

DR. JOHNSON'S TRANSLATIONS  
FROM THE FRENCH

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## ABSTRACT

### DR. JOHNSON'S TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH

by John Lawrence Abbott

Throughout his long and productive career Dr. Johnson was an active translator. Little scholarly or critical attention, however, has been paid to his translations from the French which in quantity and quality deserve investigation. Dr. Johnson's major French translations are: Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia (1735) from Le Grand's Voyage Historique d'Abissinie (1728); "The Life of Father Paul Sarpi" (1738) from Le Courayer's "Vie Abregée de Fra-Paolo" (1736); A Commentary on Mr. Pope's Principles of Morality, or Essay on Man by Mons<sup>r</sup> Crousaz (1739) from Crousaz's Commentaire sur la Traduction en Vers de M. l'Abbé Du Resnel, de l'Essai de M. Pope sur l'Homme (1738); "A Dissertation on the Amazons" (1741) from Guyon's Histoire des Amazones (1740); "A Panegyric on Dr. Morin" (1741) from Fontenelle's "Eloge de M. Morin" (1731); in Dr. James's Medicinal Dictionary (1743) the lives of Ruysch and Tournefort from Fontenelle's "Eloge de M. Ruysch" (1731) and "Eloge de M. de Tournefort" (1708) and the lives of Aesculapius, Archagathus, Aretaeus, and Asclepiades from Le Clerc's Histoire de la Médecine (1723); and "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" from Brumoy's Le Théâtre des Grecs (1730) for Charlotte Lennox's The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy (1759).

In speaking of Dr. Johnson's French translations the term translation needs to be qualified for it is often inadequate to describe just what he does with his French sources. Johnson does not view translation



simply as a tool to render meaning literally from one language to another but as a means of commentary, criticism, and interpretation. Thus in many of his French renditions he does not attempt to translate faithfully but through condensation, compression, abridgement, and rearrangement of his foreign text he recreates his foreign source rather than translates it. Moreover, Johnson often intrudes upon his texts in various ways and a careful comparison of the French and English reveals Johnsonian attitudes, biases, and prejudices which we would hardly expect to find in the supposedly objective medium of translation. In many cases, then, the term translation fails completely to convey the highly original nature of Johnson's French renditions. At least several of his French translations, "A Dissertation on the Amazons," "The Life of Father Paul Sarpi," and some of the biographies in the Medicinal Dictionary, for instance, deserve full membership in the Johnson canon and are worthy of all the consideration we give his wholly original works.

Johnson's style as translator from the French is no less obvious than his style in his English writings. Certainly the chief stylistic idiosyncrasy in his French translations is the "doublet," often a doubling of a modifier as in "une imitation fine" compared to Johnson's rendition, "a remote and delicate imitation." The doublet is seen so frequently throughout Johnson's translations that it becomes a sort of signature and coupled with his various translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive, it becomes an aid in identifying doubtful translations as Johnsonian or not.

An analysis of Dr. Johnson's French translations is useful not only as it sheds light upon one aspect of his life to which he devoted considerable time and energy, but also as it reveals that even in what many consider a less creative part of Johnson's work his personality, attitudes, and abilities manage to shine through quite forcibly.

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By

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## PREFACE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The variety and multiplicity of the gifts required of him make the great translator as infrequent an apparition as the great critic, who, as everybody knows, is an even rarer bird than the great poet. Yet literature cannot afford to do without good translators; in given situations, it may well need them even more than good authors. Translators are after all the most cosmopolitan among the citizens of the Republic of Letters; their absence from the scene, or their presence in a too limited number, may mean that the literary tradition will rest all too easily within the Chinese wall it has erected around itself. By denying itself a look beyond that wall, a literature is bound to die of slow exhaustion, or, as Goethe said, of self-boredom.<sup>1</sup>

Renato Poggioli

Although Samuel Johnson was an active translator from many languages, including French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Greek, little scholarly or critical attention has been paid to this aspect of his work. In quantity and certainly in quality his translations from the French deserve examination. A brief survey of the scholarship on Dr. Johnson's French translations reveals that there is much to be done on this aspect of his life to which he chose, for various reasons, to devote a considerable amount of time and energy.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Added Artificer," On Translation, ed., Reuben A. Brower (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 147.

Dr. Johnson's first translation from the French, Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia (1735) from Joachim Le Grand's Voyage Historique d'Abissinie (1728), has attracted some scholarly and critical notice not only because it is Johnson's first prose work, but also because of its relationship with Rasselas. Little has been said, however, about Johnson's translation of his French source. Donald Lockhart in a recent Harvard dissertation, Father Jeronymo Lobo's Writings Concerning Ethiopia, Including Unpublished MSS in the Palmella Library, includes a short discussion of Johnson's translation of Le Grand's work, but he does not go much beyond a structural comparison of the French and English texts.<sup>2</sup> Donald Greene in The Politics of Samuel Johnson indicates that a comparison of the French and English texts is necessary in any serious study of the work. He says, "Johnson's fairly drastic cutting and condensation of some parts of Le Grand's text should be kept in mind; the serious student of the work will compare it with the French original as he goes along."<sup>3</sup> A close analysis of the two texts is needed, then, and would provide, as Greene suggests, a base from which a serious examination of Johnson's first prose work could be made.

Dr. Johnson's translation of Father Paul Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent from the French edition of Pierre-François Le Courayer (1736) never appeared because of his feud with a rival translator who was working on the same text.<sup>4</sup> Recently, however, the "Proposals" for the printing of this work were discovered which contain the first few paragraphs of Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's edition. From this small sample we are able to get some idea of how he translated his

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<sup>2</sup>Department of Romance Languages (1958), pp. 70-79.

<sup>3</sup>(New Haven, 1960), p. 302, n. 39.

<sup>4</sup>See Edward Ruhe, "The Two Samuel Johnsons," N&Q (October 1954), 432-435 for an account of this feud.

French source. In 1738, moreover, an article by Johnson appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for November (581-583), entitled, "The Life of Father PAUL SARPI, Author of the History of the COUNCIL OF TRENT; For Printing a new Translation of which, by S. JOHNSON, we have publish'd Proposals." E. L. McAdam, Jr., in "Johnson's Lives of Sarpi, Blake, and Drake," suggests that the article was meant to be an advertisement for Johnson's forthcoming translation of Sarpi's History and that it is a translation, paraphrase, and condensation of Le Courayer's "Vie Abregée de Fra-Paolo" in his edition of Sarpi's work.<sup>5</sup> Although McAdam's comments about Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's "Vie Abregée" are sound throughout, there is need for a more complete analysis of how Johnson works with his source.

Johnson's third translation from the French is A Commentary on Mr. Pope's Principles of Morality, or Essay on Man by Mons<sup>r</sup> Crousaz (1739) from Jean Pierre de Crousaz's Commentaire sur la Traduction en Vers de M. l'Abbé Du Resnel, de l'Essai de M. Pope sur l'Homme (1738). The commentary on these two works has been mainly bibliographical, and there has been no examination of the French and English texts.

In the Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1741 (202-208) there is an article attributed to Johnson by Boswell entitled "A DISSERTATION on the AMAZONS. From the History of the Amazons, written in French by the ABBE DE GUYON" which is a translation of the Abbé de Guyon's Histoire des Amazones Anciennes et Modernes (1740). The scholarship on this translation is slight, and no thorough comparison of the French and English texts has been made. In the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1741 (375-377) there is an article entitled "A Panegyric on Dr. MORIN, by Mr. Fontenelle" which Boswell attributes to Johnson on internal evidence.

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<sup>5</sup>PMLA, LVIII (June 1943), 466-476.



This article, a translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge de M. Morin" from his Eloges des Academiciens de l'Académie Royale des Sciences (1731), has received little scholarly attention.

Dr. Johnson's contributions to Dr. Robert James's Medicinal Dictionary (1743-1745) are not yet fully determined, and I shall examine only those items mentioned by Professor Allen Hazen in two articles in the Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine as probable or possible translations from the French by Johnson. In his "Samuel Johnson and Dr. Robert James" Hazen suggests that the "Life of Tournefort" in "Botany" is translated by Johnson from Fontenelle's "Eloge" from Histoire de l'Académie Royals des Sciences (1708). In the same article Hazen states that "Aesculapius" may well be drawn by Johnson from Daniel Le Clerc's Histoire de la Médecine, and he has little doubt that "Aretaeus" and "Archagathus" are translated by Johnson from Le Clerc. Hazen also feels that "Asclepiades," which is a translation from Le Clerc, is "very probably" by Johnson.<sup>6</sup> In "Johnson's Life of Frederic Ruysch" Hazen suggests that the "Life of Frederic Ruysch" in "Anatomy" in the Medicinal Dictionary is Johnson's translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge" from Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences.<sup>7</sup> Since Hazen is more concerned with questions of attribution in both these articles than translation, more work needs to be done on how Johnson used his French sources.

Johnson's last major translation from the French is "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" which he translated for Mrs. Charlotte Lennox's The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy (1759) from Pierre Brumoy's Le Théâtre des Grecs (1730). No one has examined the two sections Johnson translated or compared them with the translations of other sections by Dr. Sharpe, Dr. Grainger, John Bourryau, the Earl of Corke and Orrery, and Mrs. Lennox in the same work.

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<sup>6</sup>IV (June 1936), 455-465.

<sup>7</sup>VIII (March 1939), 324-334

The only other French translations which need to be examined are a paragraph in Idler No. 8 for Saturday, 3 June 1758 and three short poems. The probable source of the Idler paragraph is either the Abbé de Vertot's Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean (4th ed. 1755), II. 194-203 or a French version (1643) of Giacomo Bosio's Dell 'istoria . . . de S. Gio. Gierosol<sup>no</sup> (1621-84), II. 71-74. The three poems are: "Translation of Verses from a French Pantomine"; Translation of Lines by Benserade"; and "Translations of French Verses on Skating." Also, I have included a brief analysis of the "Preface" to Sully's Memoirs in an attempt to determine if Johnson might have translated it.

Edward Niles Hooker in The Critical Works of John Dennis says that in the early seventeenth century Jonson and Marvell headed a school which held for literal translation while Harington and Chapman claimed the translator had the right to deviate from the foreign text. Toward the middle of the century, and probably under French influence, Cowley and Denham advanced their theory of loose paraphrase which allowed the translator considerable freedom.<sup>8</sup> These men, in their translations and pronouncements about translation, together with Dennis, Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope created that nexus of attitudes about translation that Johnson inherited. It is only in examining their views on translation that one can fully understand Johnson's translations from the French.

Ben Jonson, J. E. Spingarn points out, was the leading exponent of literal translation and complimented May's Lucan as late as 1627 for its fidelity to the original.<sup>9</sup> Opposed to Jonson, though, were such men as George Chapman who vigorously defends his less than literal translation of Homer in his "Preface." Chapman says, "If any taxe me

<sup>8</sup>(Baltimore, 1939), I, 462. Referred to hereafter as Hooker.

<sup>9</sup>Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1908), I, liv. Referred to hereafter as Spingarn.

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for too much periphrasis or circumlocution in some places, let them reade Laurentius Valla and Eobanus Hessus, who either vse such shortnesse as cometh nothing home to Homer, or, where they shun that fault, are ten parts more paraphrastical then I." <sup>10</sup> Later in his "Preface" he defends his translation with even more force. He writes, "Alwaies conceiuing how pendentall and absurd an affectation it is in the interpretation of any Author (much more of Homer) to turn him word for word, when (according to Horace and other best law-giuers to translators) it is the best part of euery knowing and iudiciall interpreter, not to follow the number and order of words, but the materiall things themselues, and sentences to weigh diligently, and to clothe and adorne them with words, and such stile and forms of Oration, as are most apt for the language into which they are conuerted." <sup>11</sup>

Even more than Chapman, though, Sir John Denham and Abraham Cowley were exemplars of the school of free translation which opposed the literal translation favored by Jonson. Denham in "To Sir Richard Fanshaw upon his Translation of Pastor Fido (1647)" praises the poet for his avoidance of literal translation.

That servile path thou nobly dost decline  
 Of tracing word by word, and line by line.  
 Those are the labour'd births of slavish brains,  
 Not the effects of Poetry, but pains;  
 Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrowness affords  
 No flight for thoughts, but poorly sticks at words.  
 A new and nobler way thou dost pursue  
 To make Translations and Translators too.  
 They but preserve the Ashes, thou the Flame,  
 True to his sense, but truer to his fame.  
 Foording his current, where thou find'st it low  
 Let'st in thine own to make it rise and flow;  
 Wisely restoring whatsoever grace  
 It lost by change of Times, or Tongues, or Place.

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<sup>10</sup>Spingarn, 70.

<sup>11</sup>Spingarn, 72.

Nor fetter'd to his Numbers, and his Times,  
 Betray'st his Musick to unhappy Rimes,  
 Nor are the nerves of his compacted strength  
 Stretch'd and dissolv'd into unsinnewed length.<sup>12</sup>

Denham's poetical attack on the strictures of literal translation is reinforced in the "Preface" to his translation of The Destruction of Troy in which he says, "I conceive it a vulgar error in translating Poets, to affect being Fidus Interpres; . . . there being certain Graces and Happinesses peculiar to every Language, which gives life and energy to words; and whosoever offers at Verbal Translation, shall have the misfortune of that young Traveller, who lost his own language abroad, and brought home no other instead of it: for the grace of the Latine will be lost by being turned into English words; and the grace of the English, by being turned into the Latine Phrase."<sup>13</sup>

Abraham Cowley, like Denham, was an advocate of freedom in translation. In the "Preface" to his translation of the Pindarique Odes (1656) Cowley writes, "If a man should undertake to translate Pindar word for word, it would be thought that one Mad-man had translated another; . . . We must consider in Pindar the great difference of time betwixt his age and ours, which changes, as in Pictures, at least the Colours of Poetry, and no less difference betwixt the Religions and Customs of our Countreys, and a thousand particularities of places, persons, and manners, which do but confusedly appear to our eyes at so great a distance."<sup>14</sup> Later in the "Preface" he answers those who would condemn the freedom of his translation saying, "It does not at all trouble me that the Grammarians perhaps will not suffer this libertine way of

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<sup>12</sup>The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham, ed., Theodore H. Banks, Jr. (New Haven, 1928), pp. 143-144, vss. 15-32. Referred to hereafter as Banks.

<sup>13</sup>Banks, pp. 159-160.

<sup>14</sup>Abraham Cowley: The Essays and Other Writings, ed., Alfred B. Gough (Oxford, 1915), pp. 18-19. Referred to hereafter as Gough.

rendring foreign Authors, to be called Translation; for I am not so much enamoured of the Name Translator, as not to wish rather to be Something Better, though it want yet a Name."<sup>15</sup> Cowley continues, pointing out that in his translation he omits from and adds to the original, feeling that it is best for a translator to reveal his author's "way" and "manner" of speaking rather than precisely what he spoke.

John Dryden was not only a student of translation and an active translator in his own right, but he gave to it the nomenclature it badly needed. Dryden's comments on translation made an impact on his own time and on later generations of translators, including Johnson. In an important passage in the "Preface" to his translation of Ovid's Epistles Dryden describes three kinds of translation.

All translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads.

First, that of metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace his Art of Poetry translated by Ben Jonson. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. Such is Mr. Waller's translation of Virgil's Fourth Æneid. The third way is that of imitation, where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the ground-work, as he pleases. Such is Mr. Cowley's practice in turning two Odes of Pindar, and one of Horace, into English.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Gough, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup>Essays of John Dryden, ed., W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1900), I, 237. All subsequent references to this work will be found in the text.

Dryden has little use for direct translation, or what he terms "metaphrase." He declares, "In short, the verbal copier is encumbered with so many difficulties at once, that he can never disentangle himself from all. He is to consider, at the same time, the thought of his author, and his words, and to find out the counterpart to each in another language; and, besides this, he is to confine himself to the compass of numbers, and take the slavery of rhyme" (238). Although Dryden wishes the translator to eschew "metaphrase" and its strictures, he does not want him to practice "imitation" as Denham and Cowley did. Dryden says of their method, "I take imitation of an author, in their sense, to be an endeavour of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject; that is, not to translate his words, or to be confined to his sense, but only to set him as a pattern, and to write, as he supposes that author would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country" (239). Dryden fears that in using "imitation" the translator will fail to present his author's thoughts and that although "imitation" is the best way for a translator to show his abilities, it is "the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead" (240). Dryden urges the translator to seek some sort of via media between the extremes of "imitation" and "metaphrase" and says that the translator's art, like the painter's, must resemble the original from which he works.

In his "Preface" to Sylvae: or, the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies (1685), Dryden also comments extensively on the nature of translation and makes it clear that he views it more as a creative art than merely the passive transmission of meaning from one language to another.

Yet withal, I must acknowledge, that I have many times exceeded my commission; for I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my authors as

no Dutch commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by those pedants, which none but a poet could have found. Where I have taken away some of their expressions, and cut them shorter, it may possibly be on this consideration, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin, would not appear so shining in the English: and where I enlarged them, I desire the false critics would not always think, that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the poet, or may be fairly deduced from him; or at least, if these considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such as he would probably have written. (252)

Later in his "Preface" Dryden reiterates the idea that translation is not merely the transmission of meaning, but a creative search for the inner essence of the foreign text. He writes, "'Tis one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, and the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowing, and chiefly, by the spirit which animates the whole" (252-253). Dryden suggests there is a harder task for the translator than merely giving the author's sense and that he has "already hinted a word or two concerning it; that is, the maintaining the character of an author, which distinguishes him from others, and makes him appear that individual poet whom you would interpret" (254).

Dryden, then, thought penetratingly about translation and viewed it as a creative, interpretive art rather than a mechanical process of rendering one language into another. He discarded those "rules" which required a close adherence to the foreign text and championed an approach that did not hesitate to make those changes which facilitated a deeper understanding and appreciation of the original. Always, though, he was



aware that the translator must strive to avoid the excesses of fidelity on the one hand and those of liberality on the other.

