Samuel Johnson. London: A Poem in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal. London, 1738; rev. 1748.

Early editions of the poem

1738[1] First edition: R. Dodsley, 1738 (12 May). Folio.
Dodsley bought the copyright of the poem from Johnson for 10 guineas. Johnson later remarked to Boswell, "I might perhaps have accepted less, but that Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead" [Smith 1].

1738[2] Second ed., revised: R. Dodsley, 1738 (ca. 20 May). Folio and octavo.
66 lines excerpted in the Gentleman's Magazine (May 1738): 269.
Dublin ed.: George Faulkner, 1738. Octavo.
Third ed.: R. Dodsley, 1738 (15 July). Folio.
Fourth ed.: R. Dodsley, 1739. Folio.

1748[1] Revised ed. in Dodsley's Collection of Poems (1748), 1:101 (2nd ed. 1748; 1:192) [= *1748*[2]].

1751-82 "All subsequent editions of Dodsley [1751, 1755, 1758, 1763, 1765, 1766, 1770, 1775, 1782] follow this text, as do Two Satires by Samuel Johnson, Oxford, 1759; The Art of Poetry on a New Plan, 1761, II.116; The Beauties of English Poesy, ed. Goldsmith, 1767, I.59; A Select Collection of Poems, Edinburgh, 1768, 1772, I.50; Davies, Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces, 1773, 1774, II.300; D. Junii Juvenalis et A. Persii Flacci Satirae, ed. Knox, 1784, p. 373; Poetical Works, 1785, p.1" (Yale 46).

1750 Fifth ed.: R. Dodsley, 1750. Quarto. (reverts to text of first ed.)
Probably many years after 1750 (Smith), "Johnson used a copy of this on which to make changes and add notes, forgetting the revisions he had already made. This copy, which has now disappeared, Hawkins used for his text in Works, 1787, XI.319. . . . James Boswell the younger did see the annotated copy, and in 1793 or later transcribed Johnson's revisions and notes into a copy of the 1789 edition of Johnson's poems, a volume owned by the late D. Nichol Smith" (Yale 46-47).

1785 Poetical Works.

1787 Works. Ed. Sir John Hawkins.
Incorporates the ms. revisions (lines 5, 131, 218, 241) and all but one of the notes made by Johnson to a copy of 1750.

1789 Poetical Works.

1816 Works. Ed. Alexander Chalmers.
Johnson's ms. note to line 194 "was first printed in Works, 1816" (Yale 47).

Abbreviations used in notes

Brady = Frank Brady and W. K. Wimsatt, ed. Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose. Berkeley: U of California P, 1977.

Greene = Donald Greene, ed. The Oxford Authors: Samuel Johnson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984.

Smith = David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam, ed. The Poems of Samuel Johnson. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1941.

Yale = E. L. McAdam, with George Milne, ed. Poems. Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol. VI. New Haven: Yale UP, 1964.

Both Smith and Yale use the text of "London" in Dodsley's Collection of Poems (1748^1), corrected by Johnson's manuscript revisions and notes (made to a copy of 1750), for their editions. They also silently correct typographical errors.

The text below is based on Yale (= 1748^1) but notes significant variations found in other editions. I relegate Johnson's ms. revisions to the footnotes, so as to present a text closer to what actually circulated publicly in the eighteenth century. Yale also includes references (which I omit) to revisions found in the fragmentary manuscript of Johnson's rough draft of the poem (consisting of a single large sheet, it was rediscovered in about 1945).

I omit, however, the reprinting of corresponding passages of Juvenal's original Latin; these can be found in Smith and Yale. "Johnson insisted that the passages in Juvenal's satire which he had followed most directly 'must be subjoined at the bottom of the page, part of the beauty of the performance (if any beauty be allowed it) consisting in adapting Juvenal's sentiments to modern facts and persons.' Herein he was following a common habit and in particular the practice of Pope, who in the original editions of some of his Imitations of Horace had the corresponding passages in the original printed on the left-hand page" [Smith 1-2].

