We are well acquainted with these answers;
But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn,
Cannot outfly our apprehensions.
Much attribute he hath, and much the reason
Why we ascribe it to him; yet all his virtues,
Not virtuously of his own part beheld,
Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,
Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,
Are like to rot untasted. (II,iii,121-125)

Of course, Agamemnon does not "apprehend" the situation
by any means. If he understood Achilles, he would not credit
the warrior with "attribute"; nor would he speak of virtue
in terms of "gloss," which is the same as "lustre" in
Ulysses' philosophy. In line 125 we again see "tasting"
equated with "combat."

The theme of externalized virtues occurs again in Act
III, scene iii, where, after a display of mock-rejection,
Ulysses exhorts Achilles to leave his tent and take part in
the war. Ironically, Achilles is seen lamenting the
shallowness of the world's praise:
"Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,
Must fall out with men too. What the declin'd is
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others
As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;
And not a man, for being simply man,
Hath any honour, but honour'd for those honours
That are without him, as place, riches, and fa-vour,—
Prizes of accident as oft as merit; (III,iii,75-83)

At this point Ulysses conjures forth a series of platitudes
that serve to embellish the idea of Ajax rising to the place
in public esteem once held by Achilles. The importance of
the public eye is again acknowledged:

no man is the lord of anything,
(Though in and of him there is much consisting,)
Till he communicate his parts to others;
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught
Till he behold them formed in th' applause
Where they're extended; who, like an arch, rever-b'rate

The voice again, or, like a gate of steel
Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
His figure and his heat. (III,iii,115-123)

Achilles still feels the "heat" of public approval. As
Ulysses stated earlier, he "broils in loud applause" (I,iii,379). But because the word "heat" was twice used in line
101 ("Heat them and they retort that heat again"), and is
seen in the present context with "figure," it is safe to
assume that a pun is intended relating to Achilles' licen-
tiousness.¹³ Moreover, a definite connection is established
between the "heat" of sexual appetite and public eye-appeal.
During the same conversation with Achilles, there is an ob-
vious sexual suggestion in the terms of Ulysses' advice:
"and better would it fit Achilles much / To throw down
Hector than Polyxena" (207-208). After Ulysses has left,
Achilles confesses to Patroclus that his "figure" has suffered a loss of fame:

_Achil._ Shall Ajax fight with Hector?

_Patr._ Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.

_Achil._ I see my reputation is at stake;

my fame is shrewdly gor'd. (III,iii,225-228)

"Fight" or "combat" of any kind we have seen equated with violent amorous play, so that "receive much honour by him" and "shrewdly gor'd" suggest the act and the result of castration. Besides "honour" and "fame," "reputation" may refer to the phallus, which is "at stake," or erect, just as "imputation" was "oddly pois'd" (I,iii,339).

Although Achilles is affected by Ulysses' lecture, he is far from being moved to action. His immediate desire is to invite Hector to his tent--after Ajax answers the challenge.

He says to Patroclus:

Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus.
I'll send the fool to Ajax and desire him
T' invite the Troyan lords after the combat
To see us here, unarmed. I have a woman's longing;
An appetite that I am sick withal,
To see great Hector in his weeds of peace.

(III,iii,234-239)

In the mime that follows, Thersites plays the part of Ajax being asked by Patroclus to give Hector the invitation. Ajax is shown to be distracted with pride, but more important, certain "members" belonging to the "merchant-family" emerge to tell a "story" of prostitution. For convenience, I shall place in italics the words telling the "story."

First, Achilles suggests that Ajax "procure" safe conduct from Agamemnon (376, 338):
Ther. Agamemnon?
Patr. Ay, my lord.
Ther. Ha!
Patr. What say you to't?
Ther. God buy you, with all my heart.
Patr. Your answer, sir.
Ther. If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven
O'clock it will go one way or other. Howsoever, he
shall pay for me ere he has me.
Patr. Your answer, sir.
Ther. Fare you well, with all my heart.

(III, iii, 290-300)

In Act IV, the combat between Ajax and Hector lasts only
a few moments. Hector discontinues the fight because Ajax
is his "father's sister's son, / a cousin-german to great
Priam's seed" (IV, iv, 120-121). As for the sexual drift, the
act of drawing blood would signify copulation and castration,
—and also death, since the phallus and the man are synony-
 nous. To engage at all in "sportful combat" is, for these
two, incestuous. But Ajax is unhappy with the interruption:

I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence
A great addition earned in thy death.
Hect. Not Neoptolmus so mirable,
On whose bright crest Fame with her lord'st Oyes
Cries, "This is he," could promise to himself
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.

(IV, v, 140-145)

Notice that "kill thee" is balanced with "bear hence a
great addition": death and castration. Notice also "added
honour torn from Hector."

Aeneas intercedes at this point to drive the argument
to some decisive conclusion:

Aene. There is expectance here from both the
sides,
What further you will do.
Hect. We'll answer it:
The issue is embracement. 

(IV, v, 146-148)

The two "members"—"expectance" and "issue"—tell the "story"
of gestation and birth, which confirms our idea that in figurative terms, the "combat" here was an act of copulation. The "combat" is described by its spectators in a "heated" rhythm, and the language is highly suggestive:

Azm. They are in action.
Nest. Now, Ajax, hold thine own!
Tro. Hector, thou sleep'st; Awake thee!
Azm. His blows are well disposed. There, Ajax!
Dio. You must no more.
Aene. Princes, enough, so please you.
Ajax. I am not warm yet, let us fight again.

(IV,v,113-118)

Now, for the first time in the play, Hector and Achilles are brought face to face. So much is to be learned from this confrontation that I shall quote it from beginning to end:

Achil. I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;
I have with exact view perus'd thee, Hector,
And quoted joint by joint.
Hect. Is this Achilles?
Achil. I am Achilles.
Hect. Stand fair, I prithee; let me look on thee.
Achil. Behold thy fill.
Hect. Nay, I have done already,
Achil. Thou art too brief. I will the second time,
As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.
Hect. O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;
But there's more in me than thou understand'st.
Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?
Achil. Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body
Shall I destroy him, whether there, or there, or there?
That I may give the local wound a name
And make distinct the very breach whereout
Hector's great spirit flew. Answer me, heavens!
Hect. It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,
To answer such a question. Stand again.
Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly
As to prenominate in nice conjecture
Where thou wilt hit me dead?

Achil. I tell thee, yea.
Hect. Wert thou the oracle to tell me so,
I'd not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;
For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there;
But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,
I'll kill thee everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er.
You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag.
His insolence draws folly from my lips;
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,
Or may I never--

Ajax. Do not chafe thee, cousin;
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone
Till accident or purpose bring you to't.
You may have every day enough of Hector,
If you have stomach. The general state, I fear,
Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.
Hect. I pray you, let us see you in the field.
We have had pelting wars, since you refus'd
The Grecians' cause.

Achil. Dost thou entreat me, Hector?
To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;
To-night all friends.

Hect. Thy hand upon that match.

The overall drift of the "story" is, of course, sexual. In
the first few lines "members" of all "families" are gathered
to support themes relating predominantly to sight; "fed mine
eyes" (231) and "Behold they fill" (236) show the functional
correspondence between eating and seeing, or between the
"stomach" and the "eyes" as organs of appetite. There is
even a suggestion that to feed one's "eyes" is an imagina-
tive act of amorous engagement. Having once "fed," or satis-
fied, his "eyes," Achilles invites Hector to do the same:
"behold thy fill" (236). The phallus is suggested by such
images as: "joint" (232), "limb" (238), and "there" (243),
while the usage of "stand" -- "stand fair" (235), "stand
again" (248) -- imply penis erectus. As we have seen many
times before, images related to eating suggest both the satisfaction of the sexual appetite—and its consequence in emasculation. Support is mobilized, to this end in the terms: "destroy" (243), "local wound" (244), "breach" (245), "catch my life" (249), "hit me dead" (251).

The "eye-" and the "merchant-family" interact again to evoke the idea of prostitution, especially in—"As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb" (238).

Throughout this confrontation, the lewdness of Achilles and the comparative innocence of Hector is obvious. Hector feels that he is being "read o'er" "like a book of sport" (239). He is oppressed by Achilles' "eye" (241). If we think of man as in himself a microcosm of the universe, it would appear that the condition of Achilles' "eye" is diametrically opposed to what it should be. The "eye" of the cosmos, the "great planet Sol," directs the proper ordering of the universe; it is not itself directed. By its authority, degree is maintained:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order;
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence entron'd and sphier'd
Amidst the other; whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad. (I,iii,85-94)

Degree has been upset in Achilles: in him the eye of justice is controlled by the "eye" or "eyes" of appetite. I said before that the source of passion and the means of its
proper regulation must always be at war, unless one subdues the other. In Achilles the victory of appetite is complete. By means of imagery, Shakespeare has given us a portrait of that condition, and in the action of the play, Achilles is a metaphor of disorder.

Similarly, in himself and in his position among men, Agamemnon is a picture of what he should not be. Agamemnon should function in the social sphere as the "planet Sol" functions among the other planets. But, as Hector was informed of the Greek Army, "their great general slept, / Whilst emulation in the army crept" (II,i,211-212). Apprehension and will, the primary characteristics of Sol, are absent in Agamemnon. Upon entering the Greek camp in search of Agamemnon, Aeneas says, "How may / A stranger to those most imperial looks / Know them from eyes of other mortals?" (I,iii,222-224). Then, addressing himself to the ideal conception of a king, he continues:

I ask, that I might waken reverence,  
And bid the cheek be ready with a blush  
Modest as Morning when she coldly eyes  
The youthful Phoebus.  
Which is that god in office, buiding men?  
Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?  
(I,iii,227-232)

All the while Aeneas is looking straight into Agamemnon's eyes: The general identifies himself: "It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour / That thou shalt know, Trojan, he is awake, / He tells thee so himself" (255-257). Indeed, Agamemnon is sleeping; or, which is the same thing, he is impotent.
To return to the "history," we see that Hector is unable to recognize the treachery in Achilles' lewd stare. He invites Achilles to meet him in the field, and the two shake hands on the "match": the "vows" are taken.

It is interesting to note that immediately following the confrontation between Achilles and Hector, Troilus approaches Ulysses and inquires after the whereabouts of Cressida:

Tro. My Lord Ulysses; tell me, I beseech you, In what place of the field doth Calchas keep? Ulysses. At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus. There Diomed doth feast with him to-night, Who neither looks on heaven nor on earth, But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view On the fair Cressid. (IV,v,277-283)

We may assume that Diomed gazes on Cressida in much the same spirit as Achilles gazed on Hector, and both before the "match." Menelaus the cuckold presides over the "feast."

The promise of heroic deeds in the "sportful combat" has much in common with the "vows" made before the "sport" between Troilus and Cressida. Hector, after promising to kill his opponent, concludes:

You wisest of Grecians, pardon me this brag. His insolence draws folly from my lips; But I'll endeavour deed to match these words. (IV,v,257-259)

When in Act III, Cressida suggests that in performance lovers seldom live up to their "vows," Troilus answers:

Are there such? Such are not we. Praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove. Our head shall go bare till merit crown it. No perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present; we will not name desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition shall be humble. (III,ii,97-102)
Note also the two "families" of imagery, sex and eating.

Because he is unable to unite a certain keenness of insight into right conduct, with strength of will, Hector falls a victim to Achilles—and, for that matter, to the war in general. Even in his combat with Ajax, his fate is at the hands of forces beyond his capacity to control. Departing to witness the contest between Hector and Ajax, Aeneas says:

Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity
Let us address to tend on Hector's heels.
The glory of our Troy doth this day lie
On his fair worth and single chivalry.

(IV, i11, 147-150)

That is, like a "bridegroom," Hector goes to the "sportful combat." He meets Ajax for the "glory" of Troy, but the "glory" of Troy shall "lie on," or sexually violate, his "fair worth and single chivalry," which is passive and vulnerable, like a helpless woman. The "glory" for which he is fighting Hector knows to be only a word signifying the "honour" and blood paid to keep Helen, who, being the wife of another man, is held in defiance of the "moral laws of nature and of nations" (II, i11, 184-185). He sees that his and the action of all of Troy is being mobilized to satisfy the appetites of Paris; but lacking the will to give his judgment strength, he concludes:

yet nevertheless,
My spritely brethren, I propend to you
In resolution to keep Helen still,
For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependence
Upon our joint and several dignities.