Another important contributor to the theory of translation in the seventeenth century was Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon in his Essay on Translated Verse (1684). According to Edward Niles Hooker, "Roscommon's remarks on translation probably better represent the trend of the period following than do Dryden's."<sup>17</sup> Roscommon in his Essay views translation as a noble endeavor and an important means to enrich English literature. Although he does not feel that translation draws upon the artist's highest creative powers, he does believe it requires considerable ability.

'Tis true, Composing is the Nobler Part,  
But good Translation is no easie Art;  
For tho Materials have long since been found,  
Yet both your fancy and your Hands are bound;  
And by Improving what was writ Before,  
Invention Labours Less, but Judgement more.<sup>18</sup>

A great author, he says, will prove difficult to translate.

For if your Author be profoundly good,  
'Twill cost you dear before he's understood.

(302, vss. 7-8)

But he exhorts the translator to strive for the meaning of the work.

Take pains the genuine Meaning to explore,  
There Sweat, there Strain, tug the laborious Oar.  
Search ev'ry Comment that your Care can find,  
Some here, some there may hit the Poets Mind.

(302, vsss. 21-24)

Like Dryden, Roscommon condemns slavish literalness and suggests that a translation should suit the time in which it is written.

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<sup>17</sup>Hooker, 426.

<sup>18</sup>Spingarn, II, 299, vss. 1-6. All subsequent references to this work will be found in the text.

Words in One Language Elegantly us'd  
 Will hardly in another be excus'd,  
 And some that Rome admir'd in Caesars Time  
 May neither suit Our Genius nor our Clime.  
 The Genuine Sence, intelligibly Told,  
 Shews a Translator both Discret and Bold.

(303, vss. 17-22)

Roscommon, however, is not willing to allow the translator the liberty Dryden and others do, and in a famous statement in his Essay he warns against too much freedom in translating a text.

Excursions are inexpiably Bad,  
 And 'tis much safer to leave out than Add.

(303, vss. 23-24)

John Dennis's comments about translation in the "Preface" to his translation of *The Passion of Byblis* (1692) indicate that he was not quite as strict as Roscommon in his conception of the duty of the translator, nor quite as liberal as Denham or Cowley. Like Dryden, though, Dennis views the translator more as a creative artist than a passive conductor of meaning from one language to another. In his "Preface" he makes it clear that he has no qualms about "improving" or changing the original. He says, "Some of my Friends to whom I have recited in Conversation, the substance of what I have repeated in Writing, have advised me to leave out this unreasonable similitude, [which Byblis utters] especially since I have made so bold with Ovid; . . . All that I would do here, was by giving this passage another turn, to make that appear in the Copy to be spoken in a short, but downright Fury, whose fault it was in the Original to seem to be spoken with too much Considerateness, and too much Coolness of Temper."<sup>19</sup>

Translators in the seventeenth century, then, did not work from a unified theory of translation. Generally, however, they rejected the

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<sup>19</sup>Hooker, 2-3.

Jonsonian ideal of literalism and sought those methods which would capture the "spirit," "fame," and "character" of a work rather than its exact sense. Translation was increasingly viewed as an art rather than a mechanical process, and the ultimate goal of a translator often became the creation of a new work rather than the transmission of a foreign text into English. J. E. Spingarn summarizes concisely the basic seventeenth-century views toward translation.

The gradual divergence of seventeenth-century opinion from the literal conception of translation may be traced through various stages. The attempt to approximate the sense rather than to reproduce the words of the original was justified by the advice of Horace. But from an author's sense to his spirit, from his spirit to his 'fame', and from his fame to a new work intended to replace his own, is a far cry. It is to be remembered, however, that the seventeenth century had no conception of the historical or scientific functions of translation. The purpose of translating a classic was not to further the understanding of outworn modes of thought and experience, or even the subtler appreciation of undying forms of art. The ultimate, as we have seen, was always the creation of a new work of art, which could be enjoyed in itself, and which would enrich English letters with the flower and fruit of ancient eloquence. (I, lvii)

John W. Draper in "The Theory of Translation in the Eighteenth Century" says that the "Eighteenth Century produced tons of translations, chiefly from the Latin and Greek, to a large degree from the French and Italian, and to some extent from almost every known literature, ancient or modern."<sup>20</sup> The eighteenth-century translator, for the most part,

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<sup>20</sup>Neophilologus, VI (1921), 241-242. Referred to hereafter as Draper. For the substance of my remarks on translation in the eighteenth century, I am indebted to Draper's article.

pushed to excess the freedom which prevailed in seventeenth-century translation and displayed little interest in preserving the literal meaning of the foreign text. There were several causes for this lack of fidelity in eighteenth-century translations. One was moral. An eighteenth-century translator was often offended by the immorality and obscenity he found in the foreign work and felt the need to make much expurgation as was necessary for the preservation of the taste and the morals of the time. Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, for example, in her translation of Pierre Brumoy's Le Théâtre des Grecs was shocked and disgusted at the gross and unseemly orations of Aeschenes and Demosthenes and felt that Greek tragedy needed to be edited severely.<sup>21</sup> Other reasons for the lack of fidelity in the translations of the period were the translator's lack of preparation and his attitude toward his work. Often the translator knew the foreign language he was rendering so imperfectly that he resorted to a free translation to cover up his lack of ability. Translation, moreover, was viewed as an endeavor distinctly inferior to that of original composition and as a result did not elicit from the translators the full measure of their talents. Finally, those who purchased the translations produced during this period, the rich who preferred pretty volumes to accurate renditions, and the reviewers, who mouthed clichés about the beauties of the English version and cant phrases about the exactness of the translation, did nothing to promote the production of higher quality translations.

In his preachments about translation, though, if not in his actual practice, Alexander Pope runs counter to the laxity that prevailed in eighteenth-century translations. In the "Preface" to his translation of the Iliad (1715), Pope makes a strong plea for translating an author with accuracy and fidelity. He says, "It is the first grand duty of an interpreter to give his author entire and unmained, . . . I know no liberties one ought to take but those which are necessary for transfusing the spirit of the original and supporting the poetical style of the translation; and I will

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<sup>21</sup>Draper, 249.

venture to say there have not been more men misled in former times by a servile dull adherence to the letter than have been deluded in ours by a chimerical insolent hope of raising and improving their author."<sup>22</sup> Pope attacks Chapman and Hobbes for the inadequacy of their translations of Homer declaring "Chapman has taken advantage of an immeasurable length of verse, notwithstanding which there is scarce any paraphrase more loose and rambling than his. . . . Hobbes has given us a correct explanation of the sense in general, but for particulars and circumstances he continually lops them and often omits the most beautiful."<sup>23</sup> Pope, however, in spite of his pleas for accuracy and fidelity in translation, was not entirely free of the sins he saw so plainly in his fellow translators and was guilty of such an expediency in translation as working from the Latin instead of the original Greek.<sup>24</sup>

Although much of eighteenth-century translation was characterized by liberty carried to license, the growing Romantic movement and other factors undermined the Neoclassical theory of translation toward the end of the century. Draper comments, "The rise of a more exact scholarship, the growing interest in the past for its own sake and in other literatures for their unique gusto, slowly changed the ideal of English translations, so that, in 1804, Herbert translated his Select Icelandic Poetry 'line for line' in order to keep the 'energetic harmony of the original'."<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Johnson never formulated a precise theory of translation but he makes his views on the subject clear, particularly in Idler No. 68 and

<sup>22</sup>Scott Elledge, Eighteenth Century Critical Essays (Ithaca, New York, 1961), I, 270-271. Referred to hereafter as Elledge.

<sup>23</sup>Elledge, 274-275.

<sup>24</sup>Draper, 250.

<sup>25</sup>Draper, 254.

No. 69 which might be entitled "Johnson on Translation." In Idler No. 68 for Saturday, August 4, 1759 Johnson writes, "Among the studies which have exercised the ingenious and the learned for more than three centuries, none has been more diligently or more successfully cultivated than the art of translation; by which impediments which bar the way to science are, in some measure, removed, and the multiplicity of languages become less incommodious."<sup>26</sup> He continues with an historical survey of translation, pointing out that the Greeks, although they travelled into Egypt, made no translations from the Egyptians and that later, the Romans made little use of translations but learned instead to read Greek. The Arabs, Johnson states, were the first nation to become enthusiastic about translation. When they had conquered the eastern provinces of the Greek empire, they recognized the superiority of their captives and hastened to transmit their knowledge from Greek to Arabic. Johnson concludes Idler No. 68 with a brief discussion of the impact of the Dark Ages upon the dissemination of knowledge, the revival of learning, and the arrival of the art of translation in Britain.

In Idler No. 69 for Saturday, August 11, 1759 Johnson examines translation in England from Chaucer's time to his own. He begins, "He that reviews the progress of English literature, will find that translation was very early cultivated among us, but that some principles, either wholly erroneous or too far extended, hindered our success from being always equal to our diligence" (353). In general, Johnson finds much fault with English translation. He criticizes Chaucer's translation of Boethius's Comforts of Philosophy for being too literal, saying, "It may be supposed that Chaucer would apply more than common attention to an author of so much celebrity, yet he has attempted nothing higher than a version strictly literal, and has degraded the poetical parts to prose,

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<sup>26</sup>The Works of Samuel Johnson, ed., Francis Walesby (Oxford, 1825), IV, 350. All subsequent references to this work will be found in the text.



that the constraint of versification might not obstruct his zeal for fidelity" (353).

Johnson also condemns Caxton's translations from the French "in which the original is so scrupulously followed, that they afford us little knowledge of our own language; though the words are English, the phrase is foreign" (353). He points out that the Elizabethans continued to translate literally but that in the Restoration translation was done with considerable freedom. Johnson, however, has some reservations about this new approach to translation.

But reformation is seldom the work of pure virtue and unassisted reason. Translation was improved more by accident than conviction. The writers of the foregoing age had at least learning equal to their genius; and, being often more able to explain the sentiments or illustrate the allusions of the ancients, than to exhibit their graces and transfuse their spirit, were, perhaps, willing sometimes to conceal their want of poetry by profusion of literature, and, therefore translated literally, that their fidelity might shelter their insipidity or harshness. The wits of Charles's time had seldom more than slight and superficial views; and their care was to hide their want of learning behind the colours of a gay imagination; they, therefore, translated always with freedom, sometimes with licentiousness, and, perhaps expected that their readers should accept sprightliness for knowledge, and consider ignorance and mistake as the impatience and negligence of a mind too rapid to stop at difficulties, and too elevated to descend to minuteness. (354-355)

Johnson, though, feels there is a mean possible between slavish literalness and excessive freedom in translation, a mean which is seen in the translations of Dryden "who saw very early that closeness best preserved an author's sense, and that freedom best exhibited his spirit" (355).



In his "Life of Dryden" Johnson elaborates upon some of the ideas on translation he discusses in Idler No. 68 and No. 69 and reveals once more his preference for an approach which avoids both slavish literalness and complete freedom in translation. He again attacks Jonson for his literal translation of Horace and berates Feltham, Sandys, and Holyday for seeking verbal fidelity in their translations rather than the grace and style of the original. Johnson, though, displays a sensitivity to the problems translators encounter in their work and suggests some criteria for excellence in translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when they divaricate each must take its natural course. Where correspondence cannot be obtained it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. 'Translation therefore,' says Dryden, 'is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase.'

All polished languages have different styles: the concise, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened; hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed, nor sententious affectation to have its points blunted. A translator is to be like his author: it is not his business to excel him.<sup>27</sup>

In his "Life of Denham" Johnson shows a partiality for more freedom and less literalism in translation. He compliments Denham's poem

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<sup>27</sup>Lives of the English Poets, ed., George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1905), I, 422-423. All subsequent references to this work will be found in the text.

praising Fanshaw's version of Pastor Fido (see pages 6 and 7 above) and says Denham "appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity of emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words" (79). It would be a mistake, though, to assume that Johnson saw no limits on freedom in translation. Though he praises Nicholas Rowe's translation of Lucan for having captured the genius and spirit of the original, he feels that the "sense is sometimes weakened by too much expansion" (II, 77). In his "Life of Addison," moreover, he attacks Addison for carrying freedom to excess in his translations, declaring, "His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical" (II, 145).

In his preachments about translation, then, it is possible to see that Dr. Johnson approved of the seventeenth-century revolt against the strictures of literal translation, though he voiced fears that excessive freedom in translation might give rise to the elevation of the personal and the idiosyncratic into a standard of excellence. In theory Dr. Johnson felt that a suitable method of translation must avoid both the excesses of a narrow literalism and those of a wanton liberalism. In his translations from the French, however, Dr. Johnson often took great liberties with his sources and frequently became more a creator and interpreter than just a translator. In doing so he displayed an attitude toward translation and the translator's relationship with his text that is very modern in tone.

Modern commentary on the theory and practice of translation is still concerned with the problem of determining whether the translator should merely transfer meaning from one language to another or whether he should play a creative and interpretive role. Many critics today view the translator as a creator and interpreter rather than a conductor of

meaning and see translation as an endeavor whose resultant production is not simply a substitute for the foreign text, but an artistic commentary upon it. D. S. Carne-Ross in "Translation and Transposition" suggests that a true translation is not just a substitute for the original but more a commentary on it and that translation, like criticism to which it is closely related, must be essentially interpretative. He comments, "Only when translation is seen in this way, as essentially an instrument of criticism, is it going to be allowed the liberty it needs. Where it is seen as a substitute for the original, the stress is likely to fall on literal accuracy. If we are looking for a faithful account of the letter of the original, we should use a crib, not a translation. . . . The accuracy of translation is of a very different kind."<sup>28</sup> Another translator and critic, Jean Paris, states in an essay entitled "Translation and Creation" that it is false to assume that the function of the translation is to imitate the original, that the goal of the translator is to seize the "music" of his foreign text which is of much greater value and importance than its literal meaning. Translators today are keenly aware of a multitude of problems confronting one who attempts to render a foreign text into his own language, problems which make a recreation of the original a more feasible goal than its duplication. Werner Winter in an essay describing the translator's difficulties, "Impossibilities of Translation," compares the translator not to a machine who mechanically changes one language into another but to an "artist who is asked to create an exact replica of a marble statue, but who cannot secure any marble. He may find some other stone or some wood, or he may have to use a brush or a pencil and a sheet. Whatever his material, if he is a good craftsman, his work may be good or even great; it may indeed surpass

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<sup>28</sup>The Craft & Context of Translation, ed., William Arrowsmith and Roger Shattuck (Austin, Texas, 1961), p. 6. Referred to hereafter as Arrowsmith.

the original, but it will never be what he set out to produce, an exact replica of the original."<sup>29</sup> The views expressed by these three students of translation, then, tend to be quite representative of much of the modern commentary on the subject, and it is interesting to note how closely their ideas about translation as a creative and interpretative art coincide with Johnson's own practice in his translations from the French.

Although French is often claimed as a second language by the English-speaking person, it presents difficulties to the translator which are never encountered by those who read it well enough only to get the "gist" of an article or book or those who speak it well enough only to ask directions of a village "gendarme." T. H. Savory in The Art of Translation says, "Indeed it would not be at all difficult to develop and support the thesis that French is one of the most difficult languages to translate into English, especially if the translation is to be made with the highest standards of accuracy and literacy."<sup>30</sup> Savory points out that part of the difficulty in translating French is caused by the different evolutionary histories of French and English. French resisted linguistic infiltrations of various kinds and developed a homogeneous language with a limited vocabulary in which each word has acquired a more or less definite meaning. English, however, imported words from many sources and developed a heterogeneous language with a large vocabulary and many synonyms. As a result Savory states, "French is a language clear and precise as classical Latin, English does not so readily achieve the same degree of clarity and precision when used by writers or speakers of a comparable degree of skill."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Arrowsmith, p. 68.

<sup>30</sup>(Philadelphia, 1960), p. 94. Referred to hereafter as Savory.

<sup>31</sup>Savory, p. 94.

In vocabulary, idiom, and sentence structure French presents difficulties for the translator. The similarity of French and English vocabulary, for instance, is often more apparent than real, and the translator of French must be alert constantly for what have been variously termed "deceptive cognates," "illusory correspondences," and "faux amis." Such French words as "joli," "honnête," and "brave" do not necessarily mean the same as the English words they resemble and, Savory even warns, "Before long it becomes an article of faith that if a French word looks like an English word it is certain to have a different meaning."<sup>32</sup> Besides the difficulties presented by a vocabulary which is seemingly close to English though often very different, French has many phrases and idioms which constantly test the translator's skill. In encountering such expressions as "ventre à terre" and "l'esprit d'escalier" he must always be careful to distinguish what they say from what they mean. Finally, in sentence structure, there is a precision about French which makes it difficult to render into English in many cases. The translator is frequently faced with a French sentence whose meaning is clear and concisely expressed, but which is hard to translate into an equally clear and concise English. In her "Preface" to The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy Charlotte Lennox comments on this difficulty when she says, "The French language, although agreeable and easy to read, is difficult and harsh to translate; smooth as ivory to the sight, rough as iron to the touch."<sup>33</sup> These, then, are some of the more common problems a translator of French faces, the same difficulties Dr. Johnson encountered in his translations from the French and overcame in many instances so very capably.

In the following chapters I have attempted to show what and how Dr. Johnson translates from the French. To do so I have used mainly

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<sup>32</sup>Savory, p. 95.