Juvenal's Third Satire had earlier been adapted in an English "imitation" by John Oldham in 1682; it had also been translated into English by John Dryden in 1693. "There is little in common between Oldham's and Johnson's poems, beyond the similarity unavoidable in imitations of the same original" [Smith 2], though both Oldham and Johnson indulge in gallophobic denunciations as substitutes for Juvenal's decrying of Greek influence on Roman society. (Pope, too, in his imitation of Horace, makes French cultural influence stand in for the Greek cultural dominance denounced by his original.) Juvenal's poem subsequently also inspired Samuel Derrick's *The Third Satire of Juvenal, translated into English verse* (1755) and Edward Burnaby Greene's *The Satires of Juvenal Paraphrastically Imitated, and adapted to the Times* (1763) [Smith 3]. In discussing modern "imitations" of ancient poetry his "Life of Pope" (1781), Johnson himself argues that "between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern" [quoted in Smith 4]; against this, one might place Oliver Goldsmith's judgment, made with respect to Johnson's *London*, in *The Beauties of English Poesy* (1767) that "Imitation gives us a much truer idea of the ancients than even translation could do" [quoted in Smith 3]. In any case, "imitations" of classical poems were popular in English for about eighty years from the 1680s till past the midpoint of the eighteenth century.

More generally, "what was preeminently a social satire expressing disgust with the inequalities, the follies and the rottenness of city life, and exalting by contrast the conditions which are surmised to prevail in the country, becomes in Johnson's hands largely a political satire. His antipathy to Walpole's administration is given free scope in the allusions to [pusillanimity in the face of Spanish depredations,] excise, the abuse of pensions, the tyranny of the licensing laws, and the servitude of a thoughtless age. . . . *London* could be regarded by the 'patriots' as a political

manifesto [much like an article in *The Craftsman* published on the same day as *London*, which "begins with a reference to Juvenal, and deals with some of the same topics as the poem"]. The rapid and steady sale, which called for the second edition in a week and a third in two months, is not to be attributed solely to poetic merit" [Smith 2].

London
A Poem in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal.

Quis ineptæ
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?
Juvenal

Tho' grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injur'd Thales bids the town farewell,
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend,
I praise the hermit, but regret the friend,
Who now resolves, from vice and London far,
To breathe in distant fields a purer air,
And, fix'd on Cambria's solitary shore,
Give to St. David one true Briton more.
For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land,
Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
There none are swept by sudden fate away,
But all whom hunger spares, with age decay:
Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
And now a rabble rages, now a fire;

Epigraph] "Who can endure this monstrous city? Who is so iron-willed he can bear it?" (Juvenal) [Brady]

Line 2 Thales] "Thales corresponds to Juvenal's Umbricius, who leaves for the country in disgust at the life in Rome" [Smith].

Line 5 Who now resolves] "Resolved at length" (Johnson's MS. revision); "Resolv'd at length" (*1787*).

Lines 7-8 Cambria . . . St. David] Ancient name for Wales; "St. David" is the patron saint of Wales. [Brady]

Line 9 Hibernia] Ireland.

Line 10 Strand] A street in the heart of London [Brady].

Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay,
And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
Here falling houses thunder on your head,
And here a female atheist talks you dead.
While Thales waits the wherry that contains
Of dissipated wealth the small remains,
On Thames's banks, in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth;
In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew,
And call Britannia's glories back to view;
Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain,
Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,

Line 16 fell] Cruel.

Line 19 wherry] A narrow river vessel. [Brady]

Line 23 Eliza] "Queen Elizabeth born at Greenwich" [Johnson's note, printed in *1787*]. Elizabeth I was a heroine for the Opposition to Walpole because of her success against the Spanish. Greenwich on Thames was then "an outlying village" and is now "a district of London" [Brady]; "Johnson was lodging at Greenwich when he wrote the poem" [Smith].

Line 27 her cross] England's flag, the red cross of St. George.