(II, i11, 189-193)

The fusion here is complete between the spirit and the flesh, the high and the low, between aspiration and
appetite. I am almost certain that Shakespeare is punning with the phrase, "joint and several dignities": in the first confrontation between Hector and Achilles, "joint" signified "phallus."

Immediately after Hector's capitulation, Troilus says:

Why, there you touch'd the life of our design,
Were it not glory that we more affected
Than the performance of our heaving spleens,
I would not wish a drop of Troyan blood
Spent more in her defence. (II,ii,194-198)

Helen is confused with "glory," and "glory" will victimize Hector. In Act III, Paris says to Helen:

Sweet Helen, I must woo you

To help unarm our Hector. His stubborn buckles,
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel
Or force of Greekish sinews. You shall do more
Than all the island kings,—disarm great Hector.

(III,1,162-167)

A "story" of castration is re-told in these lines, and as before, castration means death: death by "white enchanting fingers."

Having "vowed" to meet Achilles in the field, Hector, "like a bridegroom," prepares the next day for battle. His wife and family have had premonitions of his death, and they beg him to stay behind. In answer to Cassandra's admonition, Hector cries: "Be gone, I say; the gods have heard me swear" (V,iii,15), to which Cassandra declares:

The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows.
They are polluted off'ring, more abhorr'd
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

(V,iii,16-18)

Because the "vow" to meet Achilles issues from a point of
honour whose original motive is grounded in sexual appetite, the gods will find such offerings "polluted." If Helen, the "original motive," were worthy in herself and her cause just, the question of honor might validly be raised. As it is, Hector has engaged himself in upholding honor for its own sake. The "vow" is thereby divorced from any real purpose, except as it incidentally defends a condition already acknowledged by Hector to be against "the moral laws / Of nature and of nations." Consequently, Cassandra accurately asserts that, "It is the purpose that makes strong the vow, /
But vows to every purpose must not hold" (V,iii,23-24).

Hector, deaf to the voice of his own sound judgment, persists in bringing noble sentiments to an ignoble cause:

Hold you still, I say;  
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate.  
Life every man holds dear; but the brave man  
Holds honour far more precious—dear than life.  
(V,iii,25-29)

We should miss all the irony in these noble sentiments if we were to forget that such abstractions as "honor," "glory," and "purpose" have concrete equations. In the primary source, "honor" was fused with the phallus: "Who may you else oppose / That can from Hector bring his honour off, / If not Achilles?" (I,iii,333-335) It is perhaps even more significant that "honor," "glory," and "purpose" may also be taken to equal Helen: "vows to every purpose must not hold;"
"the glory of our Troy"; "honor keeps the weather of my fate"; "the brave man / Holds honour far more precious—dear than life." Troilus says of Helen, "She is a theme of honour" (II,11,199).
Unlike Cressida in relation to Troilus, Hector keeps his "vow" to Achilles. But Achilles, as expected, disregards his; he leaves his tent only after an appetite for vengeance is provoked in him. Hector is caught unarmed by Achilles and his Myrmidons, and is slaughtered like an animal. Just before the kill, Achilles points to the "planet Sol":

Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set,
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels,
Even with the vail and darking of the sun,
To close the day up, Hector's life is done.
(V,viii,5-8)

The "med'cinable eye," whose light and power enforces order in the cosmos is covered over by a night which "comes breathing" as if aroused by passion.

Moments later, Achilles compares the oncoming night to a dragon, a monster of base appetite:

The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth,
And, stickler-like, the armies separate.
My half-supplied sword, that frankly would have fed,
Please'd with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed.
(V,viii,17-20)

Like a presiding god ("stickler-like"), the dragon of passion separates the armies from their "combat." The "story" is supported by the two "families" concerned throughout the play with the theme of emasculation, the "sex-" and the "eating family": "half-supplied sword," "bait," "goes to bed."

The "history" of Hector and Achilles (in perhaps the supreme metaphor for the whole action of the war) reaches its climax, not with the "emasculation" scene, but with the picture of Hector being dragged over the battlefield at the
tail of Achilles' horse. At least as the "history" relates to the overall "social" theme of the play, this picture is the climax; for until now we have witnessed, in actions and imagery, a fusion of essentially hostile modes of being: the spirit and the flesh. With Hector trailing behind a horse, the spirit is crushed, and an absolute inversion has evolved. In the discussion scene inside the walls of Troy (II,ii), Hector appears to have succumbed to Troilus and to the general will more from a love of high aspirations than an inability to perceive mundane truths. His own arguments pertaining to Helen seem to have been too pedestrian, too "practical" for a disposition that delights in notions, however abstract, of honor, dignity, and nobility. In other words, his were the highest aspirations of man, so high as almost to lose sight of the earth below.

If Hector embodies the loftiest aspirations, Achilles embodies the basest passions, is the most earth-bound, and the whole direction of his being puts him on a sensual level with his horse—which is but an extension of himself. In view of the forces motivating the war, it is fitting, then, that Hector should be pulled through the dust by Achilles' horse: passion leading conquered aspiration; the near-lowest in cosmic degree dragging the near-highest. At this point in the play, the figurative and the literal action converge.

III

At the very center of the tapestry is Helen, and her
influence is felt in every thread. Thersites sums up the whole action of the war in his comment:

Such patchery, such juggling and, such knavery! All the argument is a cuckold and a whore; a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. (II,iii,77-80)

The "argument" is Menelaus and Helen in person, and the hostility they have caused between Greek and Trojan. When Cressida first enters the Greek camp with Diomed, Menelaus and Patroclus are seen using the term "argument":

Men. I had good argument for kissing once.
Patr. But that's no argument for kissing now; For thus popp'd Paris in his hardiment, And parted thus you and your argument.
(Iv,v,26-29)

Menelaus begins by using "argument" to mean "good cause," or "good reasons," for kissing. Patroclus in the next line identifies the "good reasons" with their object, Helen, and gives "argument" another possible meaning—the sexual act interrupted by Paris. Thus, "argument" may be applied to the state of war, the characters who initiated the war, the ideas or reasons used to perpetuate the war—and to the sexual appetite in which the war has its roots. What has occurred in the human heart is occurring in society at large, and both the individual and society must be seen in terms of the cosmos—of which society and the individual are microcosms.

Ulysses' speech on degree applies to all three spheres of existence:

Take but degree away, untune that string, And, hark, what discord follows! Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
And make a sop of all this solid globe.
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead.
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
Between whose endless jar justice resides,
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up himself. (I,iii,109-124)

In a sense, the whole of Troilus and Cressida is a metaphor
for degree's "untuned string." In defence of Helen and the
war, Troilus reveals the discord in himself:

I take to-day a wife, and my election
Is led on in the conduct of my will,
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores
Of will and judgement: how may I avoid,
Although my will distaste what it elected,
The wife I chose? (II,ii,61-67)

Notice the images that occur in the statement following this:

There can be no evasion
To blench from this and to stand firm by honour.
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant,
When we have spoil'd them, nor the remainder
viands
We do not throw in unrespective sieve,
Because we now are full. (II,ii,67-72)

"Honour" is Helen. "Honour" is also the phallus, confirmed
here by the suggestion of penis erectus in--"stand firm."
Images from the "merchant-family" tell the old "story" of
"sport."

Hector judges the "arguments" of Paris and Troilus:

The reasons you allege do more conduce
To the hot passion of distemp'red blood
Than to make up a free determination
'Twixt right and wrong, for pleasure and revenge
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice
Of any true decision. (II,ii,168-173)
There can be no question here that Troilus, like Achilles, sees with passion's "eyes"; and Troilus' use of the "merchant-family" of images links his relationship with Cressida to the war at large. In Act I, scene i, after a conversation with Pandar, Troilus hears the alarums calling the Trojan warriors to the field:

Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace,

rude sounds!

Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,

When with your blood you daily paint her thus.

I cannot fight upon this argument;

It is too starv'd a subject for my sword.

But Pandarus,—O, gods, how do you plague me!

I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar,

And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo,

As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.

Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,

What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we.

Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl;

Between our Ilium and where she resides,

Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,

Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar

Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

(II, i, 92-107)

The "merchant-family" occurs in lines 102 to 107. But first, notice in lines 95 and 96 the use of "starv'd" in connection with "sword." Achilles, upon slaughtering Hector, will use the phrase, "half-supp'd sword" (V, viii, 19). In the lines above "sword," Helen, "the argument," is said to wear a "lustre," is "fair" by virtue of common consent and the blood that "paints" her thus (the blood of Hector will also "paint" Achilles "fair"). Cressida is called "a pearl," and it is no accident that the same figure is applied by Troilus to Helen in the discussion-scene (II, ii); however, notice the surrounding "members":

I

cho~t-fanif

of images links his relationship with Cressilda

I

cha~t-fanif

ly"
Why, she is a pearl,
Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,
And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants. (II, ii, 81-83)

Helen is the "pearl," not in India, but in Ilium, who once lay across the "wild and wand'ring flood" from Greece. Like Troilus, Menelaus was the "merchant" whose quest depended for its achievement upon a collective Pandar, the entire Greek force. Once at the gates of Troy, Ulysses replaces Menelaus as the active "merchant" figure, and the "wild and wand'ring flood" is the complication in getting at "the pearl"; that is, the war itself, the "wild action." The heart of the Greek force, Achilles, must, like Pandarus, be "woo'd." For Menelaus and Ulysses, Achilles is "our doubtful hope, our convoy, our bark."

In the Greek discussion-scene (I, iii), Nestor compares the enterprise at Troy—or any great enterprise—to the conduct of a fleet of ships, whose worth on the high seas is only brought to the test during a tempest; and we may be certain he refers to the "best" warriors, particularly Achilles, when he says that—

> when the splitting wind
> Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,
> And flies fled under shade, why, then the thing of courage,
> As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize,
> And with an accent tun'd in selfsame key
> Retorts to chiding fortune. (I, iii, 49-54)

"Splitting wind / Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks" must be related to the soon to follow "primary source," where, in reference to "rousing" Achilles, Ulysses says, "Blunt wedges rive hard knots" (I, iii, 316). The oak is capable of
withstanding the winds of fortune. By the same token, the
noblest member of the animal kingdom, the lion, is a "thing
of courage." Patroclus attempts to move Achilles from his
insolence by saying--

Sweet, rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,
Be shook to air. (III,iii,222-225)

Achilles, then, depending upon one's point of view, may be
compared to Pandar, with Ulysses his Troilus; or to Cressida,
with Ulysses his Pandarus. Cressida may be compared to
Helen, in that both are "pearls"; Troilus to Menelaus, in
that both are "cuckolds"; Paris to Diomed, in that both
steal a "pearl." In short, "the whole argument is a cuckold
and a whore" (II,iii,78-79), and "war and lechery confound
all!" (II,iii,81)

In committing himself to Cressida, Troilus shows the
infirmity of his mind's eye: only to passion's "eyes" is
Cressida a "pearl." Just before meeting "the pearl" in
Pandarus' house (India), he confesses, though unwittingly,
to the perversion of "will and judgement":

Even such a passion doth embrace my
bosom.
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse,
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,
Like vassalage at unawares encountering
The eye of majesty. (III,iii,37-41)

"Encountering" is intended by Troilus to mean "confronting,"
but there is an alternate meaning to this word that gives
the whole passage an ironic turn. Having met Cressida for
the first time, Ulysses says of her:
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.  
0, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
That give accosting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
To every tickling reader! set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity  
And daughters of the game.  \(\text{(IV,v,55-63)}\)

An "encounterer" is a whore. Therefore, letting "the eye of majesty" refer, not to Cressida, but to Troilus' "eye" of "will and judgement," the passage reads—like a vassal prostituting will and judgment.