<sup>33</sup>(London, 1759), i.



a running commentary, though in Johnson's "Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" from Brumoy's Greek Theatre and his translation of Crousaz's Commentaire I have relied on a series of tables to illustrate his method of rendering the French. In many chapters I have also indicated in tables two chief Johnsonian idiosyncrasies in his translations--the doublet, or doubling of a noun or a modifier, and his various translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive. The doublet appears so often (over 200 times) that it becomes something of a stylistic signature and a means of identifying a translation as Johnsonian or not. In his "Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language" Johnson shows a keen awareness of the problem of the meaning of words, or what he terms their "signification," and he warns that words thought to be synonymous need to be examined carefully to determine their true meaning. The presence of so many doublets in Johnson's French translations, then, is not so much a needless redundancy as his attempt to convey more fully the shades of meaning inherent in the French words he translates. A check on some of Johnson's doublets in his Dictionary reveals, moreover, that they were not synonymous in meaning as far as he was concerned.<sup>34</sup> Also, I have listed all of Johnson's translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive which in English is usually translated "to have just done" something, though he chooses to render the meaning of this idiom in a variety of ways.

Throughout this dissertation I have avoided an unnecessary clutter of footnotes by internal citation of the sources used, usually giving the author, page, and line numbers of the passages quoted, though all references to the Gentleman's Magazine are to page, column, and guide-letters and those to the Medicinal Dictionary to page signatures, column,

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<sup>34</sup>It will also be noted that Johnson occasionally includes a doublet in his translations which actually doesn't double any word in the French and sometimes "undoubles" a doublet in the French. Such variations, however, do not occur often enough to become distinctive deviations from the French.

and line numbers. Also, all accent marks and italics are given as I found them in the sources used. Finally, all references to Boswell's Life of Johnson are from the Hill-Powell edition (Oxford, 1934-50).



## CHAPTER II

### FATHER LOBO'S VOYAGE TO ABYSSINIA

Samuel Johnson's first translation from the French, Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia (1735) from Joachim Le Grand's Voyage Historique d'Abissinie (1728), also happens to be his first prose work, and as a result it has attracted considerable scholarly attention in contrast to the scant notice his other French translations have received.<sup>1</sup> Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the question of how Johnson translated his text from the French, the Lobo is of sufficient importance to comment in some detail about its background and composition.

Dr. Johnson's translation of Le Grand's Lobo grew out of his sojourn at Birmingham in 1733, a period in his life when he desired greatness and suffered frustration at not being able to realize this desire. Such frustration produced a despondency that gave rise to periods of indolence which threatened to immobilize the great intellectual and creative powers of the young Johnson. Luckily for him, though, two friends, Mr. Hector and Mr. Warren, a Birmingham bookseller, jolted

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<sup>1</sup>Some studies to be consulted on the substance and background of the Lobo are: James Clifford, Young Sam Johnson (New York, 1955), 144-148; Donald Greene, The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1960), 66-72, 271, 303-304; Joseph Wood Krutch, Samuel Johnson (New York, 1944), 23-26; Ellen Douglass Leyburn, "'No Romantick Absurdities or Incredible Fictions': The Relation of Johnson's Rasselas to Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia," PMLA LXX (December 1955), 1059-67; Herman W. Liebert, "Dr. Johnson's First Book," The Yale University Library Gazette, XXV (July 1950), 23-28; Donald Lockhart, Father Jeronymo Lobo's Writings Concerning Ethiopia, Including Unpublished MSS in the Palmella Library. Unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, Department of Romance Languages, 1958. 70-79.

him out of his lethargy by urging him to translate Le Grand's Lobo which he had mentioned earlier that he had read at Pembroke College and felt that "an abridgement and translation of it might be a useful and profitable publication." <sup>2</sup> Boswell gives a fairly complete picture of how the translation was accomplished.

A part of the work being very soon done, one Osborn, who was Mr. Warren's printer, was set to work with what was ready, and Johnson engaged to supply the press with copy as it should be wanted; but his constitutional indolence soon prevailed, and the work was at a stand. Mr. Hector, who knew that a motive of humanity would be the most prevailing argument with his friend, went to Johnson, and represented to him, that the printer could have no other employment till this undertaking was finished, and that the poor man and his family were suffering. Johnson upon this exerted the powers of his mind, though his body was relaxed. He lay in bed with the book, which was a quarto, before him, and dictated while Hector wrote. Mr. Hector carried the sheets to the press, and corrected almost all the proof sheets, very few of which were even seen by Johnson. In this manner, with the aid of Mr. Hector's active friendship, the book was completed, and was published in 1735, with LONDON upon the title-page, though it was in reality printed at Birmingham, a device too common with provincial publishers. For this work he had from Mr. Warren only the sum of five guineas.<sup>3</sup>

The book the reclining Johnson translated was not French originally but Portuguese. The full title of Le Grand's French edition, a two-volume work published in Paris in 1728 is, Voyage Historique d'Abissinie, Du R. P. Jerome Lobo De La Compagnie De Jesus. Traduit du Portugais,

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<sup>2</sup>Life, I, 86.

<sup>3</sup>Life, I, 86-87.

continué & augmenté de plusieurs Dissertations, Lettres & Mémoires.

Par M. Le Grand, Prieur de Neuvilleles-Dames & Prevessin. In his

"Preface" Le Grand tells how during a five-year stay in Lisbon as a secretary to the late M. l'Abbé d'Estrées he occupied himself, since official duties were light, in seeking out manuscripts and materials dealing with the Portuguese colonial activity. Of all the information he was able to obtain he found a manuscript by a certain Jerome Lobo the most interesting. He writes, "Pour revenir aux Manuscrits que j'ai découverts pendant mon séjour à Lisbonne, aucun ne m'a fait plus de plaisir que cette Relation du Pere Jérôme Lobo Jésuite, que Mr. le Comte d'Ericeira eut la bonté de m'apporter dans le tems que je desespérois de la déterrer" (iii). Although aware of other accounts of Portuguese political and missionary activity in Abyssinia, Le Grand most preferred Father Lobo's. He says, "J'ai préféré celle du P. Jérôme Lobo, pour deux raisons; la première, parce qu'elle m'a paru plus simple & plus de notre goût; la seconde, parce que le Pere Jérôme Lobo parle mieux des pays par où il a passé, & que les autres en disent très-peu de choses; & que de plus il a voyagé dans l'Abissinie & vû plus de Provinces" (ix-x).

As the full title of his work indicates, Le Grand's Voyage Historique is an augmentation as well as a translation of his Portuguese source. Lobo's voyage to Abyssinia and his description of his missionary activities there occupies only 222 pages of Le Grand's edition, and rest being devoted to sixteen "Dissertations" (225 pages) and a number of letters and documents pertaining to Abyssinia (188 pages). In his "Preface" Le Grand explains these additions. About his "Dissertations" he writes, "Enfin j'ai poussé mes recherches sur l'Abissinie aussi loin qu'il m'a été possible; & quoique très-ignorant dans les langues qui sont en usage parmi les Abissins, j'ai crû que je pouvois, sur des Memoires plus sûrs que ceux de Mr. Ludolf, refuter plusieurs choses qu'il a avancées trop

legerement.<sup>4</sup> C'est ce que j'ai taché de faire dans plusieurs Dissertations, & de donner une idée juste de son travail dans la premiere, où le Lecteur trouvera bon que je le renvoye" (x). Of the various documents which take up the last 188 pages of his work *Le Grand* comments, "Comme j'ai voulu continuer, j'ai eu recours aux Lettres, Relations, & Mémoires des Missionnaires de Syrie & Egypte, & des Consuls & Vice-Consuls d'Egypte" (x). He includes this material, evidently, to make his study more plausible and his text more complete, but Johnson translates no part of it.

Johnson does not translate any portion of *Le Grand's* "Preface," though it must have demonstrated to him as it does to us the excellence of his French version of Lobo's voyage. He does, however, include his own "Preface" which is the earliest piece of prose we have of Johnson's since the Birmingham articles have never been recovered. This "Preface" not only offers a useful commentary on the substance of the Lobo and the way in which it is translated but it also contains themes and attitudes which Johnson develops in later works and foreshadows clearly the stylistic greatness to come. Three paragraphs illustrate the importance of this earliest Johnsonian prose composition.

THE Portuguese Traveller, contrary to the general Vein of his Countrymen, has amused his Reader with no Romantick Absurdities or Incredible Fictions, whatever he relates, whether true or not, is at least probable, and he who tells nothing exceeding the bounds of probability, has a right to demand, that they should believe him, who cannot contradict him.

HE appears by his modest and unaffected Narrative to have described Things as he saw them, to have copied Nature from the Life, and to have consulted his Senses not his Imaginations; He

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<sup>4</sup>The scholar, Hiob Ludolf, a German Lutheran, refuted the Catholic view that the Abyssinian Church represented a corrupt, Judaized type of Christianity. *Le Grand*, a Catholic naturally opposed his stand throughout the "Dissertations" which he appended to his text.

meets with no Basilisks that destroy with their Eyes, his Crocodiles devour their Prey without Tears, and his Cataracts fall from the Rock without Deafening the Neighbouring Inhabitants.

THE Reader will here find no Regions cursed with irremediable Barrenness, or bless'd with Spontaneous Fecundity, no perpetual Gloom or unceasing Sunshine; nor are the Nations here described either devoid of all Sense of Humanity, or consummate in all private and social Virtues, here are no Hottentots without Religion, Polity, or Articulate Language, no Chinese perfectly Polite, and compleatly skill'd in all Sciences: He will discover, what will always be discover'd by a diligent and impartial Enquirer, that wherever Human Nature is to be found, there is a mixture of Vice and Virtue, a contest of Passion and Reason, and that the Creator doth not appear Partial in his Distributions, but has balanced in most Countries their particular Inconveniences by particular Favours. (vii-viii)

Joseph Wood Krutch in his Samuel Johnson not only notes the stylistic maturity of these lines which one would hardly expect of Johnson, then in his twenty-fourth year, but he also comments on the thematic importance of these passages.<sup>5</sup> James Clifford in his Young Sam Johnson states that it might have been the sage of seventy instead of the youth of twenty-four who wrote the above commentary and says, "If the authorship were not already well known, if one stumbled on these sentences merely by chance, there would be an irresistible impulse to cry out 'Samuel Johnson.'" Already the style is the man."<sup>6</sup> Donald Greene in The Politics of Samuel Johnson sees in Johnson's comments evidence of his empiricism, "his refusal to believe that human nature

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<sup>5</sup>(New York, 1944), 24.

<sup>6</sup>(New York, 1955), 148.

varies greatly from one part of the world to another" and his "belief in the essential homogeneity of human motivation."<sup>7</sup> The "Preface" to the Lobo, then, is a necessary beginning for any analysis of Johnson's style and of the themes and attitudes which permeate his later work.

The "Preface" is particularly important for this chapter because it contains Johnson's comments about his translation of Le Grand's text. I shall quote these statements in full since they form the basis for an examination of the Lobo as a translation from the French.

IN this Translation (if it may be so call'd) great Liberties have been taken, which, whether justifiable or not, shall be fairly confess'd, and let the Judicious part of Mankind pardon or condemn them.

IN the first part the greatest Freedom has been used, in reducing the Narration into a narrow Compass, so that it is by no Means a Translation by an Epitome, in which whether every thing either useful or entertaining be comprised, the compiler is least qualified to determine.

IN the Account of Abyssinia, and the Continuation, the Authors have been follow'd with more exactness, and as few Passages appeared either insignificant or tedious, few have been either shortened or omitted.

THE Dissertations are the only part in which an exact Translation has been attempted, and even in those, Abstracts are sometimes given instead of literal Quotations, particularly in the first; and sometimes other parts have been contracted. (xi)

From these statements it is apparent that Johnson views his role in rendering his French source as that of a translator-editor. He adds very little to the French, usually no more than a sentence here and

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<sup>7</sup>(New Haven, 1960), 67-68.

there to preserve the continuity of the text, and his chief method throughout the work is condensation, abridgement, and paraphrase. Johnson's main aim in his translation of Le Grand's Lobo is to reduce the somewhat rambling and digressive French volumes into a smooth narrative which would capture and hold the attention of his English readers. So skillful are his excisions of the French that one rarely gets the impression he is reading an abridgement of a longer work. It is important to consider Johnson's omissions from the French, however, for they reveal in part his attitude toward his text. In the opening paragraph of his "Preface" he writes, "THE following Relation is so Curious and Entertaining, and the Dissertations that Accompany it so Judicious and Instructive, that the Translator is confident his Attempt stands in need of no Apology, whatever Censures may fall on the Performance!" (vii). In these lines we see expressed the familiar idea that the function of literature is to delight and instruct and Johnson's feeling that the Lobo does both. Of the two aims, however, it is evident that Johnson considers the instructional to be more important for he condenses and abridges quite vigorously the early part of the Lobo, which is definitely entertaining, and preserves almost intact the more discursive and didactic "Dissertations" which to many an English reader must have seemed somewhat of an anti-climax to the colorful commentary that came before. The importance of analyzing the Lobo as a translation, then, and comparing the French and English carefully is clear, for without such an examination Johnson's attitude toward his French source would remain at least partially obscured.

One must not get the impression, though, that Johnson's condensation of his French source lessens its value for English readers, for in most places his abridgements are judicious and tend to tighten Le Grand's somewhat rambling narrative. Actually Johnson was fortunate in working with a text that generated a good deal of excitement

and interest on the part of the reader. Father Lobo, the narrator of the first section of the book (up to the "Dissertations") is characterized by Le Grand in his "Preface" as "un homme à la fleur de son âge, d'une complexion forte & robuste, laborieux, infatigable, s'exposant toujours aux plus grands dangers" (ix). He heightens the adventures he has by the very matter of fact way in which he tells about them. The picaro himself scarcely ever encountered a broader selection of humanity than does Father Lobo as he meets angry Turks and fierce Galleys, avaricious kings and evil counsellors, and plotting villains and treacherous viceroys. Though Father Lobo sees "no Basilisks that destroy with their Eyes" or crocodiles who "devour their Prey without Tears," there are shipwrecks, beheadings, murders, various kinds of torture, plains of salt, a region of snakes, and serpents who kill with their breath. Even one marvel manages to creep into the text. In one place Le Grand discusses the characteristics of the unicorn and Johnson translates his statements carefully and without comment.

In order to show clearly just how Johnson translates his French source and to check at the same time his statements about translation in his "Preface," I shall use several methods. First, I shall consider in some detail the first chapter of Johnson's Lobo, for it reveals how much he condenses Le Grand's text. Second, I shall cite passages from two other sections of the work, "A Description of Abyssinia" and "The Sequel of the Account of Abyssinia" which illustrates Johnson's closer rendition of the French. Third, I shall give a sample of his translation of the "Dissertations" to indicate how faithfully he translates this particular portion of the Lobo. At the end of this chapter I have also included a table showing the comparative lengths of Johnson's chapters and their French sources and a tabular summary of two idiosyncrasies which appear throughout his translation--the doublet and his various translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive.



In his "Preface," as we have seen, Johnson admits that he translates the first part of Le Grand's text with considerable freedom. In his first chapter, for example he compresses twenty-three and a half pages of Le Grand's text into only seven and a half of his own. He omits Lobo's description of his first attempt to reach Goa in a voyage that ended in disaster near the Gulf of St. Thomas and his vivid account of the hardships faced by the survivors due to disease, weather, and a lack of supplies. Instead, Johnson starts translating at the beginning of Lobo's second voyage to Goa. Le Grand: (4: 32-40; 5: 1-26)

Ce voyage manqué nous coûta Ormus: les Perses assistez des Anglois assiegèrent cette Place au mois d'Octobre de cette année 1621. Ils la prirent au mois de Mai de l'année suivante. Il y a apparence que si nous étions arrivez à Goa avec le secours que nous portions, nous aurions ou prévenu le siège d'Ormuz, ou empêché que cette Place importante ne fût prise, malheureusement nous perdîmes deux mois dans le Porte de Lisbonne, faute de quelques Galeres pour nous mettre au large. Ainsi nous partîmes si tard qu'étant près de la Ligne, & ne trouvant plus les vents qui nous étoient nécessaires pour continuer nôtre route, nous fûmes contraints de revenir en Portugal, après avoir longtemps souffert, & couru beaucoup de dangers. Comme je n'étois pas bien guéri, je retombai malade presque en mettant pied à terre; je gardai le lit jusqu'aux Fêtes de Noël, que mes Supérieurs m'envoyèrent à Conimbre pour me rétablir.

Alfonse Noronha ayant toujours devant les yeux les peines qu'il avoit souffertes, & les périls qu'il avoit courus dans les voyages de l'année précédente, aima mieux renoncer à la Viceroyauté des Indes, que de se rembarquer. On nomma à sa place le Comte de Vidigueira, qui avoit déjà été Viceroy de ce païs-la, & qui étoit alors Conseiller d'Etat.

Johnson: (1: 1-10; 2:1-4)

I EMBARK'D in March 1662, in the same Fleet with the Count Vidigueira, on whom the King had confer'd the Viceroy-ship of the Indies, then Vacant by the Resignation of Alfonso Noronha, whose unsuccessful Voyage in the foregoing Year had been the Occasion of the Loss of Ormuz, which being by the Miscarriage of that Fleet deprived of the Succours necessary for its Defense was taken by the Persians and English.

It is clear from the above passages that Johnson's rendition is not a translation at all but what he himself in his "Preface" calls an epitome. The French text supplies him with the facts for his text but what he does with them is very much his own. I think it interesting in connection with the passage from Le Grand quoted above and Johnson's "translation" of it to consider Boswell's comments about the Lobo in the Life.

This being the first prose work of Johnson, it is a curious object of inquiry how much may be traced in it to that style which marks his subsequent writings with such peculiar excellence; with so happy an union of force, vivacity, and perspicuity. I have perused the book with this view, and have found that here, as I believe in every other translation, there is in the work itself no vestige of the translator's own style; for the language of translation being adapted to the thoughts of another person, insensibly follows their cast, and, as it were, runs into a mould that is ready prepared.<sup>8</sup>

Now we may agree with Boswell that what we read in the above passage is not the style of the mature Johnson but we cannot accept his dogmatic assertion that Johnson is simply mirroring Le Grand's text. A comparison of the French and the English reveals that what we read is, indeed,

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<sup>8</sup>Life, I, 87.