Line 29 excise] Like customs duties, a tax on commodities, but applying to home products as well as, when originally established in 1643, to some foreign products. Later, the term came to be restricted to taxes applied to home products only, a "sort of inland customs" as Adam Smith put it in 1776 (*OED*). Walpole's attempt to increase excise taxes in 1733, following on earlier excises and duties passed in 1724 and 1732, prompted a concerted opposition campaign that caused him to withdraw the measure and led to a significant diminishment of Walpole's majority in the House of Commons in the election of 1734. Walpole's proposal was designed to reduce the tax burden on the landed classes by shifting much of it onto the mercantile classes and "consumers" as a whole. The opposition to excises stemmed not only from the pecuniary tax itself but also from the fact that its enforcement involved granting "extensive powers of search to revenue officers, and a wide jurisdiction to magistrates and excise commissioners. The Englishman's right to privacy on his own property, and also to trial by jury, were put at risk. An entire genre of horror stories, retailed in the press and depicted in broadsheets and prints, exploited such fears" (Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* [1989], 29). In his *Dictionary* (1755), Johnson defines "excise" as "A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid" [Smith].

Or English honour grew a standing jest.
A transient calm the happy scenes bestow,
And for a moment lull the sense of woe.
At length awaking, with contemptuous frown,
Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town.
Since worth, he cries, in these degen'rate days,
Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise;
In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science toils in vain;
Since hope but sooths to double my distress,
And ev'ry moment leaves my little less;
While yet my steddy steps no staff sustains,
And life still vig'rous revels in my veins;
Grant me, kind heaven, to find some happier place,
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
Some peaceful vale with mature's paintings gay;
Where once the harass'd Briton found repose,
And safe in poverty defy'd his foes;
Some secret cell, ye pow'rs, indulgent give.
Let —— live here, for —— has learn'd to live.
Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite

Line 30 English honour grew a standing jest] "An allusion to the peaceful policies of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. His opponents [in the "patriot" opposition (cf. line 52)] called them cowardly" [Brady]; Walpole's "alleged failure to protect British merchant ships from depredations by Spanish coast guards" was a standard topic of Opposition rhetoric [Greene].

Line 35 The rest of the poem is a speech by Thales [Smith].

Line 37 devote] Devoted; doomed.

Line 38 science] Learning.

Line 41 steddy] "steady" (in *edd. 1-5*).

Line 45 osiers] Willows.

Line 47 Where once the harass'd Briton found repose] "The ancient Britons retreated to Wales when the Saxons and other Germanic tribes invaded England" [Brady].

Line 50 "Fred Springer-Miller has pointed out that this line is a close paraphrase of Boileau: 'Que George vive ici, puisque George y sait vivre' (*Satire*, I.34), and suggested that 'George,' i.e. George II, be supplied for the blanks. [*Notes and Queries* 196 (1951): 497]" [Yale].

To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth,
And lend a lye the confidence of truth.
Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
Collect a tax, or farm a lottery,
With warbling eunuchs fill a licens'd stage,

Lines 51-52 pensions . . . patriot . . . courtier] "The 'Patriots' were those who opposed Walpole and the Court party ['courtiers']. Pension grants were a common means of influencing M.P.'s" [Brady]. In his *Dictionary* (1755), Johnson defines "pension" as "An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling, for treason to his country" [Smith]. "When Johnson received his own pension [of £300 per annum, in 1762 from Lord Bute's ministry under George III], these definitions, and the 'distant hints and dark allusions' in this poem were turned to account by [John] Wilkes in *The North Briton* (No. 12, 21 August 1762)"; likewise, Horace Walpole commented on this line in his copy of Dodsley's *Collection* (1748), "This would have suited Johnson himself latterly" [Smith].

Line 54 pirates] "The invasions of the Spaniards were defended in the houses of Parliament" [Johnson's note, printed in *1787*]. "The Parliamentary Opposition denounced Walpole's policy of allowing the Spanish to stop and search all ships trading with their American colonies" [Brady]. The unacknowledged hypocrisy of Johnson's "patriotic" rhetoric here is that English ships were the pirates and smugglers, not the Spanish. "Spain had at this time the legal right to regulate the traffic with her American possessions, and the activity with which she enforced the search of English merchant vessels created a popular indignation which was steadily augmented after the affair of 'Jenkins's ear' in 1731 till in 1739 Walpole was forced against his will into a naval war with Spain" [Smith]. Cf. Pope's *Epistle to Augustus*, l.2, and *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-Eight*, ll.17, 18 [Smith].