The suggestion of prostitution, body and soul, is re-enforced when Troilus parts with Cressida later in the play.

Lamenting the brevity of their "meeting," he says:

We two, that with so many sighs  
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  \(\text{(IV,iv,41-43)}\)

They have "sold" themselves for but one act of copulation—"the discharge of one."

When Troilus says of himself, "The moral of my wit / Is 'plain and true'; there's all the reach of it" \(\text{(IV,v,109-110)}\), he means to say that he is unaffected and faithful. However, imagery tells another, though related, "story."

The "plainness" and "simplicity" of Troilus is in his single-minded urge for sexual satisfaction with Cressida. When Cressida asks him if he will be "true," he answers:

Who? I? Alas, it is my vice, my fault.  
While others fish with craft for great opinion,  
I with great truth catch mere simplicity,  
Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,  
With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.  \(\text{(IV,v,104-108)}\)
The key to the figurative meaning of this passage is in the phrase "copper crowns." Speaking of the "argument" between Menelaus and Paris over Helen, Ulysses remarks, "O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns, / For which we lose our heads to gild his horns!" (IV,v,30-31) The word "head" in this context is a pun signifying "phallus"; and a "head" and a "crown" being the same literal objects, are equatable here on a figurative level. Another similar pun referring to the phallus is seen in Cressida's remark to Pandarus, "I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended / Troilus for a copper nose" (I,ii,114-115).

Returning to Troilus' "simplicity,"--"Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns, / With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare,"--might read: While other people conceal their penis, I show mine to full view; or, more delicately, I show my sexual appetite for the whole world to see. "Plain and true" is also equated with the phallus in, "'plain and true'; there's all the reach of it." "All the reach of it" is a pun similar to the one we find in Ulysses' remark about Aeneas' knowledge of Troilus' character:

They call him Troilus, and on him erect
A second hope, as fairly built as Hector.
Thus says Aeneas; one that knows the youth
Even to his inches. (IV,v,108-111)

Both Troilus and Cressida are at fault in mistaking sexual appetite for love. But Cressida is not so "plain." Like Ulysses she knows herself pretty well, and is clever in perceiving the weaknesses in others, and in manipulating those weaknesses to her own ends. Like Hector, even like
Troilus in his better moments, she is unable to effect what
her mind's eye sees to be the just mode of conduct. Corres-
ponding to conditions in the world outside, there is a war
raging in Cressida between appetite and aspiration. Had
she been faithful to Troilus, aspiration and appetite would
have found their proper balance. If she were capable,
Cressida would actually be "the pearl" Troilus envisions;
if, that is, she were capable of an "enterprise" as trying
as a promise of faith. But,--"when degree is shak'd, /
Which is the ladder to all high designs, / Then enterprise
is sick!" (I,iii,101-103)

In her first confrontation with Troilus, Cressida admits
her weakness. Troilus asks her why she was so hard to be
won; she replies:

Hard to seem won; but I was won, my
lord,
With the first glance that ever--pardon me--
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
I love you now; but not, till now, so much
But I might master it. In faith, I lie;
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mothers. (III,ii,125-131)

What Ulysses says of the "public-eye" applies also to
Cressida, "The present eye praises the present object"
(III,iii,180). In the presence of Troilus, she is all his;
apart from him, she is open to a new object. For this
reason, when Diomed comes to take Cressida to the Greek
camp, she repeats, "When shall we see again?" (IV,iv,59),
and "When shall I see you?" (IV,iv,73). Almost as soon as
Troilus is out of sight, Diomed replaces him in her favors.
Cressida laments her inability to keep faith:
Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee,  
But with my heart the other eye doth see.  
Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,  
The error of our eye directs our mind.  
What error leads must err; 0, then conclude  
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude.  
(V, i, 107-112)  

Though the "eye" of judgment and will knows better, passion's  
"eye" is the more compelling. Tied to passion's tail, again  
the spirit of aspiration is dragged through the dust. The  
"eye" in this context as sexual organ is supported by the  
figures--"Fault" 
and "O." 
The whole tone of the scene  
between Cressida and Diomed is sexually suggestive, both by  
its rhythm, and especially by the repetitive use of the word  
"come," which, in this instance, may be a homonymic pun  
signifying "sexual emission":  

Dio. What, shall I come? The hour?  
Cress. Ay, come:—0 love!—do come—I  
shall be plagu'd.  
Dio. Farewell till then.  
Cress. Good night. I prithee, come.  
(V, ii, 104-107)  

This same use of "come" to establish a sexual overtone was  
used in Act III, scene ii, when Pandarun encourages the  
lovers to proceed with their "sport":  

Come your ways, come your ways; an you  
draw backward, we'll put you i' th' fills. Why do  
you not speak to her? Come, draw this curtain  
and let's see your picture. Alas the day, how loath  
you are to offend daylight! An 'twere dark,  
you'd close sooner.  
(III, ii, 46-51)  

In any case, I think it fair to say that Cressida  
desires to be true. When Ulysses says to Troilus that  
there is a "feast" at Menelaus' tent, and that--
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night,
Who neither looks on heaven nor on earth,
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view
On the fair Cressid. (IV,v,260-263)

--it is just possible that at this point in her conflict, Cressida is neither in "heaven nor on earth," neither de-
cidedly "spirit" in favor of her vows, nor "flesh" in favor of Diomed. However, the character of Cressida is very much open to question. Judging from the remarks she makes with Pandarus in Act I, scene ii (almost all of which are sexual innuendos), she could be the confirmed "encounterer" Ulysses thinks she is: "She will sing any man at first sight" (V,ii,9). Like an "encounterer," she is "bought" for the Greek camp. Speaking of Antenor, Calchus, her father (and a traitor) says, "Let him be sent, great princes, / And he shall buy my daughter" (III,iii,27-28).

Cressida's "true" identity may be difficult to deter-
mine, but it is certain that, along with the death of Patro-
clus, her betrayal of Troilus marks a turning point in the action of the play. Until now, appetite has manifested it-
self in a drive toward pleasure; henceforth it will seek revenge. Both manifestations defy the necessities of just conduct. Hector was right in stating that "pleasure and revenge / Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice / of any true decision" (II,iii,171-173); and Ulysses accur-
ately predicted, though unintentionally, the outcome of the war, when he warned the Greek assembly against "emulation."

He said, once "degree is shak'd"--
everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make persevere an universal prey,
And last eat up himself. (I,iii,119-124)

Before Patroclus' death and Cressida's betrayal, pleasure
lent itself to indolence; but the need for revenge has
called forth will and power. Troilus will have revenge of
Diomed for the loss of Cressida; Achilles for Patroclus;
Ajax for an anonymous friend. After the death of Hector,
Troilus says, "Strike a free march to Troy. With comfort
go; / Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woes" (V,x,30-31).
From a more general point of view, the whole war has been a
quest for revenge. Paris took Helen "for an old aunt whom
the Greeks held captive" (II,ii,77), and Menelaus came to
Troy for Helen.

IV

Thus far, particularly through language and imagery,
I have tried to discover the basis of human relationships
in Troilus and Cressida. If Cressida's "true" identity re-
mains uncertain, I must assume that uncertainty is consist-
tent with Shakespeare's intention. The action of the play
is dominated by the spirit of "merchandizing," of prostitu-
tion, whose principal defence is an ostensible "lustre."
In the sense that they are used to keep up appearances and
to conceal devious motives, words and the "arguments" they
espouse are "whores" in Troilus and Cressida. When Ulysses
begs to be heard before the Greek assembly, he addresses
Agamemnon in the loftiest formalities, knowing full well
their "lustre" "dresses up" an attitude which might otherwise be found unpalatable:

Agamemnon,
Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,
Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit,
In whom the tempers and the minds of all
Should be shut up, hear what Ulysses speaks.
(I,iii,54-58)

Agamemnon is flattered by this address, and being well acquainted with the eloquence to be had from Ulysses, welcomes the entertainment of "music, wit, and oracle" (74). Ulysses proceeds to deliver his speech on degree, the import of which must have been perfectly commonplace to his audience; so commonplace, in fact, that the general does not see in it the lie given to the previous nonsense about "nerve and bone of Greece." Nor is he offended by Ulysses' facetious description of the mimes enacted by Achilles and Patroclus.

The same high-sounding formalities we see in Ulysses' address are used both by the Greeks and the Trojans whenever they confront each other off the battlefield. The meeting between Aeneas and Diomed reveals the absurdity in this kind of gesturing (IV,i,10-31), and Paris sums up the paradox by his remark,--"This is the most despiteful'st gentle greeting, / The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of" (IV,i,32-33). Divorced from authentic conviction, polite conventions, whether chivalric or heroic, become parodies of themselves and the individuals who adopt them. Ulysses entertains the Greek assembly with a fine speech, "dresses up" Ajax with flattery, tries to rouse Achilles with "fair" words on time and fame and the necessity for action;
Patroclus and Achilles mock the mannerisms of Agamemnon and Nestor; Hector speaks out in defense of "the moral laws / Of nature and of nations"; Aeneas speaks of love for his enemies and reverence in the face of the Greek general; Troilus and Paris laud the "inestimable" beauty and the "fair rape" of Helen; Cressida praises faith in love; Helen celebrates the joys of love. The incidence of sometimes well-meant, but always incongruous "arguments", is inexhaustible. There can be no forthright connection between language and action because most of the characters—Achilles, Menelaus, Patroclus, Troilus, Cressida, Paris, Helen, Pandarus—speak as they "see"—from their "purpose"; and their "purpose," being strictly passionate, is incompatible with basically "spiritual" values.

Of all the characters who use gestures to appear what they are not, or for the mere sport of it, Ajax is the least successful, and therefore, the most comic. He has the stuff of any and all roles in him, but cannot properly piece one of them together. In a world where identities are highly fragmented, mutable, and generally confused, he contains all identities and none, which is both fitting to the circumstances of his birth (half Greek, half Trojan), and in so far as he contains the sum of both parties at war, to the overall condition of things: Ajax moves and acts as a microcosm of the human world at large. Achilles is said by Thersites to be a "picture of what thou [Achilles] seem'st" (V, i, 6). Achilles is a parody of
what he is reputed to be, what he ought to be, and even what he is. By the same logic, Ajax is a "picture" and a parody of the general disposition and conduct of the war. Since he has but a vague notion of what it is to be a great warrior, he is compelled to discover the means by which he may look the part:

Cressida's man-servant, Alexander, describes him well:

There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attain but he carries some stain of it. He is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair. He hath the joints of everything, but everything so out of joint that he is gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight. (I, ii, 24-31)

Calling Achilles' attention to Ajax, Thersites suggests the problem of recognizing a man who does not even recognize himself:

Thers. You see him there, do you?
Achil. Ay; what's the matter?
Thers. Nay, look upon him.
Achil. So I do. What's the matter?
Thers. Nay, but regard him well.
Achil. Well! Why, I do so.
Thers. But yet you look not well upon him; for, whosoever you take him to be, he is Ajax.
Achil. I know that, fool.
Thers. Ay, but that fool knows not himself. (II, i, 63-72)

In Act III, Thersites describes Ajax again, this time as going "up and down the field, asking for himself" (III, iii, 245).

Ajax embodies the question, how is the personal worth of a man to be judged if not by the "eye?" The confusion of sight with insight is well illustrated by Pandarus in Act I, on the occasion of his observing with Cressida the
Trojan warriors returning from the field. When Hector passes, he cries (the italics are mine in the next three quotations):

That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks! There's a countenance! Is't not a brave man?

(I,i,215-219)

Then Troilus passes:

Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece. Look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hack'd than Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he ne'er saw three and twenty.

(I,i,251-255)

After Troilus, when the common soldiers pass, Pandarus says:

Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran! porridge after meat! I could live and die i' the eyes of Troilus. Ne'er look, ne'er look;

(I,i,262-264)

In the meantime, Cressida, in her usual manner, cleverly mocks her uncle's childish enthusiasm, until he is provoked to chide her lack of "discretion." The result is another fusion or confusion between the personal characteristics signifying a man's worth, and the means by which those characteristics may be identified:

Why, have you any discretion? Have you any eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and so forth, the spice and salt that season a man?