Johnson's, though it may lack the "force, vivacity, and perspicuity" of his later work. Again, though, it is only in examining the Lobo as a translation and finding out just what Johnson does with his French source that it is possible to refute such statements that in the Lobo there is "no vestige of the translator's own style."

Johnson omits Lobo's comments about the names of the ships sailing to Goa and his discussion of their commanders. He also greatly condenses Lobo's narration of the trip around the Cape of Good Hope. In the following passage it is evident how freely he treats the French even when he obviously borrows from it for the substance of his own text.

Le Grand: (7: 11-29)

Nous arrivâmes en peu de jours sur les côtes de la Terre de Natal, si connuë par le grand nombre de naufrages que les Portugais y ont fait. La Mer y est ordinairement fort grosse, les vents y sont furieux, les tonnerres fréquens; on est souvent obligé dans ce passage de lier les Navires avec de gros cables, de peur qu'ils ne s'entr'ouvrent. Cette précaution que nous primes ne nous fut pas inutile, car quoique nous n'eussions pas d'abord un mauvais tems, néanmoins le jour de l'octave de S. Pierre & S. Paul, l'air commença à se charger de nuages, & bien-tot après le tonnerre se fit entendre; il tomba le long du bâton du Pavillon, & courut tout le tillac qui étoit couvert de monde: cependant il ne fit d'autre mal que de brûler legerement un soldat au visage, & en blesser un autre à la tête; puis sortit par un sabor, & nous le vîmes faire plusieurs ricochets sur l'eau.

Johnson: (2: 8-15)

Here began our Misfortunes; these Coasts are Remarkable for the many Shipwrecks the Portuguese have suffer'd. The Sea is for the most part Rough, and the Winds Tempestuous, we had

here our Rigging somewhat damag'd by a Storm of Lighting  
which when we had repaired, we sailed forward to Mosambique,  
where we were to Stay for some time.

Here again it is clear how little Johnson is confined by his source and how he uses it only for the facts of his paragraph. He is obviously epitomizing his French text rather than translating it.

Following the above passage Johnson condenses slightly over five pages of Le Grand's text, in which Lobo describes a dramatic encounter of Portuguese and Dutch and English ships, into the brief statement, "I shall not trouble the Reader with the Particulars of this Fight, in which though the English Commander ran himself a Ground, we lost three of our Ships, and with great Difficulty excap'd with the rest into the Port of Mosambique" (2: 23-27). Though Johnson manages to preserve the sense of the French text in this single comment, he fails completely to capture the excitement of Lobo's narration. Such an omission, though, is the exception rather than the rule in Johnson's Lobo, and in most cases his excisions add to rather than detract from his English version.

Even in the first chapter, in which epitome rather than translation is the chief method, there are times when Johnson works more closely with his French source. Compare, for instance, his rendition of the following passage of Le Grand's.

Le Grand: (12: 40; 13: 1-13)

Nous ne trouvions pas dans l'Isle de Mozambique beaucoup de consolation, il y avoit à peine de quoi nourrir nōtre équipage & les gens du pais. L'air y est très-mauvais, & particulierement dans le mois de Septembre. Quoique les chaleurs y soient excessive, le Soleil y est beaucoup moins à craindre que le serein & le frais de la nuit; quand on va le soir par les ruës, on est obligé de se bien vêtir, & de se boucher le nez & la bouche; sans cette précaution, on tombe dans des maladies mortelles.

Rien ne peut mieux faire connoître la malignité de l'air que la rouille qui ronge en peu de tems le fer & le bronze, si on n'a soin de les couvrir de paille.

Johnson: (2:28-29; 3: 1-9)

This Place was able to afford us little Consolation in our uneasy Circumstances; the Arrival of our Company almost caused a Scarcity of Provisions: The Heat in the Day is Intolerable, and the Dews in the Night so unwholesome, that it is almost certain Death to go out with ones Head uncover'd. Nothing can be a stronger Proof of the Malignant quality of the Air, than that the Rust will immediately Corrode both the Iron and Brass, if they are not carefully covered with Straw.

In these passages, though the relationship of the French and the English is much clearer, particularly in the last sentence, Johnson is still looking to his French source for the facts but not the language of his translation.

An analysis of the first part of the Lobo substantiates Johnson's statements about translation in his "Preface." We can see very clearly in examining the above passages that he treats the French with great freedom and that what he offers his English readers is less a translation and more an epitome of Le Grand's text. Johnson's condensation and abridgement of the first forty-two pages of the Lobo is for the most part skillfully done, and a reader of the English text has little sense that a considerable amount of material is omitted throughout. One would have to agree, I think, in comparing the two texts, that the liberties he takes with his French source are justifiable, in most instances, and with few exceptions he includes in his translation all that is useful and entertaining in Le Grand's work.

After his fairly drastic cutting of Le Grand's text for the first portion of his English version, Johnson translates the French more

closely in "A Description of Abyssinia" and "The Sequel of the Account of Abyssinia." Throughout these sections there are frequent omissions and condensations of the French but rarely any of the proportion found in the first forty-two pages of the Lobo. As the table included at the end of this chapter indicates, Johnson's chapters in these sections and their French sources are about the same length. A single example from "A Description of Abyssinia" and from "The Sequel of the Account of Abyssinia" will suffice, I think, to show that Johnson renders Le Grand, as he says in his "Preface," with "more exactness."

Le Grand: (86: 7-26)

Un Lion s'étoit adonné au lieu où je demeurois. Il y étrangloit tous les boeufs & toutes les vaches, & faisoit plusieurs autres maux, dont chaque jour on me venoit faire des plaintes. J'avois un valet qui résolut d'en delivrer le païs. Un mercredi, il prit deux zagaïes, & sans me rien dire, il alla chercher le Loin. Il battit beaucoup de païs, sans pouvoir le rencontrer; enfin comme il demandoit a un jeune homme, s'il n'avoit point vû le Lion, il l'apperçût, la gueule toute ensanglantée d'une vache qu'il venoit d'etrangler, & dont il avoit mangé une partie. Mon valet courut sur lui, & lui passa sa zaguaïe dans la gorge avec tant de force, qu'elle vint sortir entre les deux épaules. Le Lion ne fit qu'un cri & qu'un saut, & tomba dans un fossé qui étoit là proche, où mon valet fier de sa victoire acheva de la tuër. Il m'en apporta la tête & la peau jointes ensemble; je les mesurai, je trouvai que le Lion avoit seize palmes entre la tête & la queue.

Johnson: (50: 1-17)

A Lyon having taken his Haunt, near the Place where I lived, kill'd all the Oxen and Cows, and did a great deal of other Mischief, of which I heard a new Complaint every Day. A Servant of Mine having taken a Resolution to free the Country from this Destroyer,

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went out one Day with two Lances, and after he had been some time in quest of him found him with his Mouth all smear'd with the Blood of a Cow he had just devour'd, the Man rush'd upon him, and thrust his Lance into his Throat with such violence that it came out between his Shoulders, the Beast with one dreadful Roar, fell down into a Pit, and lay struggling, till my Servant dispatch'd him. I measured the Body of this Lyon, and found him, twelve feet between the Head and the Tail.

Johnson's translation of the French in this passage is close but not exact. He omits a phrase here and there and generally condenses Le Grand's text. There are also small changes in wording which indicate Johnson is not just mirroring his source but interpreting it to a certain extent. Note, for example, his rendition of Le Grand's phrase, "Le Lion ne fit qu'un cri" by "the Beast with one dreadful Roar," a version which is certainly more colorful and descriptive. In these variations from the French, then, Johnson refutes Boswell's statement that in a translation the translator's personality must necessarily be subsumed by his author's text. In the Lobo, as in most of his translations from the French, Johnson's attitudes and personality are there if one only takes the trouble to look. A similar but somewhat freer method of translation is seen in "The Sequel of the Account of Abyssinia."

Le Grand: (186: 17-40; 186: 1)

Cette exécution fut suivie de plusieurs autres; c'étoit un crime d'avoir été des amis du jeune Prince: on n'épargna aucun de ceux qu'on crut avoir eu quelque liaison avec lui. Les Seigneurs les plus distinguez furent les premiers punis; on confisqua les biens de Caflamariam, du Viceroy Zamariam, du fils du Viceroy, & on les envoya en exil. On traita de la même manière deux fils d'Onguelavi, tante de l'Empereur, cette Dame qui avoit marqué tant d'animosité contre les Missionnaires & contre l'Eglise Romaine:



on n'épargna pas même les femmes. Oleta Christos, femme du Viceroy Flavi, fut releguée sur un rocher; Mascall Abea, la fille de Molaco Fave, & plusieurs autres eurent le même sort.

Tous ces châtimens ne furent pas capables de mettre l'esprit du Roi en repos. Il crût au contraire qu'ils avoient augmenté le nombre des mécontents, & que pouvant être attaqué au dedans & au dehors, il avoit besoin de se fortifier d'amis & d'alliez. Il envoya vers l'Yemen, & pour l'engager davantage dans ses intérêts, il lui fit entendre qu'il vouloit bien permettre l'exercice de la Religion Musulmane dans ses Etats: il lui demanda même des Docteurs pour la prêcher & l'enseigner.

Johnson: (158: 24-36; 159: 1-5)

This Execution prepared a way for many others, and all who were suspected of favouring either the Prince or the Roman Church shared in his Sentence, and had their Goods confiscated, and their Persons confined; the Persecution was carried on without regard to Dignity, Age, or Sex. All these Severities were not able to set the Emperor's Mind at quiet, for imagining that he had rather excited than suppress'd the Murmurs of his People, and encreased the Numbers, as well as aggravated the Malice of the Malecontents, he thought it necessary to secure himself on his Throne by Leagues and Alliances, and therefore sends Ambassadors to a Mahometan Prince, with Proposals of Tolerating the Exercise of his Religion, in Abyssinia, and a request that some of their learned Men might be sent to instruct his People.

Johnson's chief method in the above passage is not literal translation but condensation and paraphrase. He tightens Le Grand's text without omitting anything of substance except a series of names which he felt would probably be somewhat tedious for his English readers. This passage illustrates, moreover, the incorrectness of Boswell's view that

the translator's style must mirror his author's. What we read here is definitely Johnson's own style and if it is not that of the mature later works, it still contains no small hint of what is to come.

In his "Preface," as we have seen, Johnson says that the "Dissertations" are the only part of Le Grand's work in which an exact translation has been attempted. Again, an examination of this rather lengthy portion of the Lobo confirms Johnson's statement. Though there are occasional omissions, minor abridgements, and a certain amount of paraphrase throughout, the "Dissertations" are translated much more closely than the earlier sections of the Lobo. The single exception is Johnson abridgement of the first "Dissertation" in which twenty-six pages of the French are compressed into only nine and a half in the English. A brief citation from the third "Dissertation," "Upon the Nile" will illustrate quite clearly the method of translation Johnson uses throughout this part of Le Grand's text.

Le Grand: (262: 1-17)

Les plus grands hommes de l'Antiquité, ont souhaité avec passion de pouvoir découvrir les sources du Nil, s'imaginant après plusieurs conquêtes que cela manquoit à leur gloire. Cambise a perdu beaucoup de tems & du monde dans cette recherche. Lorsqu' Alexandre consulta l'oracle de Jupiter Ammon, la première chose qu'il demanda fut où étoit la source du Nil; & depuis ayant campé à la tête du fleuve Indus, il crût que c'étoit celle du Nil, & il en eût une joïë infinie. Ptolomée Philadelphie un de ses successeurs porta la guerre en Ethiopie, afin de pouvoir remonter le Nil. Il prit la ville d'Axuma, comme on le voit par des Inscriptions que Cosmas Indoplustes nous a conservées, & qu'il a copiées sur le lieu du tems de l'Empereur Justin Premier.

Johnson: (206:1-17)

The greatest Men of Antiquity have passionately wish'd to find

the Head of the Nile, and have thought after all their Conquests that their Glory was not compleat without this Discovery. Cambyses lost in this search much time and great numbers of Men. When Alexander consulted the Oracle of Ammon, the first enquiry he made was after the Sources of the Nile, and having afterwards encamp'd at the head of the River Indus, which he imagined to be that of the Nile, was overjoy'd at his Success. Ptolomy Philadelphus, one of his Successors carried his Arms with this view into Ethiopia; where he took the City of Axuma, as appears by the Inscriptions preserv'd upon the spot in the Time of the Emperor Justin the First. In this passage it is possible to see that Johnson follows his French source more faithfully than ever before, though there are enough variations, however minor, to require that the label "exact" be qualified somewhat.

Though he translated Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia in a reclining position, it is evident that Johnson's mind was fully on his work. From his statements in his "Preface" it is clear that he had a firm conception of just how he wanted to translate Le Grand's text, and in his abridgement, condensation, paraphrase, and close translation of the French, he brought to his English audience a text faithful to its original but without its digressiveness. Though Johnson was not particularly interested in impinging his personality, attitudes, and style upon his French source (except in the opening pages), he does so often enough in the Lobo to refute Boswell's contention that there is nothing of Johnson in this work. Had Boswell taken the trouble to compare the French and the English texts, he would have found more of Johnson present than he suspected. In the first pages of the book it is Johnson's Lobo we read, which he translated from the French, and not simply Le Grand's Voyage Historique which happened to be translated into English by Samuel Johnson. In the early pages of the book especially we see Johnson not as mimic and mirror but Johnson the artist calling upon his creative powers and

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his judgment in order to recreate from his French source a work at least partially his own. Had he continued in this way the Lobo might have been even a more interesting work than it is.

There is in the Life an epilogue of sorts to the Lobo. Boswell writes:

On Sunday, March 31, [1776] I called on him, and shewed him as a curiosity which I had discovered, his 'Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia,' which Sir John Pringle had lent me, it being then little known as one of his works. He said, 'Take no notice of it,' or 'don't talk of it.' He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. [actually 24] I said to him, 'Your style, Sir, is much improved since you translated this.'

He answered with a sort of triumphant smile, 'Sir, I hope it is.'<sup>9</sup> At sixty-seven, with fame already achieved, it is not surprising that Dr. Johnson brushed aside this work of his youth. We must, however, reject his command that we "take no notice of it," for as the Lobo is examined and especially as it is seen just how Johnson worked with his French source, it is apparent that what Boswell saw only as a translation is really a clear foreshadowing of the greatness that was to come.

#### A Comparison of Chapter Lengths in Johnson's and Le Grand's Versions of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia<sup>10</sup>

Johnson		Le Grand	Difference
<b>A VOYAGE TO ABYSSINIA</b>			
Chapter I.	(1-8): 7½ pp.	(1-24): 23½ pp.	16 pages
Chapter II.	(8-15): 7½ pp.	(25-37): 12 pp.	4½ pages
Chapter III.	(15-22): 7 pp.	(37-50): 13½ pp.	6½ pages

<sup>9</sup>Life, III, 7.

<sup>10</sup>This table is meant to suggest the comparative length of Johnson's chapters and their French sources in order to indicate just how much he condenses Le Grand's text. A completely accurate comparison cannot be made since Johnson's pages are slightly shorter than Le Grand's. Generally, however, if a difference of a page or less is indicated, it means that Johnson abridges or expands the French very little.