Line 58 Collect a tax, or farm a lottery] "Tax collecting and 'farming' a lottery (paying a fixed amount to the government to conduct a lottery and keeping the proceeds) were often highly profitable activities" [Brady].

Line 59 warbling eunuchs] I.e., the *castrati* (male sopranos) who sang in Italian opera, then fashionable in London [Brady]. "The 'warbling eunuchs' of the popular Italian opera had been the object of attack since Addison, partly because the opera was Italian, partly because it was opera, and partly because it was patronized by the court" [Yale].

Line 59 a licens'd stage] "The licensing act was then lately made" [Johnson's note, printed in *1787*]; "our silenc'd stage" (in *edd. 1-5, 1787*). "The Stage Licensing Act, 1737, required plays to be approved and licensed by the Lord Chamberlain's office before they could be publicly performed" [Greene]. The Stage Licensing Act "had been introduced to silence satire on Walpole's government. But by the date of Dodsley's *Collection* [1748], Garrick was manager of Drury Lane, and Johnson changed 'our silenc'd stage' to 'licens'd' . . . Professor Donald J.

And lull to servitude a thoughtless age.
Heroes, proceed! what bounds your pride shall hold?
What check restrain your thirst of pow'r and gold?
Behold rebellious virtue quite o'erthrown,
Behold our fame, our wealth, our lives your own.
To such, a groaning nation's spoils are giv'n,
When publick crimes inflame the wrath of heav'n:
But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
Who start at theft, and blush at perjury?
Who scarce forbear, tho' Britain's Court he sing,
To pluck a titled poet's borrow'd wing;
A statesman's logick unconvinc'd can hear,
And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;
Despise a fool in half his pension dress'd,
And strive in vain to laugh at H—y's jest.
Others with softer smiles, and subtler art,
Can sap the principles, or taint the heart;
With more address a lover's note convey,
Or bribe a virgin's innocence away.
Well may they rise, while I, whose rustick tongue
Ne'er knew to puzzle right, or varnish wrong,

Greene has pointed out that 'warbling eunuchs' on a 'silenced stage' make the best Irish bull Johnson ever committed in print" [Yale].

Line 65 a groaning nation's spoils are giv'n] "the Plunder of a Land is giv'n" (in *edd. 1, 5, 1787*).

Line 73 Gazetteer] "The paper which at that time contained apologies for the Court" [Johnson's note, printed in *1787*]. The *Daily Gazetteer*, est. in 1735, was funded by the ministry.

Line 74 H—y's] "Clodio's" (in *1787*). "H—y's jest" probably stands for "the Revd John 'Orator' Henley, a public buffoon and a supporter of Walpole" [Greene]; he was "an eccentric preacher noted for his crude jests at the Opposition" [Brady]; Pope called him "Preacher at once, and zany of thy age" (*Dunciad* III.206) [Yale]. The allusion was earlier identified as directed at "John Lord Hervey (1696-1743), supporter of Walpole and confidant of the Queen" [Smith], but McAdam later accepts the argument in favor of Henley (first made in Donald Greene's *The Politics of Samuel Johnson*, p.308) [Yale]. "The authority for Hawkins's reading, 'Clodio,' is unknown but . . . 'Clodio,' at least, is in keeping with the non-specific names of Thales, Orgilio, and Balbo" [Yale].

Line 77 address] Skill.

Line 80 puzzle] Confuse.

Spurn'd as a begger, dreaded as a spy,
Live unregarded, unlamented die.
For what but social guilt the friend endears?
Who shares Orgilio's crimes, his fortune shares.
But thou, should tempting villainy present
All Marlb'rough hoarded, or all Villiers spent;
Turn from the glitt'ring bribe thy scornful eye,
Nor sell for gold, what gold could never buy,
The peaceful slumber, self-approving day,
Unsullied fame, and conscience ever gay.
The cheated nation's happy fav'rites, see!
Mark whom the great caress, who frown on me!
London! the needy villain's gen'ral home,
The common shore of Paris and of Rome;
With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a French metropolis.
Illustrious Edward! from the realms of day,

Line 81 begger] "beggar" (in *edd. 1, 5*).