(I,iii,273-278)

The theme of sight versus insight is re-enforced by the repetitive use of the word "fair," just as sexual overtones are established in appropriate scenes by the word "come." A similar commentary by repetition is seen in Thersites' use of animal imagery (a whole "family" of
images), and both Thersites', and Pandarus' use of disease imagery (another whole "family").

From a purely structural point of view, re-occurring words, images ("members," "families," "stories," "history"), "arguments," gestures, mimes, taken together function as members of a figurative chorus, providing, among other things, a framework of values and criticism of values for the action to move in; literal "members" include Thersites, and to a lesser extent, Pandarus.

V

Re-occurring words and images serve as windows in the surface of appearances, but the human motivations we espy through them are usually of so general a nature, that they seem to apply more to the large action and themes than to the specific characters who express them. We can tell from related "stories" that sexual appetite is a governing force in the action of the play, but when a single character uses a sexual image, we seldom know if he has used it consciously. Every indication would point to the contrary. For example, Troilus does not think of eating as akin to copulation; Hector does not think of combat as copulation; Nestor does not use birth-imagery and castration-imagery from any conscious delight in sexuality; Ulysses does not connect merchandizing with prostitution; and even Achilles does not look upon himself as an Amazon. It would follow, then, that images are at once pertinent and incidental to the characters involved in the war; and that, as I suggested
earlier, the complete application of imagery, whether to a single character or action, is only seen in the "double vision"--the fixing of one eye on a small portion of the tapestry, the other on the whole of it.

When I say that a "figurative chorus" provides a moral framework for the action of the play, I mean that tightly knit correspondences are established among the three levels or "contexts" of human existence: man in the cosmos, man in society, man in himself. I do not want to suggest, however, that the play has a "moral" to it; for, despite the almost incredible integration of threads, when we stand back and view the tapestry as a whole, the figures, though familiar to us, evoke neither tragedy nor comedy, but a kind of demonic, incongruous, and singularly grotesque fusion of the two. Tragedy needs an expansive, heroic protagonist, capable of potent action and a potent engagement with death; but Hector, the only character who approaches the mark, is weak-willed, and dies the death of a slaughtered animal. Comedy needs a love-heroine, a relatively harmless predicament, a happy resolution; but in Troilus and Cressida, the "heroine" or "heroines" are faithless in love, the predicament is deadly, and a resolution is conspicuously absent.

The body of the plot is filled with incongruous and unexpected turns of events. After seven years of war, the major opposing warriors have never met face to face; Menelaus speaks not a word in the Greek discussion-scene and has taken no active part in an "enterprise" originally
undertaken to satisfy his personal grievance; Ulysses' scheme to rouse Achilles, constituting a major portion of the plot, is utterly ineffectual; Paris, the other party in the dispute, plays only a minor role; and Helen, the motive of the war, is on stage for but a few moments. The resolution of the plot, from Hector's death, is equally unsatisfying. The action during combat is chaotic; Achilles lives on, while Hector dies, and Hector's death goes unavenged; Troilus gets no blood-satisfaction from Diomed; Thersites flies about, railing; Troilus calls for the mercy of an immediate resolution of the war—"And linger not our sure destructions on" (V,x,9)—but the war will linger on, we know, for another three years. And the last words are spoken in mocking tones on the subject of prostitution by a syphilitic old lecher.

From what we have observed in the body of the plot, nothing could be more appropriate than that Pandarus should speak the last sordid words; for, if Helen is the motivational center of action, Pandarus is the leering, demonic spirit presiding over consequences. If Troilus and Cressida is possessed of a "moral," it must be said to embrace a vision in which all experience, however chaotic in appearance, is yet perfectly bound together, and everything a human thinks, feels, desires, responds to and asserts in action, has its inevitable consequences in himself and in the world at large: an "enterprise" governed by perverse appetite will "last eat up himself" (I,iii,124).
NOTES

1 All textual references are taken from the Neilson and Hill edition of Shakespeare's works. See bibliography.

2 All agricultural terms.

3 Sword is listed as a pun on "penis" in Eric Partridge's Shakespeare's Bawdy, a source to which I shall refer whenever possible. However, because his book is little more than a rudimentary list of images, and because each "member" derives its full meaning from the context in which it occurs, Partridge is not to be considered an indisputable authority. Troilus and Cressida is not included among the few plays cited to illustrate the usage of sword.

4 Sport as "Amorous sport"—see Partridge (T&C not cited in illustration).

5 Bring off may be related to "go off" or "discharge" as "seminal ejaculation"—see Partridge.

6 Eat as "sexual intercourse"—see Partridge (T&C not cited).

7 Prick as "penis"—see Partridge (T&C not cited).

8 Instrument as "penis"—see Partridge (T&C not cited).

9 Meet may be related to "meat," and in turn to "eat"—see Partridge under "meat."

10 Boil is related to the preparation of food, and therefore to "eat."

11 Nursery is derived here, along with other agricultural terms, from "a plot or piece of ground in which young plants or trees are reared" (O.E.D., 4).

12 The term "cluster" is applied to groups of imagery in Robert Heilman's This Great Stage, a very helpful study of image patterns and their thematic values in King Lear. See bibliography.

13 Heat as "amorous ardour" especially of animals—see Partridge (T&C not cited).

14 Has as "to possess carnally"—see Partridge under "have" (T&C not cited).
NOTES (cont.)

15 Fair is used here particularly in the sense of "unobstructed, open" (O.E.D., adj., IV,16).

16 Fault as female sexual organ and sexual intercourse is related here to a similar usage in King Lear, seen in a conversation between Kent and Gloucester (I,i,12-16):

  Kent. I cannot conceive you.
  Glou. Sir, the young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?
  Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

17 0 as female sexual organ—see Partridge. In relation to 0, see also listing under "circle" and "eye" in Partridge.

18 Come as "seminal ejaculation"—see Partridge (T&C not cited).

19 Sing as "to make sexual advances to"—see Partridge.
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PAPER II.

A STUDY OF THE BOSWELL PAPERS

AND THE LIFE OF JOHNSON
For many years, *The Life of Johnson* has been acknowledged the supreme achievement in biography, but only since the *Boswell Papers* began to be published in 1928, has the student been able to view for himself a sample of the materials from which the great work was created. There are nineteen volumes in the *Boswell Papers*, including the Index. One volume is devoted exclusively to *The Life of Johnson*, and it shall be my purpose in the following pages to review the selection of materials provided by the editor, Geoffrey Scott, and to discover how they relate to the finished production. It should be assumed that any judgment I may hazard is founded upon a strictly limited selection of manuscripts. But I am consoled in my purpose by the editor, who writes in the Preface:

*Selection is indeed inherent in this attempt to show the student some of the materials from which the Life was created; but the aim kept singly in view is that the reader should carry away the same impressions as he would receive from a study*
of the MSS as a whole. Or, if this is impossible, that at least no deduction he may be led to draw from the form and character of the papers here shown would have to be revised in the light of the remainder.  

The materials which Boswell had before him, when in 1786 he began the Life, are divided by Mr. Scott into the following categories:

NOTES

The Notes are comprised of a great quantity of separate sheets recording daily activities, conversations, etc.. written in a kind of shorthand to save time and to facilitate the taking down of dialogue. In his memoranda, Boswell describes his shorthand as a "method of my own of writing half words, and leaving out some altogether so as to keep the substance...." To render the Notes intelligible, the editor has supplied the missing halves of words, and often one or two complete words in a series, setting off his additions in italics as follows: "Dined Paoli's. (Vide paper apart.) Supt Lord Mountstuart. Lord Abington parts till 30." The "paper apart" refers to a category among the Notes concerned with a particular incident or conversation recorded either in place of a Note, or where a Note does not satisfactorily cover the incident in question.

The Notes were temporary records to be "written up" or completed at leisure in the "full" Journal. Once "written up," a Note was destroyed; consequently, those that have survived stand usually as the only record of the date on which they were written, and answer the corresponding
vacancy in the Journal. Frequently a Note records a dialogue of such length and with such completeness that Boswell must have had no intention of transcribing it into his Journal. Consider, for example, the dialogue of 7 May 1773, taken directly from Notes (See Life of the same date).

JOURNALS

Boswell "journalized" from 1758 to the end of his life. The importance of this activity may be estimated by the extraordinary assertion, "I shall live no more than I can record, as one should not have more corn growing than one can get in. There is a waste of good if it be not preserved." 6

When he sat down to write the Life he had a great series of journals before him, pieced together, as I have indicated, from rough Notes. Anyone who has read the London Journal written in 1762-63 will recall an affected, a posturing Boswell. But the journals from 1765 onward are not consciously literary; "they are in the fullest sense of the word Private," 7 an artless account of daily activities, noteworthy incidents, and general hopes and aspirations. Contrary to popular belief, the journals show that Boswell had many interests and engagements independent of Johnson, even when the two men lived in the same city, and saw each other almost every day.

In the Journal in London (30 March to 15 May, 1773), Johnson occupies hardly a quarter of the account. Wherever he chanced to be present, Boswell watched for the noteworthy scrap of gossip, witticism or anecdote. His method of recording is consistently the same, and when applied to
Dr. Johnson, only the subject differs. There is no evidence to prove that when he turns his attention to Johnson he in any way distorts or "glorifies" the actual occasion. Furthermore, until Johnson's death, there is no evidence in the journals that Boswell had made extensive and systematic preparations for the Life. Since the great bulk of material comprising the Life was gathered over the years in the normal course of Boswell's "journalizing" habit, his major task consisted more in compiling widely scattered materials than in gathering new information.

**NOTEBOOKS**

Boswell kept a Commonplace Book in which there may be found a few dozen anecdotes pertaining to Johnson. Many of these were taken from the Journals, but the book was not entirely devoted to Johnson; it was "a capricious miscellany selected for eventual publication or circulation, rather than a record for Boswell's own use or reference." 

There is also a Notebook (called the "Adams Notebook") containing information from Johnson's past life that would have been out of place in a daily journal. This, and others like it, Boswell carried around with him. However, there is very little serviceable information to be found in the "Adams Notebook," and it appears to have been of minor importance.

In addition to the above-mentioned materials, Boswell had in his possession a vast quantity of letters, copied documents, and "contributions" supplied by friends that were very useful to him in reconstructing the early life of
Johnson. Geoffrey Scott tells us that in 1786, Boswell, "acting on Malone's advice, drew up a skeleton chronology of Johnson's life," and that for the monumental task before him, he had the "accumulation of twenty-three years' recording." 9

Boswell once said that,--"a page of my Journal is like a cake of portable soup. A little may be diffused into a considerable portion." 10 Let us proceed now to examine the original materials, and to see for ourselves in what manner these were "diffused" into the finished work. For the sake of convenience, I shall confine myself primarily to the Journal in London, 30 March to 15 May, 1773, which is a self-contained work "on which no editor's selective bias has operated." 11

The Journal in London consists--

(1) of fifty-two sewn but unbound pages describing Boswell's journey from Edinburgh and the early part of his visit to London in the spring of that year, (March 30 to April 13). Twenty-six of these pages 'were written up' at one sitting on April 30th....(2) From April 11th till his return to Edinburgh we find a rough untidy record on loose quarto and folio pages. They form a continuous daily diary, supplemented by three 'papers apart.' 12

From the 13th onward, the Journal is written in the form of Notes, mainly dialogue, which, no doubt, were too much trouble to "write up."

To avoid confusion I shall divide the discussion into five topics, to be taken in this order: I. General method of transcription from the Journals; II. Diffusion of Notes
into the Life; III. Suppression and assertion of fact or opinion; IV. Dramatic technique, the scene and the seeing; V. Final effect.