Johnson		Le Grand	Difference
Chapter IV.	(23-27): 5 pp.	(50-59): $9\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$4\frac{1}{2}$ pages
Chapter V.	(28-31): $3\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(59-64): $4\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	1 page
Chapter VI.	(32-34): 2 pp.	(64-67): 3 pp.	1 page
Chapter VII.	(34-38): 4 pp.	(67-72): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$1\frac{1}{2}$ pages
Chapter VIII.	(39-42): $3\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(72-78): 6 pp.	$2\frac{1}{2}$ pages

#### A DESCRIPTION OF ABYSSINIA

Chapter I.	(43-50): 7 pp.	(79-86): 7 pp.	0 pages
Chapter II.	(50-53): 3 pp.	(86-90): $3\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page
Chapter III.	(53-58): 5 pp.	(90-95): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page
Chapter IV.	(59-72): $13\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(95-111): 16 pp.	$2\frac{1}{2}$ pages
Chapter V.	(73-78): 6 pp.	(111-117): $6\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page
Chapter VI.	(79-83): 4 pp.	(117-121): 4 pp.	0 page
Chapter VII.	(83-86): 3 pp.	(121-124): 3 pp.	0 page
Chapter VIII.	(86-92): 6 pp.	(124-129): 5 pp.	+1 page
Chapter IX.	(93-97): 4 pp.	(129-132): 4 pp.	0 pages
Chapter X.	(97-107): $10\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(132-142): $9\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	+1 page
Chapter XI.	(108-112): 5 pp.	(142-146): 4 pp.	+1 page
Chapter XII.	(113-121): 8 pp.	(146-152): 7 pp.	+1 page
Chapter XIII.	(121-130): $9\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(152-160): 8 pp.	+ $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages
Chapter XIV.	(131-137): 6 pp.	(160-165): 5 pp.	+1 page
Chapter XV.	(137-144): 7 pp.	(165-172): 6 pp.	+1 page

#### THE SEQUEL of the ACCOUNT OF ABYSSINIA

Chapter I.	(145-150): $4\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(172-178): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	1 page
Chapter II.	(150-153): 3 pp.	(178-181): 3 pp.	0 pages
Chapter III.	(154-160): $6\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(181-188): $7\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	1 page
Chapter IV.	(161-164): $3\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(188-199): $10\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	7 pages
Chapter V.	(164-172): 8 pp.	(199-212): 13 pp.	5 pages
Chapter VI.	(173-178): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(212-217): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	0 pages
Chapter VII.	(178-183): 5 pp.	(217-222): $5\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page

Johnson	Le Grand	Difference
Dissertation the First, Upon Mr. Ludolf's History of Abyssinia. (185-194): $9\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(223-249): 26 pp.	$15\frac{1}{2}$ pages
Dissertation the Second, Upon AÆthiopia, or Abyssinia (195-205): 11 pp.	(250-261): $11\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page
Dissertation the Third, Upon the Nile. (206-221): 15 pp.	(262-278): 16 pp.	1 page
Dissertation on the Eastern Side of Africa, from Melinda to the Streight of Babel- Mandel. (222-233): 11 pp.	(279-294): 15 pp.	4 pages
Dissertation the Fourth, On Prestor John. (234-254): 20 pp.	(295-312): 18 pp.	+2 pages
Dissertation the Fifth, on the Kings of Abyssinia, their Coronation, Titles, Queens and Sons. Of their Armies, and the Manner of Distributing Justice. (255-265): 10 pp.	(313-325): 12 pp.	2 pages
Dissertation the Sixth, on the Red-Sea, and the Navigation of Solomon's Fleets. (266-278): 12 pp.	(326-336): 11 pp.	+1 page
Dissertation the Seventh, on the Queen of Sheba. (279-288): 10 pp.	(337-346): $9\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$+\frac{1}{2}$ page
Dissertation the Eighth, upon Circumcision. (289-301): $12\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	(1-12): $11\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	+1 page

Johnson	Le Grand	Difference
Dissertation the Ninth, on the Conversion of the Abyssins. (302-326): 24 pp.	(13-36): 24 pp.	0 pages
Dissertation the Tenth, on the Errors of the Abyssins, relating to the Incarnation. (327-335): 8 pp.	(36-45): 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ pp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ page
Dissertation the Eleventh, Concerning the Sacramants, particularly those of Baptism and Confirmation. (336-349): 13 pp.	(45-60): 15 pp.	2 pages
Dissertation the Twelfth, on the Eucharist and Penance. (350-364): 14 pp.	(60-75): 15 pp.	1 page
Dissertation the Thirteenth, on Extreme Unction, Ordina- tion, and Marriage. (365-376): 11 pp.	(76-86): 11 pp.	0 pages
Dissertation the Fourteenth, on the Invocation of Saints, Miracles, Prayers for the Dead, Fasts, Images, and Reliques. (377-387): 10 pp.	(87-95): 9 pp.	+1 page
Dissertation the Fifteenth, on the Hierarchy or Government of the Church of Aethiopia (388-396): 8 pp.	(96-102): 7 pp.	+1 page



Doublets in Johnson's Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia

Le Grand 40: 27-29

Johnson 17: 16-18

Nous abordâmes un peu  
après midi à un des meilleurs  
Ports de cette Isle; ce qui allarma  
extrêmement les habitants

we came to Anchor; very much  
to the Amazement and Terror of  
the Inhabitants

59: aa

27: 19-20

quand ils virent sortir le feu

at the Fire and Noise

59: 27-28

27: 27-28

& pour parager avec nous les  
travaux de la mission

and a desire of sharing the  
Labors and Merits of the Mission

64: 17-18

32: 1-2

Mais ce malheureux vieillard

But such was either the hatred  
or avarice of this Man

66: 28-29

33: 30-31

mais on veut nous faire  
mourir de faim

but are doom'd to a more  
lingering and painful Death

68: 40; 69: 1

35: 26-27

jusqu'à ce que nous fûmes  
arrivez dans un chemin

till we came to a Channel  
or Hollow

72: 33-34

39: 1-3

lorsque nous sortîmes de ce  
mauvais chemin

we came to the End of this  
toilsome and rugged Path

78: 7-8

42: 10-11

On ne peut dire avec quelle  
joie nous nous embrassâmes  
les uns les autres

It is not easy to express the  
Benevolence and Tenderness with  
which they embraced us

Le Grand 79: 1-3

L'origine des Abissins n'est pas  
moins incertaine que celle de  
tous les autres peuples du monde

81: 17

que plusieurs abandonnerent  
leurs biens

82: 40; 83: 1

On peut dire que les autres sont  
entièrement barbares

89: 17-18

a un instinct tout particulier  
pour découvrir le miel des  
abeilles

91: 37-38

Les femmes s'habillent encore  
plus magnifiquement que les hommes

92: 3-4

Elles ne sont pas fort  
retirées

96: 33-34

qu'on ne leur permet jamais  
pour quelque raison que ce soit  
de manger de la viande

106: 23-24

Elle me dit ingénûement

Johnson 43: 1-3

The Original of the Abyssins  
like that of all other Nation,  
is obscure, and uncertain

45: 24-25

Many, they say, abandon'd all  
the Pleasures and Vanities of  
Life

47: 4-6

The rest . . . are entirely  
Rude and Barbarous

52: 33-34

with a peculiar instinct or  
faculty of discovering honey

55: 13-14

The Ladies dress is yet more  
magnificent and expensive

55: 19-20

They are not much reserv'd  
or confind

60: 27-29

and no Reason or Necessity  
whatsoever can procure them  
a Permission to eat Meat

68: 35-36

He confess'd with the utmost  
frankness and ingenuity

Le Grand 108: 38

que si je ne pouvois pas lui  
conserver la vie

110: 12-14

Si ce Chumo est bien content  
de la maniere dont il a été  
régalé, il lui donnera une  
déclaration

125: 18

Il connut que les plus  
puissants

127: 15-16

il me prioit par des termes  
pressans

127: 35-36

il n'en témoigna aucun chagrin

134: 34

& les confirme dans l'aveugle-  
ment où ils sont

135: 10-11

combien ils ont formé de  
vains raisonnemens sur les  
sources de cette riviere

138: 3

& porter l'abondance en Egypte

Johnson 70: 17-18

that if I could not preserve  
this uncertain and perishable  
Life

71: 10-12

If the Chumo is pleased with  
the Treat and Present, he will  
give him a Declaration, or  
Writing

87: 31-33

He knew . . . that those of  
greatest Interest and Power

90: 20-21

he desired me in terms very  
strong and pressing

91: 9-11

The Viceroy . . . did not  
discover any concern, or  
chagrin

99: 26-27

and confirms them in their  
present Ignorance and  
Superstition

100: 3-5

and the vain Conjectures  
and Reasonings which have  
been form'd upon its Original

103: 4-5

and convey Wealth and Plenty  
into Egypt

Le Grand 138: 26

Lorsqu'il est dans l'eau, il  
est hardi

144: 35-36

non-seulement afin de nous  
consoler les uns les autres

147: 26-28

& je goûtai là un peu plus de  
repos que je n'avoit fait  
depuis que j'étoit sorti de  
Portugal

154: 26-29

Je devois aller représenter à  
Goa, à Madrid, & à Rome les  
besoins de la Mission & des  
Missionnaires d'Ethiopie

158: 24-26

où nous trouvâmes heureusement  
nos cabanes encore entieres

198: 3-4

que jamais Roi d'Abissinie  
n'avoit eu un regne plus  
glorieux

222: 16-18

toutes entreprises qui  
paroîtront chimeriques à  
ceux qui connoîtront  
l'Abissinie & les Abissins

259: 17-18

& on n'y trouve qu'une nature  
toute brute

Johnson 103: 32

In the Water he is Daring and  
Fierce

111: 14-15

not only that we might comfort  
and entertain each other

115: 3-5

and enjoyed a longer quiet  
and repose than I had ever  
done since I left Portugal

123: 17-20

I should represent at Goa,  
at Rome, and at Madrid, the  
Distresses and Necessities  
of the Mission of Aethiopia

128: 12-13

where we were so fortunate to  
find our Huts yet uninjured  
and entire

163: 27-28

that no Emperor had ever a  
Reign of more Honour and  
Tranquillity

183: 20-23

a Design which to all who  
have any Knowledge of that  
Empire and its Inhabitants will  
appear Chimerical and Impracticable

203: 18-19

and nothing is to be met  
with but Nature savage and  
uncultivated

Le Grand 263: 16-17

ils le font passer sous les  
terres

Peut-on croire que des masses  
si pesantes puissent sortir  
du corps de quelqu'animal

292: 1

loin d'être feroce

314: 17-18

n'eût pas de peine à s'en  
rendre maître

325: 1

Après avoir parlé de la guerre

337: 8-9

que les peuples sauvages  
d'Afrique

7: 35-36 (Vol. II)

On n'eut pas de peine à croire  
que la violence faite au  
Metropolitain

10: 29-30

l'action la plus éclatante de  
sa vie

10: 32-33

d'une manière si forte

Johnson 207: 26-27

have conducted it under Lands  
and Seas

tis scarce credible that  
Pieces of such Weight and  
Bulk should be voided by an  
animal

232: 11-12

but so far from being Fierce  
or Dangerous

256: 22-24

took possession of it with  
very little Difficulty or  
Opposition

265: 5-6

After having given an Account  
of their Wars and Forces

279: 8-9

that the wild and uncivilized  
Nations of Africa

296: 3-5

The Abyssins were easily  
persuaded that the Violence  
and Indignities offered to  
their Metropolitain

299: 9-10

The most important and  
celebrated Action of his Life

299: 14-15

in such strong and moving  
Terms

Le Grand 13: 9

Saint Mathieu les fit  
fructifier dans le païs

26: 10 (Vol. II)

Ce service si signalé fut  
très-mal reconnu

37: 5-6

qu'on ne pouvoit reprocher à  
ces peuples aucune erreur

49: 12-14

ils recitent dans leur  
psalmodie tous les livres de  
l'Ancien & du Nouveau Testa-  
ment

65: 37-39

& nous vous rendons grace de  
ce que vous nous avez faits  
dignes de participer à ce  
Mystere de sainteté

67: 15

un vin véritable

97: 9

& traite de violence

Johnson 302: 11-12

which St. Matthew cultivated  
and raised to Fruit

315: 25-26

a great Service, very ill  
acknowledged and requited

327: 8-9

and that no Error or Corruption  
can be charged upon them

340: 6-8

they repeat or sing over all  
the Books of the Old and New  
Testament

354: 35-37

and we give thee Thanks that  
we have been thought worthy to  
Communicate in the Mystery of  
Glory and Holiness

356: 22

true and natural Wine

389: 29

and calls that Injury and  
Violence

Johnson's Translations of the French idiom "Venir de" plus an infinitive in Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia

Le Grand 76: 9-12

Ainsi nous marchâmes jusqu'à  
ce que nous eussions arrivés  
au pied des montagnes de Duan,  
qui séparent l'Abissinie du païs  
des Galles & des Mores que  
nous venions de traverser

85: 28-31

Les Noirs même de cette partie  
de l'Afrique, ne sont point laids  
& villains, comme ceux des  
Royaumes que je viens de nommer

98: 5-7

C'est ainsi qu'ils abusent de  
l'Ecriture sainte, pour autori-  
ser des pratiques beaucoup plus  
mauvaises que je viens de rappor-  
ter

175: 20-21

qu'il venoit d'apprendre

218: 15-16

Il venoit d'arriver une grande  
révolution dans l'Abissinie

321: 38-40

un des premiers de la Cour crie  
à haute voix, que le Roi vient  
de faire sa servante une telle,  
Reine

Johnson 41: 14-18

our Pains at last found some  
Intermission at the foot of the  
Mountains of Duan the frontier  
of Abyssinia which separates it  
from the Country of the Moors,  
through which we had travel'd

49: 1-3

The Blacks here are not ugly  
like those of the Kingdoms  
I have spoken of, but have  
better Features

62: 2-5

Thus they misapply the sacred  
Writings, to defend practices,  
yet more Corrupt than those  
I have been speaking of

148: 2

that he had lately been  
informed

179: 17-18

A Great Revolution happen'd  
at that Time in Abyssinia

261: 8-10

upon which one of the principal  
Men of the Court proclaims  
aloud that the King has made  
his Servant Queen

Le Grand 337: 7-8

On vient de voir sur le  
témoignage du Pere Dos  
Santos

346: 9-10

comme on le vient de dire

14: 29-30 (Vol. II)

Athanase venoit d'être  
fait Evêque de cette grande  
ville

60: 17-19

Si quelqu'un en veut sçavoir  
davantage, il peut consulter  
les Auteurs que nous venons  
de citer

88: 2-3

& avec ceux dont nous venons  
de faire commemoration

88: 12-13

& avec ceux dont nous venons  
de reciter des noms

Johnson 279: 7-8

We have already from the  
Writings of Father Dos-  
Santos seen

288: 28

as has been before related

304: 18-19

where he found St. Athanasius  
newly made Bishop of that  
great City

349: 11-13

of which whoever desires  
a more perfect Knowledge,  
may consult the Authors  
already cited

378: 12-13

and with those whom we have  
now commemorated

378: 21

and with those whose Names  
we have now repeated



### CHAPTER III

#### "THE LIFE OF FATHER PAUL SARPI"

In the Gentleman's Magazine for November, 1738 on pages 581-583 there appeared an article entitled, "The Life of Father PAUL SARPI, Author of the History of the COUNCIL of TRENT: For printing a new Translation of which, by S. JOHNSON, we have publish'd Proposals." Signed "S. J.," this article is evidently a kind of advertisement for Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's French edition of Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent which never appeared because of Dr. Johnson's dispute with another "Samuel" Johnson who was also translating the same book.<sup>1</sup> E. L. McAdam, Jr. in a PMLA article, "Johnson's Lives of Sarpi, Blake, and Drake" points out that the source for Johnson's "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" is Le Courayer's "Vie Abregée de Fra-Paolo" (also called "Vie de l'Auteur") which he includes in his French translation of Sarpi's History.<sup>2</sup> Although McAdam's critique of Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's "Vie Abregée" is sound throughout, I wish in this chapter to consider it in more detail than he is able to do in his brief article. Also, I shall examine in some detail McAdam's analysis of an important Johnsonian omission from the French and offer some textual evidence to temper somewhat his charge that Johnson distorts his source.

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<sup>1</sup>See Edward Ruhe's, "The Two Samuel Johnsons," N&Q, 199 (October 1954), 432-435. Ruhe points out that many details of the event are still unclear, and even the name of Johnson's rival has been obscured-- it was John, not Samuel, Johnson. A clergyman who knew Le Courayer personally, he appeared to have more support for his translation and more reasonable expectation of completing it, all of which probably discouraged Johnson from pursuing his work any further.

<sup>2</sup>LVIII (June 1943), 466-476. Referred to hereafter as McAdam.

There is no mention in the Gentleman's Magazine that Johnson's "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" is a translation from the French, although his debt to Le Courayer is obvious. Yet Johnson's article is less a translation of the "Vie Abregée" than a skillful reworking of the French text in which he does much more than simply translate the French into English. Like his "Dissertation on the Amazons," Johnson's "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" is a condensation of a much longer work. His biography in the Gentleman's Magazine is only about five columns and twenty-five paragraphs, and Le Courayer's life of Sarpi is thirty-four closely printed quarto pages. Such a difference in length makes it evident that Johnson does much more than mechanically translate the French into English. Instead, he works with his French text much as he does with Guyon's Histoire--paraphrasing, compressing, and condensing the French. He selects passages that interest him, omits considerable portions of his French source, adds comments of his own, rearranges the facts Le Courayer presents, and generally reworks the "Vie Abregée" into something quite his own. Le Courayer clearly presents the material for Johnson's article, but its style, arrangement, and expression are very much Johnson's own. Still, it is not inaccurate to call "The Life of Father Paul Sarpi" a translation, provided the term is properly qualified, for in many places in the article it is possible to see a close relationship between the French and the English.

Johnson's method of translating Le Courayer can be seen in his rendition of the opening paragraph of the "Vie Abregée."

Le Courayer: (XL: 1-16)

FRA-PAOLO, nommé dans le monde Pierre Sarpi, naquit à Venise le 14 d'Août MDLII. Son père François Sarpi, originaire de San-Vido dans le Frioul, exerça le Commerce avec peu de succès. D'un tempérament naturellement violent & plus porté aux armes qu'à sa profession, il ruina ses affaires, & laissa en mourant

sa famille avec peu de ressources du côté de la fortune, mais dédommée d'ailleurs par des biens plus précieux que l'opulence & l'élévation. Sa mère Isabelle Morelli, d'une famille Citadine de Venise, d'un caractère doux & naturellement porté à la piété, d'une conduite régulière & édifiante, suppléa à ce qui manquoit à ses enfans du côté des richesses, par les semences de religion & de vertu qu'elle leur inspira, & par l'éducation qu'elle leur procura par le moyen de son frère Ambroise Morelli Recteur des Religieuses de S<sup>te</sup> Ermagore, & Maître d'une Ecole à Venise, d'où sortirent plusieurs Elèves, qui ont fait honneur à sa mémoire & à ses soins.

Johnson: (GM 581 cl. 1, G-H)

Father Paul, whose Name, before he entered into the monastic Life, was Peter Sarpi, was born at Venice, August 14, 1552. His Father follow'd Merchandise, but with so little Success, that at his Death, he left his Family very ill provided for, but under the Care of a Mother, whose Piety was likely to bring the Blessing of Providence upon them, and whose wise Conduct supplied the want of Fortune by Advantages of greater Value.

Happily for young Sarpi, she had a Brother, Master of a celebrated School, under whose Direction he was placed by her. It is clear that although Johnson's rendition is based upon the French, he does not translate literally. Instead, he paraphrases and condenses his source, but with such skill that the substance and sense of the original are well preserved.

In his next three paragraphs (GM 581 cl. 2, A-F) Johnson stays fairly close to his French source, in which Le Courayer comments about Sarpi's academic excellence, but again he does not translate literally. In Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's discussion of Sarpi's entrance into the order of the Servites it is possible to get a clear idea of how he handles his French text.