Line 86 Marlb'rough] "The great general, John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), made an immense financial profit during his campaigns against the French in the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-11)" [Brady]. In his "Life of Swift" (1781), Johnson writes, "That is no longer doubted, of which the nation was then first informed, that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough, and that it would have been continued without end if he could have continued his annual plunder" [Smith].

Line 86 Villiers] "George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham [1628-87], who wasted a fortune and died in squalor" [Greene]. Villiers is the "Zimri" of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*; cf. also Pope's *Of the Use of Riches* (1732), ll.299-314 [Smith].

Line 94 shore] "sewer" (in *1758, 1763-82, 1787*); in the *Dictionary* (1755), Johnson writes that "shore" is "properly *sewer*" and "sewer" is "now corrupted to *shore*" [Smith]. "Johnson transfers Juvenal's imprecations against the baleful influence of Greek immigrants in Rome to the French" [Greene]; John Oldham's imitation of Juvenal (1682) has: "the common-shore, / Where France does all her filth and ordure pour" [Yale].

Line 98 French metropolis] I.e., "a London whose customs imitate French ones" [Brady].

Line 99 Edward] "Edward III (1312-77) was famous for his victories over the French [e.g., at Crécy]" [Brady].

Line 99 realms of day] Heaven.

The land of heroes and of saints survey;
Nor hope the British lineaments to trace,
The rustick grandeur, or the surly grace;
But lost in thoughtless ease, and empty show,
Behold the warriour dwindled to a beau;
Sense, freedom, piety, refin'd away,
Of France the mimick, and of Spain the prey.
All that at home no more can beg or steal,
Or like a gibbet better than a wheel;
Hiss'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
Their air, their dress, their politicks import;
Obsequious, artful, voluble and gay,
On Britain's fond credulity they prey.
No gainful trade their industry can 'scape,
They sing, they dance, clean shoes, or cure a clap;
All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,
And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.
Ah! what avails it, that, from slav'ry far,
I drew the breath of life in English air;
Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lisp the tale of Henry's victories;
If the gull'd conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery subdues when arms are vain?
Studious to please, and ready to submit,
The supple Gaul was born a parasite:
Still to his int'rest true, where'er he goes,
Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;
In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,
From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.

Line 104 beau] Dandy, fop.

Line 108 gibbet . . . wheel] "Hanging and breaking on the wheel were the British and French methods of execution respectively" [Brady, following Smith].

Line 112 fond] Foolish.

Line 116 Cf. in Dryden's translation of Juvenal, "And bid him go to Heav'n, to Heav'n he goes" [Smith].

Line 120 Henry's victories] "The victories of Henry V (1387-1422) over the French [e.g. at Agincourt]" [Brady].

Line 122 And flattery subdues when arms are vain?] "And what their armies lost, their cringes gain?" (in *edd. 1-5*); "vain." (in *1748*); "flattery prevails" (in *1787*).

These arts in vain our rugged natives try,
Strain out with fault'ring diffidence a lye,
And gain a kick for aukward flattery.
Besides, with justice, this discerning age
Admires their wond'rous talents for the stage:
Well may they venture on the mimick's art,
Who play from morn to night a borrow'd part;
Practis'd their master's notions to embrace,
Repeat his maxims, and reflect his face;
With ev'ry wild absurdity comply,
And view each object with another's eye;
To shake with laughter ere the jest they hear,
To pour at will the counterfeited tear;
And as their patron hints the cold or heat,
To shake in dog-days, in December sweat.
How, when competitors like these contend,
Can surly virtue hope to fix a friend?
Slaves that with serious impudence beguile,
And lye without a blush, without a smile;
Exalt each trifle, ev'ry vice adore,
Your taste in snuff, your judgment in a whore;
Can Balbo's eloquence applaud, and swear
He gropes his breeches with a monarch's air.
For arts like these preferr'd, admir'd, caress'd,
They first invade your table, then your breast;
Explore your secrets with insidious art,
Watch the weak hour, and ransack all the heart;
Then soon your ill-plac'd confidence repay,

Lines 129-31 "The only triplet in Johnson's mature verse" [Yale].

Line 131 gain] "get" (Johnson's MS. revision, *1787*).

Line 143 dog-days] "Late summer days when Sirius (the Dog Star) was prominent" [Brady].