I. General method of transcription from the Journals.

I said earlier that the Journal in London, 1773, is not primarily concerned with the life of Johnson, but with the life of Boswell. The great lexicographer receives no more attention than might be expected for so eminent a personage and so revered a friend; nor in the recording of Johnson's gestures and conversation does Boswell vary his journalistic method. All subjects, including himself, are committed to paper in the most expedient and matter-of-fact manner. With his journal before him, Boswell could transcribe an incident almost verbatim. Consider the Journal in London, 7 April 1773:

He [Beauchler] said Mr. Johnson was grown much better-natured of late and would bear a great deal more than he used to do. That Goldsmith was talking of there being a Playhouse for the representation of new Plays solely, as a scheme to relieve Author's from the tyranny [sic] of Managers. That Mr. Johnson opposed the scheme. Upon which Goldsmith said, 'Ay it may do very well for you to talk so, who have sheltered yourself behind the corner of a pension'; and that Johnson bore this, and said nothing severe to Goldsmith that evening.¹³

In the Life, May 1781, we read:

Goldsmith could sometimes take adventurous liberties with him, and escape unpunished. Beauchler told me that when Goldsmith talked of a project for having a third Theatre in London, solely for the exhibition of new plays, in order to deliver authors from the supposed tyranny of managers, Johnson treated him slight; upon
which Goldsmith said, 'Ay, ay, this may be
nothing to you, who can now shelter yourself
behind the corner of a pension'; and that
Johnson bore this with good-humour. 14

Notice that the major substance of the original account has
passed uncorrupted into the finished work, and that minor
discrepancies are stylistic. Since the event does not depend
upon a particular date for its significance, the author has
wedged it into the Life where he felt it most appropriate.

The shifting of anecdotes in time with minor stylistic
changes is a common characteristic of Boswell's method. On
28 April 1773, this time in Note form, we read,—"Davies had
got Johnson's laugh; said it 'twas laugh of Rhinoceros." 15

Not until 17 May 1775 do we meet this anecdote, woven into
its proper context to illustrate a generality:

I passed many hours with him on the 17th,
of which I find all my memorial is, 'much
laughing.' It should seem he had that day
been in a humour for jocularity and merriment,
and upon such occasions I never knew a man
laugh more heartily. We may suppose, that
the high relish of a state so different from
his habitual gloom, produced more than ordi-

ary exertions of that distinguishing faculty
of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much
to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable
as any circumstance in his manner. It was a
kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies de-
scribed it drollly enough: 'He laughs like a
rhinoceros.' 16

There are instances in which Boswell will shift only
part of an anecdote, though his purpose in this is unintelli-
gible to the reader of his Journal. On 11 April 1773, he
records a conversation with Johnson:

'Campbell,' said he, 'has not been within a
Church for many years, but he never passes by
one but he pulls off his hat. This shews the
man to be radically right, and we may hope it will some time or other produce a right prac-
tice.'17

The Life on the same date reads:

Of Dr. John Campbell, the authour, he said,
'He is a very able man, and a man of good re-
ligious principles, though I am afraid he has been deficient in practice. Campbell is radici-
ally right; and we may hope, that in time there will be good practice.'18

Notice that Boswell has omitted the sentence beginning,--
"Campbell has not been within a Church...." But, 1 July
1763, we find in the Life:

'Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am
afraid that he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes
a church without pulling off his hat. This shows he has good principles.'19

Stylistic discrepancies speak for themselves, but we should observe that almost invariably changes in transcrip-
tion are made to render the narrative or the dialogue more graceful. On 11 April 1773, Boswell records a conversation with Johnson, which in the Life is "polished," though again, the sense is retained:

He owned Hawkesworth was his imitator; but did not think that Goldsmith was. BOSWELL. 'Sir, every body thinks so.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, he has great merit.' BOSWELL. 'Yes. But he owes getting so far up, much to You.' JOHNSON. 'Perhaps he has got sooner to it, by that.'20

In the Life of the same date we read:

He owned that he thought Hawkesworth was one of his imitators, but he did not think Goldsmith was. Goldsmith, he said, had great merit. BOSWELL. 'But, Sir, he is much indebted to you for his getting so high in the publick estimation.' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, he has, per-
haps, got sooner to it by his intimacy with me.'21
I would call the reader's attention especially to Johnson's voice, which is not only more gracefully represented than in the "original," but is given a more natural tone by the simple addition of "Why, Sir." Indeed, the "polished" anecdote may well be truer to the living character of Johnson's speech—though this must always be open to question.

II. Diffusion of Notes into the Life.

The following Note is the complete record of 19 April 1773, and will serve as a good example of Boswell's " shorthand," as well as of the method by which the Notes were "diffused" into the Life. I shall divide the Note into fifteen parts, with double spacing. The numbers are, of course, my own:

(1) Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams came in Strahan's coach and took me. (2) Spoke of difference between Strahan and Elphinstone, and wondered two good men could not agree. (3) JOHNSON. 'Don't talk so, 'tis/like one just hatched on this earth.' (4) Hamilton had coach sooner than Strahan. (5) JOHNSON. 'He's right. The sooner the better, life is short.' (6) Dr. Young's verses to Mrs. Boscawen. (7) His attack on Mrs. Montague. (8) Allways THINKS well of the great. (9) Dull awhile. (10) Duelling.—private war as lawful as public. (11) Looked into Robertson— /a sour book/ (12) 'What, do you read books
through?' (13) School examined. (14) Then to town. (15) With Lord Mountstuart to Robin Hood.

Below is the complete diffusion in the Life, 19 April 1773:

On Monday, April 19, he called on me with Mrs. Williams, in Mr. Strahan's coach, and carried me out to dine with Mr. Elphinston, at his academy at Kensington. A printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach, was a good topick for the credit of literature. Mrs. Williams said, that another printer, Mr. Hamilton, had not waited so long as Mr. Strahan, but had kept his coach several years sooner. JOHNSON. 'He was in the right. Life is short. The sooner that man begins to enjoy his wealth the better.'

Mr. Elphinston talked of a new book that was much admired, and asked Dr. Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON. 'I have looked into it.' 'What (said Elphinston,) have you not read it through?' Johnson, offended at being thus pressed, and so obliged to own his cursory mode of reading, answered tartly, 'No, Sir; do you read books through?'

He this day again defended duelling, and put his argument upon what I have ever thought the most solid basis; that if publick war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed we may observe what strained arguments are used, to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear that duelling, having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than war, in which thousands go forth without any cause of personal quarrel, and massacre each other.

The reader should observe that (a) the diagonal lines enclosing "so, 'tis," etc., are the editor's and denote an insertion, or a correction by Boswell, written between the lines of his Note on the same or a later date; (b) parts 1, 4, 5, 10 and 12 have been introduced into the Life; (c) parts 2, 3, 6-9, 11, 13-15 were not transcribed; (d) it appears that the names in parts 6, 7 and 11 were thought to
be either of no interest, or improper to use; (c) part 3 has been suppressed, apparently because Boswell was the brunt of Johnson's remark, though it may have been directed to Mrs. Williams, in which case there can be no good reason for its omission; (f) part 9 refers either to the conversation or Boswell's state of mind, most likely to the former—in any case, "dull awhile" could hardly be of interest in the Life; (g) part 8 was undoubtedly spoken by Johnson, but either did not sufficiently admit to "diffusion," or was not well enough remembered; (h) parts 13 through 15 illustrate that the material gathered here on Johnson was not Boswell's single concern for 19 April, but simply fell within his reach as the only matter of interest to be recorded on an apparently uninteresting day; (i) part 10 is embellished in the Life with Boswell's own opinion on duelling.

I have chosen this particular Note because it is obviously the "cake of portable soup" for the entire entry in the Life, 19 April 1773. Though an unpretentious example of Boswell's ability to build a coherent structure out of simple fragments, it does represent one out of thousands of such records, collected over the years, and carefully sorted and expanded to give the reader a quantity of intimate detail until recently unique in biography. In its major characteristics, the method of "diffusion" applied to this Note is used throughout the Life—but we must continue to examine this process in the next three topics.
III. Suppression and assertion of fact or opinion.

Selection of facts and incidents was a delicate and arduous task for Boswell. When comparing the original materials with the final product, we may assume that the inclusion or omission of a fragment rested on its interest, appropriateness and accuracy. But it is frequently difficult to tell when an omission is in reality a suppression of facts.

Boswell knew his subject well—"had eat and slept" with Johnson. He had many a detail within his collection and memory that could do harm to Johnson's name. On the other hand, his great mentor had himself confirmed the value of Truth in biography; he had more than once decried the falsehood that stems from omission. The Life being a personal account, the question also arose as to what degree Boswell should assert his own character and opinions. Johnson had been dead for some years, but Boswell had still to go on living under the public eye, and his image in the world had always been exceedingly important to him. Thus, we have seen the biographer suppressing Johnson's barb, "Don't talk so, 'tis like one just hatched on this earth."

On 9 May 1776, we find another suppression of the same kind. A Note records Johnson speaking to Boswell:

Base of behaviour comes imperceptibly. No man can say 'I'll be genteel.' Ten genteel women for one man, because they are more restrained—upon the square; we are easy. Men without restraint are insufferable. Were a woman to put out her legs as you do, you'd be ready to kick 'em 'in. 24

In the Life of the same date, Johnson is made to say (the italics are my own):
An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say, "I'll be genteel." There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in.\textsuperscript{25}

"You" has been replaced by "most men."

Again to protect his figure in the world, we find Boswell suppressing his true reaction to Johnson's behaviour upon hearing that his friend Langton was making out a will. The Note for 10 May 1773 reads:

Mr. Johnson could not stop his merriment. I cherished it, crying, 'Langton the testator, Langton Longshanks.' JOHNSON. 'I wonder to whom he left his legs? Ha, ha, ha!'—making all Fleetstreet resound at that silent midnight hour.\textsuperscript{26}

In the Life of the same date, Boswell describes the incident, adding comment of his own:

In this playful manner did he run on, exulting in his own pleasantry, which certainly was not such as might be expected from the author of 'The Rambler,' but which is here preserved that my readers may be acquainted even with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man.

....Johnson could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till we got without the Temple-gate. He then burst into such a fit of laughter, that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot pavement, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleet-ditch.

This most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson, happened well to counteract the feelings of sadness which I used to experience when parting with him for a considerable time. I accompanied him to his door, where he gave me his blessing.\textsuperscript{27}
Notice that Boswell conceals, the fact that he "cherished" and contributed himself to the merriment which in the Life he pronounces a "most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson."

On most occasions, the biographer will suppress his own voice in favor of his subject. On 29 April 1773, he records a dialogue in which Goldsmith asserts that animals are strongly affected by the presence of blood:

GOLDSMITH. 'Yes, if you'll put a tub full of blood into a stable, horse is like to go mad.'
JOHNSON. 'I doubt that.' At this point Mr. Thrale offers his own horses for experiment, but Johnson advises against it because, in the event of the theory proving invalid, Goldsmith's reputation might be damaged. BOSWELL. I would make as many experiments as I could, and here he'd not only have advantage of certifying the fact, but getting the victory over Dr. Johnson.28

The remark pertaining to the victory over Johnson is not introduced into the Life:

GOLDSMITH. 'Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad.' JOHNSON. 'I doubt that.' GOLDSMITH. 'Nay, Sir, it is a fact well authenticated.' THRALE. 'You had better prove it before you put it into your book on natural history. You may do it in my stable if you will.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, I would not have him prove it. If he is content to take his information from others, he may get through his book with little trouble, and without much endangering his reputation. But if he makes experiments for so comprehensive a book as his, there would be no end to them; his erroneous assertions would then fall upon himself; and he might be blamed for not having made experiments as to every particular.'29

On 11 April 1773 in the Journal in London, Boswell laments the loss of eight hundred pages of a Journal sent
from Utrecht. The lament is one part of a conversation with Johnson, but is excluded from the Life, though the remainder of the dialogue is given in full. Again, it appears Boswell has suppressed his own voice in order to keep Johnson in the foreground. His lament was not irrelevant to the conversation, but tended to divert the spotlight from its proper subject.

When the biographer does assert his own voice, he does it quietly, as on the subject of duelling, 19 April 1773 (see above). And in the Journal in London, 7 April 1773, Boswell writes:

Mr. Johnson said, 'I'm afraid Burke sacrifices every thing to his wit. 'Tis wrong to introduce scripture thus ludicrously!' [during a speech]. I have difficulty upon this head. I am not clear that scripture is hurt by being introduced in the manner Burke did it here. It is like using highly classical phrases. It has its effect at once; and very good christians have not scrupled to use scripture phrases so. It is not throwing ridicule upon them. I own it should be done with reserve; it is hard to make a proper distinction.