Le Courayer: (XLI: 25-40)

En vain son oncle & sa mère, qui avoient sur lui d'autres vues, s'opposèrent-ils à sa résolution, & tâchèrent même de l'en détourner pas des mortifications & des duretés, auxquelles peut-être il n'eût pas cru devoir s'attendre; il demeura ferme dans son dessein, & prit l'habit de l'Ordre le 24 de Novembre MDLXVI, n'étant encore âgé que de quatorze ans: âge bien tendre pour un tel engagement, mais qui dans le jeune Sarpi étoit accompagné de tant de maturité, & secondé de dispositions si conformes à une telle profession, que ni les affaires dont il fut chargé, ni les occasions qu'il eut de s'en prévaloir pour changer de condition ou se soustraire à la pratique des Observances, ne le dégoûtèrent jamais de son état loin de l'en repentir, & ne servirent même qu'à lui inspirer plus d'inclination pour le repos & la retraite. En MDLXVIII il fit profession tacite dans l'Ordre, qu'il renouvela ensuite solennellement le 10 Mai MDLXXII, entre les mains d'Etienne Bonucci alors Général des Servites, & depuis Cardinal.

Johnson: (GM 581 cl. 2, C-D)

[His Uncle and his Mother] represented to him the Hardships and Austerities of that kind of Life, and advis'd him with great Zeal against it. But he was steady in his Resolution, and in 1566 took the Habit of the Order, being then only in his 14th Year, a Time of Life in most Persons very improper for such Engagements, but in him attended with such Maturity of Thought, and such a settled Temper, that he never seem'd to regret the Choice he then made, and which he confirm'd by a solemn public Profession, in 1572.

Here again Johnson paraphrases and condenses the French, but it is evident that he still manages to maintain the sense, if not the language, of his foreign text.

Johnson follows Le Courayer's comments about William, Duke of Mantua, who noticed the great capabilities of the young Sarpi and gained permission from his superiors to retain him at his court. (GM 581 cl. 2, E-F). Like Le Courayer he says that young Sarpi left this position in two years. Johnson, though, says Sarpi left simply because he did not find life at court "agreeable to his Temper," a phrase which hardly duplicates Le Courayer's statement that Sarpi was "dégoûté par les caprices du Duc Guillaume, qui joignoit beaucoup de bizarrerie à beaucoup d'esprit" as well as by the general atmosphere of the court and "d'une station où il vivoit moins pour lui que pour les autres" (XLII: 20-26). Johnson does, however, translate Le Courayer's description of Sarpi's intellectual achievements quite closely as can be seen by a comparison of the following passages.

Le Courayer: (XLII: 29-37)

Car outre celle des Belles-Lettres & des Langues Latine, Grecque, Hébraïque & Caldéenne, il étoit très habile dans la Philosophie, la Théologie, & le Droit Canon, & déjà très instruit du Droit Civil, des Mathématiques, de toutes les parties de la Physique, de la Chymie même, & de plusieurs autres choses, qui sembleroient avoir demandé l'étude d'une grande partie de la vie, & qui exigeoient au moins un esprit vif, une mémoire heureuse, une conception aisée, & une tête parfaitement claire & capable de réunir tant de différens objets sans la moindre confusion.

Johnson: (GM 581 cl. 2, G-H)

[He was not] only acquainted with the Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Chaldee Languages, but with Philosophy, the Mathematicks, Canon and Civil Law, all Parts of natural Philosophy, and Chemistry itself; for his Application was unintermitted, his Head clear, his Apprehension quick, and his Memory retentive.

For his first six paragraphs, then, Johnson stays fairly close to his French source, though he paraphrases in almost every instance instead of translating literally. Throughout the rest of his article, however, he moves more rapidly through Le Courayer's "Vie de l'Auteur," abridging, condensing, omitting large sections of the text, and even altering the sequence of facts Le Courayer presents. Johnson omits, for example, Le Courayer's comments about Sarpi's rigid schedule of study, his precarious health, and his diet. Such omissions, though, are consistent with Johnson's apparent aim in his biography of dealing mainly with Sarpi's religious and political ventures rather than his personal life.

Johnson follows Le Courayer's commentary in stating that at twenty-two Sarpi was made a priest and found favor with the illustrious Cardinal Borromeo who often consulted him on theological matters. Johnson also writes that persons envious of Sarpi's rise to fame wished to ruin him and charged "him before the Inquisition, for denying that the Trinity could be proved from the first Chapter of Genesis" (GM 582 cl. 1, A), not quite an accurate translation of Le Courayer's statement that Sarpi was accused "qu'il ne croyoit pas qu'on pût prouver le mystère de la Trinité par le premier Chapitre de la Genèse" (XLIII: 29-31). A typical Johnsonian variation on the French is seen shortly later in his translation of Le Courayer's discussion of Sarpi's intellectual abilities. The French reads, "Il discouroit de Mathématique avec les Mathématiciens, d'Astronomie avec les Astronomes, de Médecine avec les Médecins, d'Anatomie avec les Chirurgiens" (XLIV: 31-34) which Johnson translates, "He frequently convers'd upon Astronomy with Mathematicians, upon Anatomy with Surgeons, upon Medicine with Physicians" (GM 582 cl. 1 B). Such variation from the French is found throughout Johnson's article and is clear evidence that he considered his French source not as a text

to be followed slavishly but as a model or guide to help him create a fairly original article of his own.

Le Courayer discusses in some detail Sarpi's rise to the post of "Procureur-Général" of his order and his success as an administrator, teacher, and scholar (XLIII-XLIV), all of which Johnson summarizes briefly in his comment, "After this he passed successively thro' the Dignities of his Order, and in the Intervals of his Employment applied himself to his Studies with so extensive a Capacity, as left no Branch of Knowledge untouch'd" (GM 582 cl. 1, A). Johnson omits Le Courayer's description of the internal disturbances Sarpi faced within his Order and the admirable way he conducted himself. Such an omission, however, is not surprising, for Sarpi was soon involved in a much greater controversy--one which ultimately cost him a bishopric.

Sarpi, it seems, did not come out of the internal dispute within his order without enemies who wished to destroy him. A certain Colissoni, bent on ruining Sarpi, made public a letter Sarpi had written him. Le Courayer writes, "Il s'y agissoit d'une Lettre écrite en chiffre à Colissoni lui-même, qui pour gagner la confiance de Fra-Paolo lui aiant proposé quelques moyens de s'avancer à Rome, ce Père en montra beaucoup d'éloignement & de mépris, & répondit, qu'on ne s'avançoit aux Dignités de cette Cour que par de mauvais moyens, & que loin d'en faire aucun cas, il en avoit horreur" (XLV: 36-42). Johnson translates, "A former Acquaintance produced a Letter written by him in Cyphers, in which he said, that he detested the Court of Rome, and that no Preferment was obtained there but by dishonest Means" (GM 582 cl. 1, D). It is immediately apparent how loosely Johnson translates Sarpi's remark. Nowhere does he say, for example, that he "detested the Court of Rome." But this variation from the French text is only a minor one compared to what follows. Johnson completes his comments about the affair with the statement, "This Accusation, however dangerous, was

passed over on account of his great Reputation, but made such Impressions on that Court, that he was afterwards denied a Bishoprick by Clement VIII" (GM 582 cl. 1, D-E).

McAdam points out in his article what a comparison of the French and English immediately reveals--Johnson omits a second and perhaps the real reason why Sarpi was denied a bishopric.<sup>3</sup> According to Le Courayer, Sarpi was also accused of having consorted with Jews and heretics and this contact, rather than the letter he wrote, appeared to be the immediate cause of his loss of the bishopric. Le Courayer writes, "Car lorsque du tems de Clement VIII on le proposa pour "Evêché de Milopotamo & ensuite pour celui de Nona, l'accusation avoit tellement frappé ce Pape, que quoiqu'il avouât que ce Père étoit un homme de Lettres & de capacité, il ajouta que le commerce qu'il avoit entretenu avec les Hérétiques le rendoit indigne de l'Episcopat (XLVI: 17-22). McAdam comments, "This omission not only distorts his source, but perverts history. Johnson apparently felt that the real reason for the refusal was Sarpi's almost open opposition to Rome, and that the heretics were but a convenient pretext." <sup>4</sup>

McAdam's charge has a clear textual basis--Johnson obviously does omit a second reason for Sarpi's loss of the bishopric. But McAdam himself grants that apparently Johnson "felt" that the real reason was Sarpi's opposition to Rome prior to the second charge. There are two passages in the French text, moreover, which support the idea that Johnson has a basis in seeing the letter as a fundamental cause for Sarpi's failing to obtain the high church post and that the second accusation was more a pretext. Concerning the first episode, Sarpi's letter attacking the means of advancement in Rome, Le Courayer writes,

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<sup>3</sup>McAdam, p. 467.

<sup>4</sup>McAdam, p. 467.



"On peut juger quelles impressions pût faire à Rome une telle Lettre, & quoiqu'on n'y trouvât pas de quoi procéder criminellement contre son Auteur, on sent assez qu'il étoit impossible qu'elle ne laissât des préventions contre lui, qui se revéillèrent dès que la défense de sa Patrie l'eut obligé de se déclarer contre les prétentions déraisonnables de Paul V" (XLV: 42-44; XLVI: 1-3). From this statement it is evident that Sarpi's letter was sufficient cause for him to be put under suspicion in Rome even though the letter itself was not grounds for action. Le Courayer's phrase, "On peut juger quelles impressions pût faire à Rome une telle Lettre" is fraught with the ominous implications that Sarpi definitely was on the suspect list as far as the Church hierarchy was concerned.

A second passage in the French text, moreover, tends to mitigate McAdam's charge that Johnson, in his omission of the second accusation, "distorts" his source and "perverts" history. Le Courayer himself refers to the letter when he discusses the second accusation against Sarpi. He writes, "L'autre accusation, quoique plus frivole encore, lui fit également tort à Rome; c'est qu'il entretenoit commerce avec des Juifs & avec des Hérétiques. Dans d'autres conjonctures, un tel crime eût peut-être paru ridicule: mais l'idée que l'on a à Rome, qu'on ne sauroit mal penser de cette Cour sans penser mal en meme tems de la Religion, y fit juger que celui qui avoit écrit la Lettre déferée, pourroit bien aussi n'être pas trop zélé pour l'Orthodoxie Romaine" (XLVI: 4-10). Thus the French text clearly reveals what Johnson perhaps overemphasizes--the letter Sarpi wrote did much damage to his reputation. Once suspected he was marked for a fall, and any subsequent deviation, however innocent, was all that was needed to seal his doom.

There is, then, textual support for McAdam's position that Johnson's omission distorts the French text and also, I think, enough evidence for believing that the omission was caused simply by Johnson's view that the real reason for the denial of the bishopric was the letter

Sarpi wrote. Condensing as he does because of the small space he had to work in, Johnson probably felt that the omission of the second accusation against Sarpi would not seriously distort the substance of the work he was translating. At any rate, such an omission reveals that Johnson's French translations are not simply mechanical renderings of one language into another, but they offer complexities and problems of interpretation that one would hardly expect to find.

Johnson mentions briefly Sarpi's retirement from the turmoil he had been involved in, during which he studied, wrote, and attempted to improve himself spiritually (GM 582 cl. 1, E-G). His time of repose was soon interrupted, however, by the feud between Pope Paul V and the Republic of Venice. This conflict occupies almost two columns in Johnson's five-column article, and it is evident that it must have interested him considerably. The quarrel between the Pope and the Republic of Venice was a complex affair concerning impingement upon the papal power by the Venetian state which was seizing church property and putting members of the clergy in prison. Pope Paul was determined to force the Venetians to submit to his demands and when they refused, he countered by laying the state under an interdict. LeCourayer discusses this stage of the controversy in three long paragraphs (XLVII-XLVIII), but Johnson condenses it into a single sentence, "But the most active Scene of his Life began about the Year 1615, [Johnson incorrectly transcribes the Roman numeral MDCVI] when Pope Paul Vth, exasperated by some Decrees of the Senate of Venice that interfered with the pretended Rights of the Church, laid the whole State under an Interdict" (GM 582 cl. 1, G).

In continuing his narration of the fight between the Pope and Venice, Johnson condenses four pages of Le Courayer (XLVIII-LII) into three short paragraphs (GM 582 cl. 1, H-cl. 2, C). Though Johnson manages quite skillfully to extract from his French text the main events in the

dispute, he gives little mention to the important role Sarpi played in the controversy. Johnson cites two works Sarpi wrote in defense of the Venetian cause, one not his own but a translation, and he does not even mention a third and more important one entitled Considerations sur les Censures de Paul V. Le Courayer praises this book highly saying, "Cet Ecrit, aussi recommandable par sa modération que par la force des raisons & l'érudition dont il est rempli, étoit seul capable de terminer la disputes, si les préventions étoient susceptibles de conviction" (LI: 34-36).

Johnson's chief interest in the conflict, however, is not with Sarpi or the other Venetian writers who came to the support of the Republic, but with a list of twelve "principles" by which the supporters of Paul attempted to justify his interdict. When one considers that Johnson's whole life of Sarpi is only about five columns in the Gentleman's Magazine and the paragraph he devotes to a close translation of these "principles" is over a half a column, it is evident he finds them to be of considerable significance. Though Johnson rearranges the order of the twelve "principles" and condenses them to nine, he generally follows the French quite closely. Compare, for example, "principle" ten which reads in French, "Que le Pape est un Dieu en Terre, que sa Sentence & celle de Dieu sont la même chose, que c'est le même Tribunal, & que douter de sa puissance est autant que douter de celle de Dieu" (LII: 44; LIII: 1-3) and Johnson's translation, "That the Pope is God upon Earth, that his Sentence and that of God are the same, and that to call his Power in Question, is to call in Question the Power of God" (GM 582 cl. 2, F).

Johnson omits the Venetian reply to these "principles," eight in number (LIII), feeling evidently that the justice of their cause was self-evident. He summarizes in a single paragraph (GM 582 cl. 2 H) Le Courayer's discussion of the settlement between Rome and Venice,

brought about by the mediation of Henry IV, but he omits the terms of the settlement (LV). Johnson then moves on to a brief narration of the unsuccessful attempt on Sarpi's life by five assassins (GM 583 cl. 1, A-C) and he devotes a whole paragraph (GM 583 cl. 1, C-E) in praise of Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent, hoping perhaps to create further interest in the translation he expected to bring out. From this point Johnson begins to move much more rapidly through the French and omits over ten pages (LVIII-LXVIII) in which Le Courayer discusses in detail Sarpi's writings, his partial reconciliation with Rome, and his Protestant leanings.

To conclude his article Johnson moves on to Le Courayer's description of Sarpi's approaching death, and it is interesting, I think, to compare Johnson's rendition with the French original.

Le Courayer: (LXIX: 10-18)

Le Dimanche 8 de Janvier il ne laissa pas, tout accablé qu'il étoit, de se lever pour célébrer la Messe; ensuite de laquelle il s'en alla, comme à son ordinaire, prendre son repas avec les autres. Mais c'étoient les derniers efforts d'une nature presque éteinte, & qui se roidissoit contre la force du mal. Après avoir été surpris le Lundi d'une foiblesse qui fit craindre pour sa vie, il se prépara le Jeudi à son dernier moment par le demande du Saint Viatique, qu'il reçut avec des sentimens de foi, de piété & de résignation, qui firent admirer sa religion, & tirèrent des larmes des yeux de tous les psectateurs.

Johnson: (GM 583 cl. 1 F-G)

On Sunday the eighth of January of the next Year, he rose weak as he was, to Mass, and went to take his Repast with the rest, but on Monday was seized with a Weakness that threatened immediate Death, and on Thursday prepared his Change by receiving the Viaticum with such Marks of Devotion as equally melted and edified the Beholders.

Though Johnson condenses and paraphrases Le Courayer's description of the dying Sarpi, it is clear that his rendition is in no way inferior to the original and may in its conciseness actually excel it.

Johnson follows Le Courayer's comments about Sarpi's death quite closely (GM 583 cl. 1, H- cl. 2, B) but he omits his closing discussion of Sarpi's virtues and physical appearance (LXX-LXXII). For most of the remainder of his article, Johnson returns to an earlier episode in the "Vie de l'Auteur" in which Le Courayer talks about Sarpi's Protestant tendencies and his particular dislike of the Jesuits. Quoting a letter Sarpi once wrote, Le Courayer writes, "Il n'y a rien de plus essentiel, dit-il, que de ruiner le crédit des Jésuites. En les ruinant on ruine Rome; & si Rome est perdue, la Religion se reformera d'elle-même"(LXVI: 8-10). Johnson translates the letter quite closely saying, "There is nothing more essential than to ruin the Reputation of the Jesuits: By the Ruin of the Jesuits, Rome will be ruin'd; and if Rome is ruin'd, Religion will reform of itself" (GM 583 cl. 2 C). For his next to last paragraph (GM 583 cl. 2, D-E) Johnson borrows from the same place in the "Vie de l'Auteur" (LXVI-LXVII) in which Le Courayer tells of a situation in which a certain Fulgentio, a friend of Sarpi's, administered to a sick Englishman in Venice the sacrament according to the manner of the Church of England. Only in his last paragraph (GM 583 cl. 2, E) does Johnson return to the final paragraph of the "Vie de l'Auteur" in which Le Courayer describes how Sarpi was buried with great pomp and how a monument was erected to his memory (LXXIII).

Johnson's "Life of Father Paul Sarpi," then, is an impressive piece of condensation and compression. In it he has managed with great skill to extract the most important facts about Sarpi as well as the times in which he lived, and he has combined these into a narrative whose smoothness belies the fact that it is a series of extracts from a much longer work. In Johnson's "Sarpi" it is possible to see fully realized the creative potentialities of translation.

Although Dr. Johnson's never finished his translation of Le Courayer's French edition of Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent, we do have, at least, the "Proposals" for this work which give a small, but adequate sample of how Johnson translated his French source.<sup>5</sup> Due to the short length of this item, I shall quote the French original and the English in full.