Line 150 Balbo] "There are no grounds for identifying this 'stammerer' with any one speaker" [Smith].

Line 151 gropes] "Used in the obsolete sense 'to touch with the hand, take hold of, grasp.' This line is quoted in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the latest example of this use" [Smith]. This remark, and the *OED* entry on "grope," seem unnecessarily cautious: the "indecent" sense of the term is attested by the *OED* for 1664 but this sense is labeled "obsolete." It is not, of course, obsolete and there is no reason to suppose that it does not also color Johnson's usage here.

Line 152 preferr'd] Given public office or promotion [Brady].

Commence your lords, and govern or betray.
By numbers here from shame or censure free,
All crimes are safe, but hated poverty.
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
This, only this, provokes the snarling muse;
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak,
Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;
With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,
And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
Of all the griefs that harrass the distress'd,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
Has heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore;
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desart yet unclaim'd by Spain?
Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
And bear oppression's insolence no more.
This mournful truth is ev'ry where confess'd,
SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPRESS'D:
But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold,
Where won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
The groom retails the favours of his lord.
But hark! th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
Roll thro' the streets, and thunder to the skies;
Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and pow'r,
Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r,
Aghast you start, and scarce with aking sight,
Sustain th' approaching fire's tremendous light;
Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,
And leave your little all to flames a prey;
Then thro' the world a wretched vagrant roam,
For where can starving merit find a home?

Line 161 the snarling muse] The muse of satire [Brady].

Line 173 unclaim'd by Spain?] "The Spaniards at this time were said to make claim to some of our American provinces" [Johnson's MS. note, *1787*]. Again, Johnson's discourse, in keeping with the typical British outlook of the time, reverses the actual situation: the British colony of Georgia (est. 1732), and before that traders and settlers from the Carolinas, encroached onto territory long claimed by the Spanish as "Guale"—to say nothing of its native inhabitants, such as the Yamasee and Santee Indians, who had been extirpated by the British after the Yamasee war of 1715.

In vain your mournful narrative disclose,
While all neglect, and most insult your woes.
Should heaven's just bolts Orgilio's wealth confound,
And spread his flaming palace on the ground,
Swift o'er the land the dismal rumour flies,
And publick mournings pacify the skies;
The laureat tribe in servile verse relate,
How virtue wars with persecuting fate;
With well-feign'd gratitude the pension'd band
Refund the plunder of the begger'd land.
See! while he builds, the gaudy vassals come,
And crowd with sudden wealth the rising dome;
The price of boroughs and of souls restore,
And raise his treasures higher than before.
Now bless'd with all the baubles of the great,
The polish'd marble, and the shining plate,
Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,
And hopes from angry heav'n another fire.
Could'st thou resign the park and play content,
For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;
There might'st thou find some elegant retreat,

Line 194 confound] Destroy. Regarding the passage that begins with line 194, Johnson's MS. note remarks: "This was by Hitch a Bookseller justly remarked to be no picture of modern manners, though it might be true at Rome." (This note was first published in Alexander Chalmer's 1816 edition of Johnson's poems, unlike Johnson's other five MS. notes which were included in *1787*.) Charles Hitch (d. 1764) was a bookseller in Paternoster-row; he was one of the publishers of Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) and was Master of the Stationers' Company in 1758 [Smith].

Line 198 servile] "venal" (in *edd. 1, 5, 1787*).

Line 203 dome] Building.

Line 204 boroughs . . . souls] "Rich and powerful persons often 'bought' and 'sold' parliamentary boroughs. Also they often had the right to appoint clergymen to parishes" [Brady].

Line 207 the shining plate] "Vessels made of silver or gold, possibly plated ones" [Brady].

Line 208 aspire] Mount up.

Line 210 park . . . play] Fashionable walking grounds, such as St. James Park . . . and the theatre.

Line 211 Severn . . . Trent] "Rivers in the western and northern English countryside" [Brady].

Some hireling senator's deserted seat;
And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand;
There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flow'rs,
Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs;
And, while thy beds a cheap repast afford,
Despise the dainties of a venal lord:
There ev'ry bush with nature's musick rings,
There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings;
On all thy hours security shall smile,
And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.
Prepare for death, if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolick drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
Yet ev'n these heroes, mischievously gay,

Line 213 Some hireling senator's deserted seat] "The country house of some peer or MP who has a government appointment in Westminster" [Greene].