On 3 April 1773 in the Life, we find Boswell expressing this same opinion, but with the omission of Johnson's voice, and also the person and occasion that originally provoked the discussion:

He [Johnson] disapproved of introducing scripture phrases into secular discourse. This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A scripture expression may be used, like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong impression; and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lessen our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.
Observe that, unlike the above assertion, the opinion on duelling (19 April) was not recorded in the Journal, but must have come to Boswell's mind in the process of writing the Life.

IV. Dramatic technique, the scene and the seeing.

We have seen the primary methods by which Boswell recorded his activities and interests, and I have shown how some of this material appeared in the biography, but aside from the records themselves, we have by no means defined the Art that lies at the center of The Life of Johnson; nor is it possible to do so with any completeness within the scope and purpose of this paper. Allowing the examples to speak for themselves, my only intention on this point is to determine very generally the essential impression Boswell hoped to create out of the materials at his disposal.

In his Journal, 12 October 1780, we find this passage:
"I told Erskine I was to write Dr. Johnson's life in scenes. He approved." 32 And in a letter to Bishop Percy, February 1786, he writes: "It appears to me that mine is the best plan of biography that can be conceived; for my readers will, as near as can be, accompany Johnson in his progress, and as it were see each scene as it happened." 33

For the most part, the Life was conceived and written as a series of tableaux or scenes, the rudiments of which lay before Boswell scattered within the pages of his Notes and Journals. Once "diffused," each scene, like the stroke and daub of a painter's brush, sought to create the "true"
portrait of Samuel Johnson in body and spirit, as his image existed in the mind of one who revered him. The "true" portrait consisted in the "whole truth," that is, the complete delineation of character. Imperfections were to be expected, but Boswell was convinced that with so great a man as Johnson, the "whole truth," far from eliciting ridicule, would inspire both love and admiration. Whereas in the past, biography had usually taken the form of panegyric, the "true" biographical portrait for Boswell (and for Johnson) was the one that most nearly resembled the living subject. The slightest "characteristic" trait should not be overlooked, for an abundance of detail gives the impression of life. The following paragraph is a remarkable illustration of Boswell's ability not only to depict but to select a scene that will animate his subject in the reader's mind (Life, 22 September 1777):

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and 'pored' for some time with placid indolence upon an artificial water-fall, which Dr. Taylor had made by building a strong dyke of stone across the river behind his garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish, which had come down the river, and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a desire to see it play more freely, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate, at times, the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on the bank, and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with an humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath; and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts, 'Come,' said he, (throwing down the pole,) 'you shall take it now;' which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record; but it is a small
characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend, and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars."

We have already observed Boswell "diffusing" his Notes and Journals, selecting his materials, shifting anecdotes in time, "polishing" the narrative and the dialogue, and suppressing and asserting his own voice; and although we may never hope to define his Art, by returning to the Boswell Papers, we may at least continue to describe the manner in which "minute particulars" have been treated in their passage to the Life.

On 18 April 1775, Boswell and Johnson rode in a coach to Sir Joshua Reynolds's for dinner. Their conversation is recorded and follows (in part) in Note form:

**BOSWELL.** 'Sir Joshua good humoured?' **JOHNSON.** 'No.' **BOSWELL.** 'Burke?' **JOHNSON.** 'No. I look on myself as good humoured.' **BOSWELL.** 'No, no. You're good natured but not good humoured. You are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them if there were time to deprecate your venge- ance, but punishment follows so quick after sentence that they cannot escape.'

We find in the Life for the same date:

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or rather, as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. **JOHNSON.** 'It is wonderful, Sir, how rare a quality good humour is in life. We meet with very few good humoured men.' I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good humoured. One was acid, another was muddied, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at his ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, 'I look upon myself as a good humoured fellow.' The epithet fello
applied to the great Lexicographer, the stately Moralist, the masterly Critick, as if he had been Sam Johnson, a more pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, 'No, no, Sir; that will not do. You are good natured, but not good humoured: you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape.'

The reader may observe that (1) the scene is expressly used to illustrate a trait in Johnson's character; (2) certain names are omitted; (3) details are inserted which were absent from the Note; (4) the passage, "I look upon myself as a good humoured fellow" is an embellishment of the corresponding passage in the Note, but the addition of "fellow" changes the whole effect of the scene, and specifies the disposition of Boswell's retort, --"No, no, Sir," etc.; (5) the Note indicates that "fellow" must have occurred to Boswell when he was writing the Life and was probably added from memory, from another Note pertaining to the same incident, or from another incident conveniently related to the one in question.

For the purpose of making the reader see this incident, the most important passage is, --"Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at his ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said." With these few words, both as a revelation of attitude and as an anticipation of the assertion to follow, Boswell has captured the necessary components in a living subject. This appears to be the most essential quality of Boswell's Art, that with
an extraordinary economy of words he is able to draw the precise "minute particular" for his purpose, to make the reader "see each scene as it happened." Aside from the dialogue, he provides just enough narrative detail with an incident to stimulate the reader's imagination; so little detail on most occasions, that the reader is compelled to color the given outlines himself. Consider the following Note for 7 May 1773. This is the occasion on which, during a dinner party, Goldsmith rose in anger at Johnson for usurping the conversation:

He [Goldsmith] seised [sic] the moment when Johnson appeared to interrupt Toplady and said, 'Sir, he has heard you for an hour, pray allow him to speak.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, I was not interrupting the Gentlemen, I was only giving him the signal of my attention. Sir, you're very impertinent to me.'

Notice in the diffusion that follows in the Life, how the precise detail dramatizes the scene:

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and shine. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, 'Take it.' When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: 'Sir, (said he to Johnson,) the gentleman has heard
you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON. ( sternly,) 'Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him the signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent,' Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.38

The incident does not end here. Later in the same Note we read,—"JOHNSON had said, 'I'll make Goldsmith forgive me.' Asked pardon. GOLDSMITH. 'It must be much from you I'd take ill.'"39 And in the Life the scene is treated as follows:

He [Johnson] and Mr. Langton and I went together to THE CLUB, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, 'I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;' and then called to him in a loud voice, 'Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon.' Goldsmith answered placidly, 'It must be much from you, Sir, that I'd take ill.' And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.40

Particularly vital to the effect of this tableau is, of course, the dialogue itself that contains all the wit and ease of expression one might expect of a stage production. With the main substance of a conversation before him in his Notes and Journals, Boswell had only to expand it from memory, and to polish the rough edges with such devices as "Sir"; "Why Sir"; "Why, no, Sir." For the sake of immediacy and grace, he had rejected the method of identification,—Johnson said--; --Goldsmith said--; in favor of --JOHNSON. "voice"--; --GOLDSMITH. "voice"--.

V. Final effect.

This being a comparative study, I have tried in part
to present certain factual or representational discrepancies between the Boswell Papers and The Life of Johnson; but the reader should understand that on the whole very few examples worthy of mention are to be found, and I have more than once felt myself running the risk of pedantry. Changes and/or omissions in the dialogue and in the narrative are most often clearly designed either to protect some one, or to make the scenes interesting and attractive; seldom will the "manipulation" contradict an original fragment--at least in overall substance. If, when Johnson is speaking to him, Boswell replaces "you" with "most men," the general import of the statement remains the same (see p. 13).

In any case, we must bear in mind that Boswell was trying to do more than recount the facts of a man's life. Because the biographer's principal aim was to preserve the spirit of Johnson, every scene and every "minute particular" within a scene became significant only in so far as it was made by proper treatment to represent or epitomize the once-living subject. Though the fact contained an interest of its own, only imagination could make it an integral part of the "Flemish picture"; that is, the fact had to be made "authentic" and a contribution to the "whole truth" of Johnson.

Obviously the "whole truth" or the complete character of the "great Lexicographer" could never be known by any one, not even by the subject himself. But, if the ideal is even to be approached by gathering together an unprecedented selection of an individual's conversation, manners, gestures, etc., and concentrating the reader's attention on them, then we
should "know" Johnson better than any man in biographical history. This, indeed, seems to have been the philosophy behind the Life. In volume fifteen of the Boswell Papers, we find the biographer saying to Lord Kames:

"My Lord, we have neglected our scheme of writing your life; I am determined to do it; to be Plutarch." 'Yes,' said he, 'like a talkative old woman, as he writes. There is a style for Epick Poetry and a style for Lyrick and a style for other kinds of composition, but none for Biography, which should be in different styles according to the different characters.' I agree it should be dramatick. The great Art of Biography is to keep the person whose life we are giving allways [sig] in the Reader's view."

From a study of his Notes and Journals, we know that by writing the biography of Johnson, Boswell was also keeping his own life in view; he was preserving his own as well as the spirit of Johnson. The Boswell Papers tell us that the Life of Johnson was ultimately the grand offspring of a necessity in the biographer to mark exactly the various elements comprising his own life, and by recording, to fix them in time: "I shall live no more than I can record, as one should not have more corn growing than one can get in. There is a waste of good if it be not preserved." A large portion of that "good" was forever preserved in the Life of Johnson.
NOTES


3 *Papers*, VI, 8.

4 *Papers*, VI, 33.

5 *Papers*, VI, 118.

6 *Papers*, VI, 65.

7 *Papers*, VI, 66.

8 *Papers*, VI, 155.

9 *Papers*, VI, 185.


11 *Papers*, VI, 143.

12 *Papers*, VI, 68.

13 *Papers*, VI, 89.

14 *Life*, I, 113.

15 *Papers*, VI, 125.
16 *Life*, II, 378.
17 *Papers*, VI, 104.
18 *Life*, II, 216.
20 *Papers*, VI, 104.
21 *Life*, II, 216.
22 *Papers*, VI, 119.
24 *Papers*, VI, 49.
26 *Papers*, VI, 141.
27 *Life*, II, 262-63.
28 *Papers*, VI, 127.
30 *Papers*, VI, 93.
31 *Life*, II, 213.
32 *Papers*, VI, 161.
33 Stauffer, p. 443.
34 *Life*, III, 191.
35 *Papers*, VI, 41.
36 *Life*, II, 262-63.
37 *Papers*, VI, 138.
38 *Life*, II, 253-54.
39 Papers, VI, 139.
40 Life, II, 255-56.
41 Papers, XV, 268.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


PAPER III.

THE EYES OF GENIUS:

A STUDY OF GREATNESS IN ART
With Modern Painters in five volumes and The Stones of Venice in three volumes, John Ruskin has given us the most curious fund imaginable of metaphysics, ethics, esthetics, and not infrequently pure and undefinable poetic enthusiasm. To the infinite frustration of the student-critic, no truly systematic philosophy of art may be found in this treasury, and the problems Ruskin could not resolve in eight volumes I shall not pretend to resolve in the few pages that follow. However, it is impossible to give Ruskin's conception of greatness in art without using the terms upon which, in theory, he based his judgments. My intention, therefore, is briefly and generally to define such terms as "truth," "beauty," and "imagination," and to ride them, as it were, "into the very central fiery heart." Glaring inconsistencies are certain to arise, and these I shall return to, but first let them show themselves for some time in plain view.
I

Praising the works of Sir Walter Scott and Joseph

Turner, Ruskin declared "...that the greatest thing a human

soul over does in this world is to see something, and tell

what he saw in a plain way....To see clearly is poetry, pro-

phesy, and religion,—all in one."¹ "To see clearly" and

"to tell plainly." It is no accident, of course, that Ruskin

has linked these two functions together, for each is a reflec-
tion of the other: to see clearly is the key to telling

plainly, and to tell plainly is, in fact, the proof of having

seen clearly. They define both the capacity and the mission

of the artist, and represent a oneness in spirit between the

artist and his work. But to be properly understood, the terms

"seeing clearly" and "telling plainly" must be carefully ex-
amined. Taking each in isolation, let us deal first with

"seeing clearly."