Le Courayer: "Livre Premier" (5-7)

Quoique plusieurs Historiens célèbres de notre siècle aient touché quelques particularités du Concile de Trente dans leurs Ecrits, & que Jean Sleidan Auteur fort exact en ai décrit avec soin les causes & les motifs; comme cependant tout ce qu'ils en ont dit joint ensemble ne suffit pas pour en faire une narration suivie & entière, je me propose d'en écrire ici l'Histoire.

A peine avoi-je commencé à prendre quelque connoissance des affaires du monde, que je me sentis une extrême curiosité d'apprendre tout le détail de ce qui s'étoit passé dans ce Concile. Ainsi, après avoir lu avec soin tout ce que je pus rencontrer de monumens publics imprimés ou manuscrits, qui ont rapport à cette Assemblée, je me mis à rechercher tout ce que les Prélats & les autres qui y avoient assisté nous en ont laissé, & je n'épargnai ni soins ni peines pour recueillir les Mémoires, les Votes, & les Suffrages publics, ou qu'ils nous ont conservés eux-mêmes, ou que d'autres nous ont transmis, & jusqu'aux Lettres d'avis, qui se sont écrites de Trente pendant la tenue de cette Assemblée. J'ai même été assez heureux pour voir des recueils entiers de Lettres & de Notes de ceux qui ont eu une grande part dans toutes ces intrigues. Et c'est à l'aide de tous ces monumens, qui peuvent fournir une matière assez ample, que je me propose d'écrire cette Histoire.

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<sup>5</sup>The "Proposals," once thought to be lost, were recently discovered by Dr. Moses Tyson, Librarian of Manchester University. For a complete account of their background and origin see, J. A. V. Chapple, "Samuel Johnson's Proposals For Printing The History of the Council of Trent [1728]" Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, 45 (March 1963), 340-369.

Je raconterai donc les causes & les intrigues d'une Assemblée Ecclésiastique, qui durant le cours de vingt-deux ans a été pour diverses fins & par différens moyens recherchée & sollicitée par les uns, & arrêtée ou retardée par les autres; & qui pendant dix-huit ans, tantôt assemblée & tantôt interrompue, mais toujours tenue dans des vues différentes, a eu enfin un succès tout contraire a l'attente de ceux qui l'avoient procurée, & à la crainte de ceux qui l'avoient traversée. Belle leçon, qui nous apprend à remettre tout entre les mains de Dieu, & à ne point reposer sur la prudence humaine.

Johnson: "Book I." (3-4)

My Design is to write the History of the COUNCIL of TRENT; of which, tho' some particular Occurrences have been touch'd on in the Writings of many celebrated Historians of our Time, and the Causes preceding it been very exactly recounted by that accurate Author John Sleidan, yet all these Accounts put together will not amount to a compleat Relation.

I, for my Part, as soon as I had attained some Knowledge of Mankind, found myself seized with a strong Curiosity to be acquainted with this Transaction in its whole Extent. And having diligently perused whatever I met with written on that Subject, and the publick Instructions as well Printed as Manuscript, I applied myself, with indefatigable Industry, to search the Remains of the Writings of the Prelates, and other who were at the Council, for such Memoirs as they had left, and for Votes and Opinions pronounc'd in publick, and preserv'd either by their Authors or by other Men, together with the Advices transmitted from the City of Trent; and have been so fortunate as to obtain the Sight even of whole Registers of Notes, and Letters written by Persons who had a great Share in the Business of the Council. Having there made a

Collection of Materials sufficient to furnish a Relation of the whole Progress of this Affair, I shall digest them into their proper order.

I SHALL relate the Causes and the Intrigues of an Ecclesiastical Assembly, for the Space of twenty-two Years, by various Means and for several Ends promoted and solicited by one Party, and by the other retarded and opposed; and for eighteen Years more, sometimes assembled, sometimes dissolved, always conven'd for different Purposes, and at last modell'd and concluded in a Manner wholly contrary to the Design of those who had procured, and to the Apprehensions of those whose utmost Efforts had been employ'd to interrupt it: A plain Instruction to resign all our Cares into the Hands of God, and to put no trust in Human Prudence!

Johnson once told Boswell that history books could be translated exactly, and it is apparent here that he attempts to approximate this goal. There are, of course, frequent minor variations from the French in Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's text--paraphrases, changes in word order, slight omissions and additions, and changes in diction. A minor variation which prevents one from assigning without qualification a "literal" label on this translation is Johnson's rendition of Le Courayer's use of the word "intrigues" (lines 20 and 23 above). It is evident, I think, that Le Courayer uses the word in both instances pretty much as it is defined in Larousse: "Pratique secrète, qu'on emploie pour faire réussir ou manquer une affaire." In his first translation of the word (line 19 above), Johnson gives its English equivalent as "Business" which changes somewhat the force and meaning of the passage. Later, however (line 23 above), he translates it as "Intrigues" which preserves more adequately the sense of the French. Even though we have only a small sample of Johnson's translation of Le Courayer's



text we might assume, had he continued, that his method of translation would be essentially the same and that we would encounter variations similar to the one cited above.

## CHAPTER IV

### A COMMENTARY ON MR. POPE'S PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY

Dr. Johnson's third translation from the French, A Commentary on Mr. Pope's Principles of Morality, or Essay on Man By Mons<sup>r</sup> Crousaz (1739) from Jean Pierre de Crousaz's Commentaire sur la Traduction en Vers de M. l'Abbé Du Resnel, de l'Essai de M. Pope sur l'Homme (1738), grew out of the stir that Alexander Pope's Essay on Man created, especially in France. Though this chapter is primarily concerned with the question of how Johnson translates his French source, something of its background and origin is needed for a full understanding of the book. Etienne de Silhouette translated Pope's Essay on Man into prose in 1736 and the Abbé Du Resnel followed in 1737 with a verse translation. As a result of reading these versions, Jean Pierre de Crousaz, a professor of mathematics and philosophy in the University of Lausanne, wrote two attacks on Pope's poem: an Examen de l'Essai de Monsieur Pope sur l'Homme, published in 1737 at Lausanne and Amsterdam, and a Commentaire (see above) published in Geneva in 1738. Of Pope's attacker Edward Bloom writes, "A pious man who distrusted metaphysics and Pope's optimism (and, according to one critic, incompetent to understand Pope's meaning and purpose), Crousaz identified Pope's views with those of Leibnitz and Spinoza, concluding in the Examen that the Essay was irreligious." <sup>1</sup>

This dispute did not go unnoticed, however, and Bishop Warburton, heretofore not exactly a champion of Pope, came to his defense in a

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p. 32.

series of letters,<sup>2</sup> one of which Crousaz includes in his Commentaire. A controversy of such international proportions coupled with the inability of many to read French necessitated the translation of Crousaz's two works. The Examen was translated by the poetess and writer, Elizabeth Carter, and was printed by Cave in 1738. At the same time apparently Johnson himself was working on Crousaz's second attack on Pope, the Commentaire, but without much success. In an undated letter to Cave he indicates little hope for the project but urges the completion of Elizabeth Carter's work on the Examen.<sup>3</sup> Indolence and inertia probably had as much to do with the slow progress of the translation of the Commentaire by Johnson as anything else, but the appearance of Charles Forman's translation (issued by Edmund Curll in 1738) may have put even a greater damper on Johnson's will to work. Forman's edition was not complete, however, and the revelation of this fact, coupled perhaps with Cave's renewed urging, might explain Johnson's hasty completion of the text, during which he admitted to composing forty-eight quarto pages in one day.<sup>4</sup>

What is clear to us today, though, long remained obscured because of Boswell's confusion of Crousaz's two works. Only recently have scholars been able to describe accurately Johnson's role in the translation of the Commentaire and the actual time it saw publication.<sup>5</sup> In correcting the proofs of the Life Boswell altered Johnson's remark,

<sup>2</sup>See Life, V, 491.

<sup>3</sup>Life, I, 137.

<sup>4</sup>Life, IV, 127, 494-495; V, 67.

<sup>5</sup>See Allen Hazen, "Crousaz on Pope," Times Literary Supplement, November 2, 1955, p. 704; Allen Hazen and E. L. McAdam, Jr., "First Editions of Samuel Johnson: An Important Exhibition and a Discovery," Yale University Library Gazette, X (January 1936), 45-51; R. W. Chapman, "Crousaz on Pope," RES, n. s. I (January 1950), 57.

which he had recorded in his Journal, that he had "in one day written six sheets of a translation of Crousaz on Pope" to read "a translation from the French." L. F. Powell in a note comments, "This deliberate rejection of his own record, made at the time, is, I believe, due to his confusion of one 'translation of Crousaz on Pope' with another. He knew very well that the pamphlet published in 1739, An Examination of Mr. Pope's Essay on Man. Translated from the French of M. Crousaz, although attributed to Johnson, was really by Miss Carter, but there is no evidence that he saw the entirely different book published in 1742, or recognized the reference to it in Johnson's undated letter to Cave, which he himself had printed."<sup>6</sup> Though a long overlooked footnote in Elwin-Courthope's Pope (1871 edition, II, 307) had suggested Johnson's relationship with the Commentaire, it remained for Powell in his revision of Hill's edition of the Life to identify Johnson as the translator of the work. Moreover, Allen Hazen in an article in the Times Literary Supplement for November 2, 1935<sup>7</sup> reported that the 1742 edition of the Commentary was not the first but merely a reissue of the original 1739 edition published by A. Dodd. A final item in connection with the Crousaz controversy is Johnson's two-part article in the Gentleman's Magazine for March and November of 1743. This article is taken mainly from his translation of the Commentaire and appears to be less a serious attempt to elucidate the dispute and more a puff for his rendition of Crousaz's second attack on Pope.

Crousaz's Commentaire is essentially a criticism of the Essay on Man through the vehicle of Du Resnel's verse translation of the poem which Johnson includes in his edition with an interlinear translation. Also found in Johnson's translation, but not in Crousaz's text, is

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<sup>6</sup>Life, IV, 494-495.

<sup>7</sup>"Crousaz on Pope," p. 704.

Du Resnel's "Preface" to his translations of the Essay on Man as well as the Essay on Criticism.<sup>8</sup> Of considerable interest in Johnson's version are some forty-six notes which taken together not only constitute his "commentary" on the Commentaire, but also show Johnson the literary critic at work. Many of these notes are quite short, some more lengthy, and most are found in the first three Epistles. In them Johnson points out the deficiencies of Du Resnel's translation of the Essay and Crousaz's commentary on the poem. Scattered throughout Johnson's translation are such comments about Du Resnel's rendition as; "In this place six whole Lines are omitted" (36) or "This Couplet is an Addition by the Translator" (53), criticisms which sometimes culminate in a more extensive condemnation such as; "On this Passage where sixteen Lines are translated into thirty-three, it is not necessary to make any other Remark than may be made in general on the whole Work, that it is extremely below the Original in Spirit, Propriety, and notwithstanding the Diffuseness of his Expression, in Perspicuity" (67). Johnson is highly critical of Crousaz's comments as well, particularly when he misinterprets Pope through a foolish trust in the accuracy of Du Resnel's translation. Johnson states in one place, "Mr Crousaz ought, at least, when he met with Non-sense, to have consulted Mr Pope in the Prose Version. To attribute such an uncommon Sentiment, as that the Passions constitute the Union between the Soul and Body, to a wrong Author, is such Injustice as no Man ought either willingly or negligently to be guilty of" (107).

It is only in his notes, though, and not in his translation that we see Johnson the personality and critic. His rendition of Crousaz's

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<sup>8</sup>Johnson translates from Du Resnel's Les Principes de la Morale et du Goût, en Deux Poèmes (Paris, 1737). In comparing the French and the English I found seventeen doublets, two typical Johnsonian translations of the idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive, as well as the variations from the French found throughout the Commentary.

Commentaire is quite close for the most part, though it is by no means exact. Below I shall cite a brief passage from Johnson's translation to give an idea of the method he uses throughout the Commentary. Mainly, though, I rely on a series of tables to reveal the various deviations Johnson makes from his French source. Under "Paraphrases" it is seen how his rendition of the French is frequently less than literal; under "Variations in Diction" are illustrations of how he sometimes selects an English word that is not quite the equivalent of the French; under "Word Order Changes" are examples of how he recasts a French sentence to create what he probably thought was a smoother or more forceful English sentence; and under "Additions to the French and "Omissions from the French" are further variations which show that this translation is not completely literal. Also, I list a number of doublets which are scattered throughout the Commentary, though the twenty in the table are only a small percentage of the more than ninety I found. (Some of the other tables will also contain doublets.)

Dr. L. F. Powell in a note about the Commentary says, "The translation does not, I am bound to admit, exhibit a striking resemblance to Johnson's style, but the Annotations, which are avowedly by the translator, are distinctly Johnsonian."<sup>9</sup> The presence of so many doublets in this translation, a chief idiosyncrasy throughout Johnson's translations from the French, is certainly added support, though none is really needed now, that Johnson is indeed the translator of this work. Finally, I have listed Johnson's translations of the idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive.

In the passages below it is possible to see quite clearly Johnson's method of translation in his Commentary and many of the variations which are listed in the tables which follow.

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<sup>9</sup>Life, IV, 495.

Crousaz: (65: 3-25)

Cependant Dieu, qui voit infiniment plus clair dans l'avenir que les hommes, & qui a les événemens en sa main, souvent par bonté pour eux, ne permet pas que leur desseins tournent comme ils se l'étoient proposé, parce que ce succès leur auroit été moins avantageux. Plus souvent encore il réduit à rien la témérité & l'orgueil de leurs entreprises, & il les laisse courir à des maux qu'ils ont bien mérités. Les hommes abusent sur ce sujet de leur liberté: tantôt ils se persuadent comme certain ce qu'il leur plait, sans en avoir des preuves raisonnables, & tantôt, avertis d'éviter les malheurs qui les regardent, ils refusent de se soumettre à des conseils qui ne leur plaisent pas. On en a un exemple bien frappant dans la conduite des Israélites, un peu avant leur captivité.

Johnson: (31: 1-16) <sup>10</sup>

But God, whose Views of Futurity are infinitely more clear than Man's and who has the sovereign Disposal of all Events, very often mercifully disappoints human Designs, because the Disappointment is more to our Advantage than Success. He often brings to nothing the Pride and Rashness of their Undertakings, and suffers them to fall into the Calamities they deserve. Men, with regard to Futurity, make an ill Use of their Freewill, sometimes persuading themselves, without just Grounds, of the Certainty of what they wish for; and sometimes, when they are inform'd of the Approach of Misfortunes, disregarding Advice because they do not like it: Of this we have an affecting Instance in the Conduct of the Israelites a little before the Captivity.

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<sup>10</sup>I quote from the 1742 edition.

An examination of Johnson's translation of Crousaz's Commentaire reveals quite clearly an attitude that is found throughout most of his translations from the French. Essentially it is his view that the translator is more than an imitator, mouthpiece, or mirror. His function is not only to transmit the meaning from language to language but also to make some comment on it. In the Commentary, though Johnson stays out of the text itself, he manages through the many notes he appends to create a considerable "commentary" on the Commentaire and at the same time to reveal his own attitudes toward the work he is translating. In many of his translations from the French the distinction between Johnson the critic and personality and Johnson the translator is more subtle and only a close comparison of the French and English texts can substantiate which is which. Though in the Commentary we always know who is talking, the translator or the critic, we still see clearly implied the notion that translation must be a means of criticism as well as a tool of transmission.



## Paraphrases

Crousaz 4: 17

Après cette humble réponse

6: 14-15

C'est un langage équivoque,  
mais decisif & sacré

12: 28-29; 13: 1

On en a gravé les Definitions  
dans sa Mémoire, fondées ou  
arbitraires, c'est de quoi on  
s'est peu embarrassé

15: 5-9

On cesse d'être enfant, on  
devient adulte, on passe dans  
des Auditoires, ou des Personnes  
accréditées debitent hardiment  
une Doctrine qui étonne

25: 19-23

& le mécontentement de quelques-  
uns de ces Messieurs (car ils  
veulent tout ou rien) n'a paru  
aller jusqu'à le soupçonner  
plûtôt de Spinosisme

36: 1-3

C'est une tâche que j'accepte;  
& je suis ravi de savoir à  
quoi mes recherches doivent  
se borner

Johnson iii: 20-21

If, after having returned an  
Answer in this humble Strain

v: 9-10

The Expression in these is  
equivocal, but considered as  
sacred, and appeal'd to as  
decisive

x: 3-6

They have fixed Definitions  
in their Memories, without  
being much concerned whether  
they have any Foundation in  
Reason, or are merely arbitrary

xi: 23-26

When he is grown up, he enters  
the School, where he hears a  
Doctrine, that strikes him with  
astonishment, boldly advanced  
from Men of great Reputation

xix: 25-29

And some of these Gentlemen  
seem so far disgusted (for he  
that admits any part of their  
System is expected to swallow  
the whole) that they incline  
rather to suspect him of  
Spinosism.

9: 5-7

This Task I embrace, with  
the utmost Satisfaction, to find  
how my Searches are to be  
confin'd.