Line 214 prospects] Views.

Lines 216-23 One might contrast this pastoral evocation of the countryside with Johnson's remarks in his "Life of Savage" (1744): "As he [Savage] was ready to entertain himself with future Pleasures, he had planned out a Scheme of Life for the Country, of which he had no Knowledge but from Pastorals and Songs. He imagined that he should be transported to Scenes of flow'ry Felicity, like those which one Poet has reflected to another, and had projected a perpetual Round of innocent Pleasures, of which he suspected no Interruption from Pride, or Ignorance, or Brutality" [Smith]. One might also note the disappointing encounter with the shepherd's life and rustic simplicity in Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) and *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775).

Line 218 beds] "grounds" (Johnson's MS. revision, *1787*).

Line 223 thine] "thy" (in *edd. 1755-82*). In his *Dictionary* (1755) (A Grammar of the English Tongue—Of Pronouns), Johnson remarks, "*mine* and *thine* were formerly used before a vowel, as *mine amiable Lady*; which though now disused in prose, might be still properly continued in poetry" [Smith].

Line 223 toil] Pronounced "tile": "oi" was usually pronounced "i" (as in "line") [Brady].

Line 226 new commission vain] "A newly commissioned army officer" [Brady].

Line 227 sleeps on brambles] I.e., sleeps uneasily [Brady], as on thorns [Yale].

Lords of the street, and terrors of the way;
Flush'd as they are with folly, youth and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach.
    In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose:
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest,
And plants, unseen, a dagger in your breast.
    Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye Senatorian band,
Whose Ways and Means support the sinking land;
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
To rig another convoy for the k—g.
    A single jail, in Alfred's golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair justice then, without constraint ador'd,
Held high the steady scale, but drop'd the sword;

Line 234 the flambeaux's bright approach] "the rich were lighted on their way home by servants or linkboys carrying torches (flambeaux)" [Brady].

Line 235 train] Retinue.

Line 241 plants] "leaves" (Johnson's MS. revision, *1787*).

Line 242 Tyburn] "The customary place of execution in eighteenth-century London [till 1783]" [Brady].

Line 245 Ways and Means] "A cant term in the House of Commons for methods of raising money" (Johnson's MS. note, *1787*).

Line 247 rig another convoy for the k—g] Johnson satirizes "George II's frequent visits to his mistress, Amalie von Wallmoden, in Hanover" [Greene].

Line 248 Alfred] Alfred the Great, King of the West Saxons (849-899 CE).

Line 251 Held high the steady scale, but drop'd the sword] "Sustain'd the ballance, but resign'd the sword" (in *edd. 1-5*);"deep'd" (in *1755-85*); "sheath'd" (in *1787*); "drop'd" (emendation in Yale, based on MS. note, ". . . but dropp'd the sword," in copy of *A Classical Arrangement of Fugitive Pieces* [1763] at Yale Univ. [see Smith]).

No spies were paid, no special juries known,
Blest age! but ah! how diff'rent from our own!
Much could I add,—but see the boat at hand,
The tide retiring, calls me from the land:
Farewel!—When youth, and health, and fortune spent,
Thou fly'st for refuge to the wilds of Kent;
And tir'd like me with follies and with crimes,
In angry numbers warn'st succeeding times;
Then shall thy friend, nor thou refuse his aid,
Still foe to vice forsake his Cambrian shade;
In virtue's cause once more exert his rage,
Thy satire point, and animate thy page.

Line 252 special juries] "Special juries, drawn from a panel of wealthier citizens than ordinary juries—and therefore presumably more in favour of preserving the *status quo*—were said to be used by the ministry to obtain convictions of Opposition printers and writers for sedition" [Greene].

Line 257 wilds of Kent] "Perhaps meaning the Weald (sometimes spelled 'Wild') of Kent, a large wooded area also covering part of Surrey and Sussex" [Brady].

Line 259 numbers] Verses.

Line 260 nor thou] "If you do not" [Brady].

Line 263 point] Sharpen.