In the third volume of The Stones of Venice, Ruskin
distinguishes between science and art by the nature of their
primary subjects. He says that, above all,

Science deals exclusively with things as they
are in themselves; and art exclusively with
things as they affect the human sense and soul.
Her work is to portray the appearances of
things, and to deepen the natural impressions
which they produce on living creatures. The
work of science is to substitute facts for
appearances, and demonstrations for impressions.
Both, observe, are equally concerned with
truth; the one with truth of aspect, the other
with truth of essence. Art does not represent
things falsely but truly as they appear to man
....This, then, being the kind of truth with
which art is exclusively concerned, how is
this truth to be ascertained and accumulated?
Evidently, and only, by perception and feeling.²

The unified capacity for perceiving and feeling constitutes
Ruskin's meaning of the "seeing," while to "see clearly" means perceiving and feeling things "truly as they appear to man."

To accomplish this end,

Nothing must come between Nature and the artist's sight; nothing between God and the artist's soul. Neither calculation nor hearsay, --be it the most subtle of calculations, or the wisest of sayings,--may be allowed to come between the universe, and the witness which art bears to its visible nature. The whole value of that witness depends on its being eye-witness.  

The mind must come to objects with "passive and naive simplicity," so that it may not be influenced by prejudice of any kind. "Telling plainly," according to the dictates of sight, would amount, then, to accurately representing what is seen clearly: "the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature."1 But what does Ruskin mean by joining the sense of "nothing must come between God and the artist's soul" with "nothing must come between Nature and the artist's sight?"

In Queen of the Air, the ancient Greeks are described as "only beautiful in body as they were beautiful in soul; (for you will find, when you read deeply into the matter, that the body is only the soul made visible)."  

I think we are safe in assuming from this and other like passages (though he never makes himself as clear in expressing his religious opinions as he does on art and morality) that Ruskin agreed with Thomas Carlyle, who viewed not simply man, but all the objects of nature as the visible symbols of Divino Prescence. In the third volume of Modern Painters
we find this comment on the mysteries of nature:

But when the active life is nobly fulfilled, and the mind is then raised beyond into clear and calm beholding of the world around us, ... the simplest forms of nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God; and we ourselves, their fellows, made out of the same dust, and greater than they only in having a greater portion of the Divine power exerted on our frame, and all common uses and palpably visible forms of things, become subordinate in our minds to their inner glory,—to the mysterious voices in which they talk to us about God, and the changeful and typical aspects by which they witness to us of holy truth, and fill us with obedient, joyful, and thankful emotion.6

On the same subject we find this statement in Modern Painters, Volume One: "...the Divine mind is as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the fitting of the pillars of heaven, and settling the foundations of the earth."7 For those who can "see clearly," "...there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star."8

Thus, just as for man "all great art is the work of the whole living creature, body and soul, and chiefly the soul,"9 so all natural objects are the works of the Divine Spirit. And since art is "nothing but a noble and expressive language,"10 it would not be amiss to say that Ruskin looked upon nature as the Divine work of art by which man is made the eye-witness to "holy truth."
Returning now to our first quotation from Ruskin, we may better understand the assumptions underlying the statement that "to see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, -- all in one." We may also better understand why Ruskin attached a moral value to everything a man thinks (perceives and feels) and does; for what a man does (so the argument goes) finely reflects what he thinks, and what he thinks, even down to his most trivial predilections of taste, will reveal just how thoroughly he has grasped the "holy truth" manifest in the appearances of things. In *The Crown of Wild Olive* (Lecture II), Ruskin leaves no room for doubt as to his opinion on this point: "Taste is not only a part and an index to morality; -- it is the only morality. The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Tell me what you like and I'll tell you what you are."

A moral judgment is established when an individual prefers one object of art above another,"...and it is not an indifferent nor optional thing whether we love this or that; but it is just the vital function of all our being. What we like determines what we are, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character." To love that which is unworthy of love is a sign of some moral distortion, since "all delight in art, and all love of it, resolve themselves into simple love of that which deserves love."

We may conclude from this statement that one of the
major tasks of the artist is to create an object worthy of love. But how does he go about it? What values will he bring to the canvas? We saw earlier that "telling plainly" amounted simply to accurately representing things "as they appear to man." This definition should give us a basis for advancing a step or two further in our examination of terms, for now we may ask what object or set of objects an artist must choose to "tell plainly," and how they are to be treated in order to be worthy of love.

In differentiating between the subjects of science and art, Ruskin states that art, as well as portraying the appearances of things, should "deepen the natural impressions which they produce on living creatures." He also mentions that the "truth of aspect" is "ascertained and accumulated" by the artist. We shall discover as we continue our discussion that the objects "ascertained and accumulated" are made worthy on the canvas, and achieve greatness, in proportion to the degree to which the artist's imagination is able to "deepen" our natural impressions.

First, we must understand that by "the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature," Ruskin is not referring to mechanical imitation; the word "fact" in this context is used to describe "statements" of qualities of material things, and "...of emotions, impressions, and thoughts. There is a moral as well as material truth,—a truth of impression as well as of form,—of thought as well as of matter; and the truth of impression
and thought is a thousand times the more important of the two." The major objection to simple imitation in painting is that it "takes cognizance only of material things." It limits the mind to a deceptive likeness of objects, and the intellect observing it "derives its pleasure, not from the contemplation of a truth," but from "finding out what has been suggested to it is not what it appears to be." 

Greatness in art departs from inferiority as it reaches beyond material resemblance and begins to suggest the notion of some moral or spiritual truth, which may be conveyed by any signs or symbols that "...have a definite signification in the minds of those to whom they are addressed, although such signs be themselves no image nor likeness of anything." Ideas of imitation "speak to the perceptive faculties only: truth to the concepitive." However, the concepitive or intellectual elements in a work of art can never be wholly isolated from the perceptive, and Ruskin appeals for assistance in this problem to John Locke: "The term idea, according to Locke's definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are 'things which the mind occupies itself about in thinking,' that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye." In other words, we may use the terms idea and object interchangeably.

Ruskin would have us understand that objects represented in painting attain the status of art only after
human hands and mind have personalized them. This, we are told, is what essentially distinguishes the object of nature from the object of art: we must be able to recognize—
"...the visible operation of human intellect in the presentation of truth, the evidence of what is called design or plan in a work, no less than veracity. A looking glass does not design [;];...a painter designs when he chooses some things, refuses others, and arranges all." This is not to say that an artist could not faithfully represent the objects in nature if he chose. It is assumed that the painter, if he is to be called a painter, has

...learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully; but he has yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much toward being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has toward being a great poet...\nonject and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or writer is to be finally determined.

From the notion of art's being a form of communication like poetry, Ruskin deduces that the greatest thoughts are "those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition, and the praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression."\n
In creating a work of art, thoughts or moral truths are evoked by setting impressions of objects in some telling relationship to one another. We are given the example of
Turner's "Building of Carthage" in which--

The principal object in the foreground...is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion, which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stonemasons or arming soldiers, is quite appreciable when it is told as when it is seen—it has nothing to do with the technicalities of painting; a scratch of the pen would have conveyed the idea and spoken to the intellect as much as elaborate realizations of color. 23

The argument for the value of art which appeals to the "higher faculty" of the mind concludes with this generalization:

...that art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by the higher faculty of the mind, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this, then, be the definition of great art, that of the artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas. 24

The greatest ideas, Ruskin tells us in the third volume of Modern Painters, are those ideas which address themselves to the whole person, and are able to quicken in us "those four sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration and Joy...and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror and Grief." It matters not so much what the subject is (though, as we shall see later, there are distinctions in the quality of subjects); what makes

...the difference between great and mean art [and great and mean ideas in art] lies...wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed...It does not
matter whether the artist paint the petal of a rose, or the chains of a precipice, so that Love and Admiration attend him as he labors, and waits forever upon his work.26

I think we have made some headway, then, in answering the question as to which objects, in principle, Ruskin would have the artist choose to "tell plainly," and how these objects must be treated in order to be worthy of love: the choice of object is secondary in importance, so long as the treatment translates it on canvas into an idea inspired by some noble end, and conveys to the observer the largest possible "sum of truth." 27 Truth, once perceived and felt, is understood to mean a moral "fact of nature."

An artist's "taste," and therefore the moral direction of his character, will be shown by the subjects he chooses to paint, though the great artist will only be content with

...subjects of thought which involve wide interests and profound passions, as opposed to those which involve narrow interests and slight passions ....The habitual choice of sacred subjects, such as the Nativity, Transfiguration, Crucifixion (if the choice be sincere), implies that the painter has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable; it constitutes him so far forth a painter of the highest order, as, for instance, Leonardo, in his painting of the Last Supper: he who delights in representing the acts or meditations of great men, as, for instance, Raphael painting the School of Athens, is, so far forth, a painter of the second order: he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life, of the third....28

The artist's subject need not be in itself beautiful, for "dwelling perpetually on one class of ideas, what he supposed to be nobleness of selection ends in narrowness of perception."29 Great art "...will not deny the facts of
ugliness or decrepitude, or relative inferiority and super-
iority as necessarily manifested in a crowd, but it will, so
far as it is in its power, seek for and dwell upon the
fairest forms, and in all things insist on the beauty that
is in them, not on the ugliness.”

It remains for us to examine at this point what is
meant by the term "beauty." The first thing to understand
is that, in Ruskin's opinion, our pleasurable sensations do
not admit to intellectual investigation: they are "the pri-
mary principles of our nature." Thus, he defines beauty as
"any material object which can give us pleasure in the simple
contemplation of its outward qualities without any direct
and definite exertion of the intellect." Because our tend-
cencies of attraction and aversion are irreducible, "nearly
the whole study of aesthetics is...either gratuitous or use-
less": "It is the province of aesthetics to tell you (if
you did not know it before), that the taste and color of a
peach are pleasant, and to ascertain, if it be ascertainable
(and you have any curiosity to know), why they are so."32

The sense of beauty is a moral attribute, because the
Deity designed us to find certain things pleasant and others
unpleasant—which brings us back to our discussion of
"taste": "tell me what you like, and I will tell you what
you are." If a man has developed, and not distorted, those
natural "desires and aversions" which the Deity intended
for him, he will be in possession of "good taste." Carrying
a circular argument to the extreme, Ruskin asserts that,
"Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection."  

With regard to great art, the most general definition of beauty is "What one noble spirit has created, seen and felt by another of similar nobility." Ruskin gives this view a different expression in *The Stones of Venice*, when he writes that the work of a great artist "...addresses the whole creature. That in which the perfect being speaks must have a perfect being to listen." But the mutual perfections quite obviously differ from each other since the function of the one is to create and of the other to contemplate. Aside from the technical ability required for creation, what distinguishes the function of a great artist is the strength of his imagination. The simplest example is offered in *Modern Painters*, where Ruskin speaks of landscape painting. He writes:

Although with respect to many important scenes, it might be one of the most precious gifts that could be given us to see them with our own eyes; yet also in many things it is more desirable to be permitted to see them with the eyes of others; and although, to the small, conceited, and affected painter displaying his narrow knowledge and tiny dexterities, our only word may be, 'Stand aside from between that nature and me;' yet to the great imaginative painter—greater a million times in faculty and soul than we—our word may wisely be, 'Come between this nature and me—this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me, interpret it to me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit.'  

All the noblest pictures have this character. They are true or inspired ideals, seen in a moment to be ideal; that is to say, the result of the highest powers of imagination, engaged in
the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness.36

Now this is what I was leading up to when I said that the degree of greatness in painting depends primarily on the extent to which the artist's imagination is able to "deepen" our natural impressions of things. Marcel Proust, speaking of a poet's treatment of landscapes, formulates another version of the same idea when he says that "...what makes them [objects expressed in poetry] seem to us more beautiful than the whole rest of the world, is that they give us, like some vastering reflection, the effect that they once produced on genius."37

II

These, then, are a few of the principal statements by which Ruskin hoped to establish a just set of criteria for judging the artist and his work. In Modern Painters his immediate aim was to vindicate the landscape paintings of J.M.W. Turner which had received a series of critical blows, especially in Blackwood's magazine, from 1836 to 1842. Turner had been attacked on the grounds that his work, though fine in the past, was becoming more and more eccentric. In the violence of his colors, the obscurity of his forms, the "haziness" that enveloped all his present work, he seemed no longer to concern himself with well established rules of art, rules deeply rooted in a tradition known as the Grand Style, and given their best expression in Joshua Reynolds's Discourses of Art.
It will advance our purpose somewhat if, very briefly, we note the chief opinions on the Grand Style held by Turner's critics. First, the painter should concern himself with representing the Ideal in nature; that is, he should depict, not the minute and relatively unimportant "particulars" in a subject, but the "general characteristics." In this manner he should free nature from ugliness and defect, and bring his subject to an idealized perfection. Although he should pass over insignificant details, the artist must give to every figure a clarity of outline; there should be no "mistiness" or obscurity in his forms, but all must be rendered "in focus" or "finished." Color must be subordinated to "design," and should be kept warm and subdued, or as some critics put it, "modest." Areas of light should be set off one from another. When the human figure is treated, it should also be brought to perfection, as the Greeks had done with their sculpture. The worthiest subjects were thought to be religious or historic. Artists of the seventeenth century, such as Claude and Nicolas Poussin, were considered the great masters of the Grand Style in landscape painting, and were to be studied and closely followed.

Actually, Joshua Reynolds would never have agreed that rules alone could produce great art. He said himself that the artist must first and finally appeal to nature, but because he had not emphasized the point, his disciples passed it over, and gave their attention to what appeared
the more tangible strictures. Anyway, it was fairly well agreed that classical models could not be surpassed. With a sufficient knowledge of the great art of the past and of the mechanics of painting, it was thought possible for an artist to create a masterpiece.

Now Ruskin was not about to deny the greatness of the French and Italian Renaissance painters, but it was abundantly clear to him that Turner was equally great, if not greater. Why had the Blackwood's critics failed to see this? The source of the problem was two-fold: First, the critics had accused Turner of painting out of nature as opposed, say, to Poussin. From his own careful observation, Ruskin knew this to be false. On the contrary, Turner had captured material appearances as perhaps no painter had before him. By the substance of their accusations the critics had shown themselves unable, or at least unwilling, to see clearly the material "facts of nature"—if, that is, they looked on nature at all.

Secondly, the argument itself that greatness consists in imitating physical appearances was, to Ruskin's mind, abhorrent and even immoral. Besides never foiling the perceptive observer, exact imitation ignored the infinitely more important spiritual "facts of nature," the revelation of which, contrary to the Blackwood's opinion, accounted for the greatness of such painters as Michael Angelo and Tintoretto. The ability faithfully to represent an object, though essential as we have seen before, could not be
valued in itself, just as a command over words gave no particular advantage if a man had nothing worthwhile to say. How much truer, then, in the case of a poet, whose end and duty it was to convey timeless "emotions, impressions, and thoughts."

Thus considering the depth of error into which his opponents had fallen, Ruskin soon realized that he would have to start at the very basis of art criticism. He had first to destroy prejudice, from there to build anew. But mainly, and this is the most important point, as Turner had tried to do, he had to teach people to see.

In the first volume of Modern Painters, he proposed to limit his discussion to physical phenomena with the intention of proving that Turner's paintings were not "out of nature." He promised to be entirely objective. But he ended in over-stating his case, so that many were inclined to believe that he meant imitation to be of the first importance. And the confusion was amplified because his descriptions of nature, though accurate enough, were highly poetic, and in themselves resembled a kind of Turner landscape. When he came to set forth theories, say, on ideas of power or ideas of relation, he tended always to exaggerate, and he seemed everywhere to call upon moral values that were patently un-objective. To say that the greatest thoughts are those least dependent on language, and that "the dignity of any composition, and the praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or
expression" was clearly ridiculous. The imaginative power of his own poetic descriptions contradicted the assertion. When he proceeded to define beauty, he ran into a similar problem of trying to isolate mental processes. He would not allow beauty to be intellectually perceived, but sensually, so that all the moral qualities he meant to associate with this term were somehow denied rationality, and he was forced to draw upon such mysterious capacities as the "moral faculty" and its companion "taste," or to make such airy generalizations as, beauty consists ultimately in "what one noble spirit has created, seen and felt by another of similar nobility." Moreover, by separating "truth" from "beauty" and stating that the greatest art conveys the greatest number of noble ideas, beauty became somehow irrelevant. Other absurdities are easily discovered in the outline I have given of general terms; the statement, for example, that great art is distinguished from mean art "wholly" by "the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed," and that it does not matter what an artist paints, so long as "Love and Admiration attend him as he labors."

But after the first volume of *Modern Painters*, the major problem that Ruskin had to resolve was the seeming confusion between imitation and expression; that is, granting the meanness of mere copy work, how far could an artist be allowed to assert his own feelings and emotions onto the canvas? Ruskin was careful to point out that much depends upon what ideas the artist sets out to communicate, yet all
that he writes on the subject may finally be reduced to this, that just as the individual of perfect taste will sense the presence of beauty wherever it may potentially exist, the great artist will know intuitively the proper means by which to convey his own personal vision of nature. In fact, this is the distinguishing mark of a great imaginative artist, and its full recognition the mark of an imaginative observer. Rules, he declared, will not help in the creation of great art. Rules are the stuff of inferior minds, while genius is free from anything mechanical. And here we see one of Ruskin's most essential arguments against Turner's critics. They seemed to suggest that great art could be derived from knowledge, whereas Ruskin believed it to be the child of inspiration. Knowledge could be learned and was restricted to the mind alone, but genius was a quality of feeling and perception, involving the whole man, body, mind and soul. Turner's critics had stopped at the superficialities of painting. They failed to see that painting, above all, is a means by which a great imagination penetrates into the reality of things: "It never stops at crusts or ashes or outward images of any kind; it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart; nothing else will content its spirituality.”

While nature, then, is the bodying forth of the Divine Spirit, great art is the bodying forth of the human spirit, the eye-witness to "holy truth." Turner had known this, and the supremacy of his genius lay in his ability to assert
"emotions, impressions, and thoughts" into his work and at the same time remain true to the appearance of nature as it is received "passively and naively" through the eye. Turner knew just how far his subjects needed "realization" and "finish." He knew that painting must appeal primarily to the imagination, but that for a subject to be well imagined was not enough;

...it must task the beholder also to imagine well; and this so imperatively, that if he does not choose to rouse himself to meet the work, he shall not taste it, nor enjoy it in any wise. Once that he is well awake, the guidance which the artist gives him should be full and authoritative: the beholder's imagination must not be suffered to take its own way, or wander hither and thither; but neither must it be left at rest; and the right point of realization, for any given work of art, is that which will enable the spectator to complete it for himself, in the exact way that artist would have him, but not that which will save him the trouble of effecting the completion. So soon as the idea is entirely conveyed, the artist's labor should cease, and every touch which he adds beyond the point when, with the help of the beholder's imagination, the story ought to have been told, is a degradation to his work. So that the art is wrong, which either realizes its subject completely, or fails in giving such definite aid as shall enable it to be realized by the beholding imagination.39

Once having roused the spectator's imagination, the artist will proceed as if to say:

'Here is a tree for you, and it is to be an oak. Now I know that you can make it green and intricate for yourself, but that is not enough: an oak is not only green and intricate, but its leaves have most beautiful and fantastic forms which I am very sure you are not quite able to complete without help; so I will draw a cluster or two perfectly for you, and then you can go on and do all the other clusters. So far so good: but the leaves are not enough; the oak is to be full of acorns, and
you may not be quite able to imagine the way they grow, nor the pretty contrast of the glossy almond-shaped nuts with the chasing of their cups; so I will draw a bunch or two of acorns for you, and you can fill up the oak with others like them....'

In this way the calls upon the imagination are multiplied as a great painter finishes; and from these larger incidents he may proceed into the most minute particulars, and lead the companion imagination to the veins in the leaves and the mosses on the trunk, and the shadows of the dead leaves upon the grass, but always multiplying thoughts, or subjects of thought, never working for the sake of realization.

These two statements on realization were made in the conclusion to *The Stones of Venice*, written during the period between the second and the third volume of *Modern Painters*. It represents perhaps the best source of commentary on imitation and expression. Although Turner is only mentioned in passing, the arguments are clearly addressed to the disciples of Joshua Reynolds. After realization, Ruskin went on to speak of the use of color, quite obviously in answer to the charges made against Turner:

No amount of expression or invention can redeem an ill-colored picture; while, on the other hand, if the color be right, there is nothing it will not raise or redeem; and, therefore, whatever color enters at all, anything may be sacrificed to it, and, rather than it should be false or feeble, everything must be sacrificed to it: so that when an artist touches color, it is the same thing as when a poet takes up a musical instrument; he implies, in so doing that he is a master, up to a certain point, of that instrument, and can produce sweet sounds from it, and is able to fit the course and measure of his words to its tones, which if he be not able to do, he had better not have touched it. In like manner, to add color to a drawing is to undertake the perfection of a visible music, which if it be false, will utterly and assuredly mar the whole work;
if true, proportionately elevate it, according to its power and sweetness. 41

The rules of the Grand Style had determined that color should be subdued, and subordinated to design, but Ruskin maintained that

...when it is permitted to enter at all, it must be with the pre-determination that, cost what it will, the color shall be right and lovely: and I only wish that, in general, it were better understood that a painter's business is to paint, primarily; and that all expression, and grouping, and conceiving, and what else goes to constitute design, are of less importance than color, in a colored work. 42

IV

Despite the clarity of these and other theoretical statements on art, there is always something indefinite and inconsistent about Ruskin's criticism. It is only when he addressed himself to some concrete subject, a particular painting or a scene in nature, that his genius cast its finest light, for what Turner did with paint, Ruskin did with words. The brilliancy of color, even the "mistiness" that characterized many of Turner's works, is seen in Ruskin's poetic prose. He looked upon works of art and the works of nature from essentially the same point of view; through his eyes, both human and divine creation were enriched with a sense of wonder, and this sense of wonder he was eminently capable of passing on to others. Marcel Proust confesses that after reading one of Ruskin's books, "I suddenly saw the universe as something of infinite value. My admiration for Ruskin gave such a high importance to the objects he had made me love that they seemed as though charged with a greater richness even than life itself." 43
In another place, speaking of Ruskin's love of beauty, Proust gives what seems to me the best possible statement on the spirit behind Modern Painters and The Stones of Venice.

This Beauty to which he thus found himself dedicated, was conceived by him, not as an object of delight existing to give him pleasure, but as a reality infinitely more important than life itself, for which he would have given his own. That, you will discover, was the starting point of all Ruskin's aesthetic philosophy.44
NOTES


3 Selections from Writings, II, 207.


5 Selections, p. 62.

6 Works, III, 306.

7 Works, I, 324.

8 Works, I, 324.

9 Selections, p. 53.

10 Works, I, 18.


12 Victorian Prose, p. 368.

13 Victorian Prose, p. 367.

14 Works, I, 21.

15 Works, I, 24.

16 Works, I, 24.

17 Works, I, 20.
NOTES (cont.)

18 Works, I, 20.
19 Works, I 12.
20 Selections from Writings, p. 178.
21 Works, I, 8-9.
22 Works, I, 19.
23 Works, I, 29.
24 Works, I, 12.
25 Works, III, 10.
26 Works, III, 21-22.
29 Works, III, 33.
30 Works, III, 33.
32 Works, I, 26.
33 Works, I, 26.
34 Victorian Prose, p. 335.
35 Selections, p. 53.
36 Works, III, 139.
37a The following outline on the Grand Style is taken from Van Akin Burd's "Background to Modern Painters: The Tradition and the Turner Controversy," PLMA, LXXIV (1959), 254-267.
NOTES (cont.)

38 Work., III, 164.
39 Work., V, 182.
40 Work., V, 184.
41 Work., V, 186.
42 Work., V, 187.
43 Proust, p. 106.
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