## Paraphrases

Crousaz 47: 1-3

Il me paroît qu'il faut être  
bien facile pour trouver cette  
réponse satisfaisante

56: 7-11

L'un ou l'autre m'arrive  
suivant que je me rens plus  
ou moins attentif à mon  
devoir, aux discours des  
personnes sages & à leur bons  
exemples

182: 14-16

On ne peut s'empêcher de  
frémir à l'idée d'un  
Système qui conduit là

206: 7-10

Mr. POPE, a pu voir des exemples  
de ce détachement en Angle-  
terre; mais je doute même qu'ils  
y soient universels

231: 1-4

Les personnes qui ont eu des  
blessures, s'aperçoivent des  
changemens de tems par des  
douleurs, & en sont avertis par  
avance

265: 1-2

Mr. POPE n'est pas plus  
heureux Théologien qu'habile  
Philosophe

Johnson 18: 1-3

I must own that, in my  
Opinion, the Man, whom this  
Answer can send away satisfied,  
is very cheaply contented

24: 6-10

I act one way or the other,  
according as I apply myself  
with greater or less Diligence,  
or observe with more or less  
Care, the Precepts of the Wise,  
and the Examples of the Good

126: 3-5

nothing can be more horrible  
than a System that insinuates  
such a Doctrine

147: 6-9

Mr Pope may have seen, perhaps  
in England, some Instances of  
this Disregard for Life, and  
Willingness to resign it, but I  
much doubt whether it be even  
there the general Temper

171: 16-18

Men that have been wounded,  
often perceive any impending  
Change of Weather, by Aches  
in the healed Part

204: 9-10

Mr Pope succeeds no better in  
his Divinity than his Philosophy

## Paraphrases

Crousaz 287: 8-10

& l'effet d'un arrangement  
merveilleux auquel il est  
impossible de rien changer

311: 3-6

Mais la Grandeur appartient  
à des hommes privilégiés par  
les talens qu'ils ont, ou  
qu'on leur impute

330: 1-3

La Raison insinuë que cela  
doit être ainsi, la Révélation  
l'assure & l'expérience le prouve

343: 1-7

Nous sommes nés pour aimer,  
c'est un devoir; & plus nous nous  
en acquittons, c'est-à-dire, plus  
notre coeur fait aimer tendrement,  
plus vivement nous éprouvons à  
que point il est doux d'aimer  
autant qu'on doit

352: 5-7

car je n'en eu jamais la moindre  
ombre contre lui

Johnson 224: 10-12

and the inevitable Consequence  
of an invariable Concatenation

247: 2-4

but Greatness is the Privilege  
of Men distinguish'd either  
by real or imputed Superiority  
of Genius

265: 1-3

This Truth, which is hinted to  
us by Reason, is confirmed by  
Revelation, and proved by  
Experience

274: 21-25

We are born to love one another,  
and the more any Man indulges  
his Benevolence, the more  
sensibly he perceives the Happi-  
ness of Loving; the more he  
practices his Duty, the more  
agreeable does his Duty grow

283: 13; 284: 1

for I never had the least Reason  
for personal Malevolence to his  
character.

## Variations in Diction

Crousaz 22: 12

dans leur mortelle hypothese

31: 25-27

& pour profiter avec plus  
de docilité des lumieres qu'ils  
vont acquerir

38: 2-3

sur ma destinée

123: 13-14

Ce n'est pas Dieu qui fait  
naître dans le coeur des  
hommes

138: 14-15

L'Homme, nait-il condamné  
au travail

186: 2-3

Le Maître de ce second-Etat

188: 14

ses projets ambitieux

257: 16

Le coeur humain

267: 22-23

les Commencemens de la  
félicité parfaite

Johnson xvii: 3-4

in their destructive System

5: 20-21

and that I may attend more  
tractably to the new Instruc-  
tions which are to be received

11: 3

upon the End of my Being

78: 1

God does not infect the Heart  
of Man

89: 2-3

Was Man at his Birth sentenced  
to perpetual Fatigue

129: 1

The King of this detestable  
Race

131: 15

his darling Passion

198: 1

The Mind of Man

206: 20-21

the first Dawn of that perfect  
Felicity

## Variations in Diction

Crousaz 268: 11-12

on pourroit faire un très  
grand abus

278: 5-6

Il sent sa présence dans son  
intérieur

une liberté réelle

308: 2-3

mais ses desirs sont très  
modérés

313: 2-3

se réduit à un extérieur

318: 9-10

Leur passion dominante est la  
Brutalité

328: 18-19

un mauvais coeur

351: 16-17

se trouvera rempli de doutes

360: 16-17

ces réflexions si affreuses

363: 20

A des esprits serviles

Johnson 207: 11

will lead us to very destruc-  
tive Consequences

216: 2-3

He feels his Presence in  
his inward Faculties

a Freedom of Action

242: 7-8

but his Passions are subjected  
to exact Regulations

249: 2-3

is a mere external Advantage

254: 4-5

Their ruling Passion is a  
brutal Self-love

263: 8

An ungenerous Man

282: 1-2

find his Mind clouded with  
Uncertainty

289: 10-11

these horrid Consequences

291: 11

This Herd of slavish adherents

## Word Order Changes

Crousaz 11: 18-22

Un tems a été qu'il falloit parler  
comme ARISTOTE & ses plus  
autorisés Commentateurs, pour  
se faire une Reputation, & se  
parvenir à la Fortune

15: 15-17

sans cesser d'être riches en  
Vertu, vous deviendrez égale-  
ment riches en connoissances

19: 20-21

J'ai connu ces Combats par  
expérience

33: 10-12

La Poësie adopte le grand, mais  
mon coeur souhaite du simple &  
du clair

49: 26-30

ils se seroient instruits de  
la Chute de l'Homme dans une  
ancienne Histoire, que de très  
habiles gens ont démontrée tout-  
à-fait digne de foi

96: 1-3

C'est un Sophisme de mettre  
en parallèle, comme égales, des  
choses très différentes

139: 19-20

La Raison condamne également  
ces extrémités

Johnson ix: 4-7

There was a Time, when to  
establish a Reputation, and raise  
a Fortune, it was necessary to  
speak in the same manner with  
Aristotle, and the most approved  
of his Commentators

xii: 2-4

by these means you will enrich  
your Mind with Knowledge, with-  
out impoverishing it in Virtue

xv: 12-13

These Struggles I once  
experienced

7: 6-7

Grandeur is the Delight of Poetry,  
but my Heart is set upon Clear-  
ness and Simplicity

19: 32-35

they would have consulted an  
ancient History, which many Men  
of the first Class have shewn to  
be highly credible, for an Account  
of the FALL

55: 10-11

To draw a Parallel between  
Things of a Nature entirely  
different, is mere Sophistry

90: 4-5

Each of these Extremes is con-  
demn'd by Reason

## Word Order Changes

Crousaz 181: 12-13

La Divine Providence ne fait  
point naître, dans le coeur  
des hommes, des inclinations  
vicieuses

245: 17-21

J'ai déjà fait mes remarques  
sur l'insuffisance de ces instruc-  
tions prétendues, que nous donnent  
les animaux, & sur le peu de fonde-  
ment de cette Harangue Romanesque

274: 14-15

De quels assemblages de  
merveilles ne me trouve-je pas  
environné

307: 11-12

Les vers suivans ne sauroient  
être trop lûs

322: 1-4

Ce n'est point par le mépris  
qu'il a pour les hommes envieux,  
qu'un homme sage se met au  
dessus de leur injustice

372: 5-9

La pureté de ses moeurs &  
l'exactitude de sa conduite ne  
souffrirent aucun relâchement d'une  
Hypothèse, qui auroit plongé une  
infinité de gens dans le desordre

Johnson 126: 1-2

Vicious Inclinations are  
not implanted by Divine  
Providence in the Heart of Man

186: 4-8

Upon the Insufficiency of these  
pretended Instructions, which we  
receive from the Brute Creations,  
I have already made my Observ-  
ations, and shewn upon what weak  
Foundations the Author raised  
this Romantic Structure

213: 23-24

and see myself surrounded by  
an immense Assemblage of  
Wonders

242: 1-2

It is impossible to read the  
following Lines too often

256: 11-12

A wise Man has a more certain  
Method of eluding Envy than  
that of despising it

297: 3-6

Many would have been corrupted  
in their Morals, and made irregu-  
lar in their Conduct by such an  
Opinion; but this Man did not  
suffer his Hypothesis to have any  
Effect upon his Conduct

## Additions to the French

Crousaz 20: 4

Mais cela posé, pourquoi prier

33: 14-15

les Corps dont je suis  
environné

50: 22

&amp; disposés à choisir mal

71: 4-7

Plus un Auteur a de réputation,  
plus il doit se rendre attentif à  
ne laisser rien échapper

126: 9-11

c'est une sécurité qui va au  
renversement de la Morale & de  
la Religion

155: 3-4

Mr POPE tient exactement parole

190: 1-2

qu'on peut les comparer à ces  
nuances

195: 9-10

Que répondra-t-on à l'Etre  
eternel

Johnson xv: 23-24

But when this Position was laid  
down, what need was there of  
Prayer, or of Confession

7: 10-11

that Assemblage of Bodies with  
which I am surrounded

20: 17-18

and disposed to chuse Evil  
rather than Good

35: 5-7

The more Reputation an Author  
is arriv'd at, the more cautious  
ought he to be, that nothing drops  
from his Pen

80: 6-8

an ill-grounded Security that  
tends to the total Overthrow of  
Morality and Religion

101: 5-6

Mr. Pope keeps his Promise with  
great Exactness

132: 11; 133: 1

be compared to those Shades  
in a Picture

137: 8-9

What Answer will such a  
Wretch be able to make to the  
Eternal



## Additions to the French

Crousaz 205: 25-26

les hommes s'étourdissent  
sur la mort

237: 14-15

mais dans d'autres endroits,  
il se laisse voir un grossier  
Epicurien

237: 19-20

on passe à des vuës plus pures

255: 26-27

Le Culte des Dieux ne pouvoit  
tomber

275: 26-27

ce qu'il demande de moi

278: 1

d'avoir reçu la vie

324: 2-4

qu'elle ne leur laisse pas le  
tems nécessaire pour décider

359: 21

Ce n'est pas tout

Johnson 146: 20

Men harden themselves against  
the Fear of Death

177: 7-8

but, in other Places, appears a  
very gross Epicurean, a mere  
Sensualist

177: 12-13

Men rise to more pure Desires,  
and more exalted Views

196: 10-13

There was no Danger that the  
Worship of the Gods, estab-  
lished upon this Principle,  
could ever fall to the Ground

214: 21-22

and of the Duties which he  
requires from me

215: 34-35

to have received the Gift of Life

259: 2-3

that they never stop in their  
Career, long enough to examine

288: 20-21

But this is not all that may  
be urged against the Perfection  
of the Leibnitzian Universe

## Omissions from the French

Crousaz 9: 4-5

Mais cette réponse que vous  
venez de faire, est-elle  
 conforme

21: 3-4

a leur Système spéculatif

27: 9-10

que j'ai trouvées dans divers  
 Ouvrages

91: 4-6

Mais le Système se découvre  
 ici plus clairement qu' on ne  
souhaiteroit

108: 1-7

A tout coup Mr. POPE oublie  
 une des grandes règles, &  
des plus-essentielles que  
 Mr. DES-CARTES ait donné

217: 4-8

Notre sensibilité pour ses  
 bienfaits, nôtre reconnoissance,  
 & la sincérite de nos actions  
de grâces, la crainte enfin  
 de ses jugemens

268: 25-26

au dessus de tout reproche &  
 de toute punition

Johnson vii: 6-7

But is this Answer of yours  
 agreeable

xvi: 14-15

to their System

1: 9

which I met with in Books

51: 19-20

But the Systeme appears  
 here too plainly

65: 15-17

Mr. Pope forgets, almost  
 in every Line, one of the  
 chief Rules laid down by  
 Mr. Des-Cartes

156: 6-8

Our Sense of his Benefits,  
 our Thanksgivings, and even  
 our Dread of his Judgments

207: 22-23

as out of reach of Reproach  
 or Punishment

## Omissions from the French

Crousaz 273: 23-26

Ne me hazardai-je point trop,  
& ne craindrai - je point d'avancer  
un sentiment qui paroitra  
trop paradoxe

284: 3-5

ne présentent pas des idées  
assez nettes & assez instruc-  
tives pour un sujet si intéressant

309: 1-3

Après avoir combattu & démontré  
l'erreur des préjugés si communs  
sur les richesses

320: 21

& de toutes les lumières

368: 22-25

je me suis rappelé plus d'une  
fois le souvenir de deux  
événemens, qui ont trop de  
rapport à ce sujet pour les  
omettre

Johnson 213: 8-9

SHALL I not too rashly expose  
expose myself to the Character  
of a paradoxical Writer

221: 8-9

is a Manner of speaking scarcely  
clear enough on so great and  
important a Subject

244: 1-2

After having shewn the Falsehood  
of the common Notions about  
Riches

255: 23-24

and that Knowledge

294: 23-25

I have more than once called  
to mind two Occurrences which  
have a close Connection with  
Subject

## Doublets

Crousaz 7: 23-24

pour jouir purement du  
vrai

12: 25-27

& son parti s'est empressé  
à la met en crédit, avec un  
zèle du plus vifs

37: 9-11

sans quoi tout l'Univers  
se seroit d'abord réduit  
en une Masse très compacte

84: 21-23

dans l'espérance de voir  
Éternellement ses Loix regner  
en nous & sur nous

103: 7-10

J'ouvre mes yeux, & je ne  
puis me lasser d'admirer  
avec ravissement, les beautés  
que la Divine Providence  
étale à nos yeux

114: 4-6

& auxquelles le Poëte ordonne  
de s'attendre avec la plus ferme  
certitude

132: 10-11

ce sont des vérités constantes

Johnson vi: 9-10

than quit it for the Enjoyment  
of pure and simple Truth

x: 1-2

and his Party has exerted  
itself with great Warmth  
and Zeal to bring it into Credit

10: 9-10

or the World would at once  
become a Mass of compact  
and solid Matter

46: 15-17

in hopes of living to all Eternity  
in Obedience and Submission to  
his Laws

61: 3-6

We open our Eyes, and behold  
with Extasy and Admiration  
the Beauties which Divine  
Providence has displayed  
before them

79: 3-5

which we are directed by the  
Poet to entertain without the  
least Uncertainty or Doubt

84: 7-8

These are certain and unvaried  
Truths

## Doublets

Crousaz 140: 1-3

se relève & retombe, &  
toute sa constance se  
réduit à ces inégalités

195: 3-4

dont l'effet naturel est  
tout opposé à la vigilance

214: 2

à sa lumière

215: 1-7

Il est triste de voir  
l'espérance la plus respectable,  
& pour laquelle nous devons à  
Dieu des graces infinies,  
marcher à la suite d'une liste  
de chimères, effets de nôtre  
orgueil, & de la légèreté de nôtre  
attention

232: 17-18

Mr. POPE a un grand goût  
pour les exagérations

276: 13-15

qui, à son air, le reconnoit  
très agité, & lui en demande  
la cause

Johnson 90: 13-15

rises and falls alternately,  
and is nothing but Inequality  
and Inconstancy

137: 1-3

which naturally tends to  
discourage all Vigilance  
and Attention

153: 18-19

from her clear and steady  
light

154: 12-20

I cannot, without Melancholy  
and Pity, see that Hope, which is  
so firmly grounded, so strongly  
supported, and so highly valued;  
that Hope for which we owe such  
ardent and frequent Acknowledg-  
ments to the Goodness of our  
Creator, rank'd among airy-  
Visions, and wild Chimeras,  
which are indebted for their  
Influence and Existence to nothing  
but our Pride and our Inattention

173: 1-2

Mr Pope seems to have a strong  
Inclination to the Marvellous and  
the Hyperbolical

215: 1-2

who seeing Perturbation and  
Inquietude in his Look and  
Gesture, inquires the Reason

## Doublets

Crousaz 298: 17-18

que la laideur du vice y  
relevat l'éclat de la  
vertu

306: 9-11

l'empêcheroient de parvenir  
jamais à une plénitude de  
satisfactions

320: 18-19

qui, dans la sincérité  
de son coeur

352: 11-12

en toute sincérité

368: 7-8

que la Sagesse éternelle

371: 5-6

Je lui ai toujours reconnu  
de la probité

372: 14-16

& il ne tarda pas à tomber  
tout jeune qu'il étoit,  
dans l'imbécillité

Johnson 235: 14-16

and that the Lustre of  
Virtue becomes more  
amiable and conspicuous  
by the Blackness and  
Deformity of Vice

241: 1-2

would never suffer him to  
arrive at Happiness and  
Content

255: 21

who, without Affectation or  
Hypocrisy

283: 9

without any Artifice or  
Disguise

294: 10-11

that the supreme and eternal

296: 9-10

I always observed him to  
be a Man of Conscience  
and Probity

297: 12-13

young as he was, he sunk  
into Dotage and Stupidity

## Johnson's Translations of the French idiom "venir de" plus an infinitive

Crousaz 26: 17-21

Ayez pour moi, je vous  
prie, la compaisance de  
lire une nouvelle fois  
l'Essai de Mr. POPE,  
dans le même esprit que  
je viens de le lire

166: 1

Que viens-je de lire

256: 6-8

L'origine & les progrès de  
l'Idolatrie, dont je viens  
de decouvrir les sources  
intérieures

264: 9-11

dont Mr. POPE vient de faire  
l'Éloge & de feliciter le  
Genre humain

280: 26-27

dont je viens de donner  
un Essai

352: 1-3

Je viens, Monsieur de lire  
chez votre Ami le Manuscrit  
de votre Examen

371: 4-5

Comme je viens de le dire

Johnson xx: 19-22

I intreat you to favor me so  
far as to read once again the  
Essays of Mr Pope, with the same  
Frame of Mind that I have done

114: 1

What have I been reading

196: 20-21

The Original and Progress  
of Idolatry, of which I  
have here discovered the  
interior Causes

204: 2-3

upon whom Mr Pope has  
congratulated the World

218: 3

of which here I have  
exhibited a Specimen

283: 1-2

Sir, I have been reading  
your second Examen in your  
Friend's Hands

296: 8-9

yet as I before said

## CHAPTER V

### "A DISSERTATION ON THE AMAZONS"

"A DISSERTATION on the AMAZONS. From the History of the Amazons, written in French by the ABBE DE GUYON" appeared in Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1741 on pages 202-208. According to Boswell, Johnson translated this article from the Abbé Guyon's Dissertation on the Amazons. Boswell, though, confused the title of the French work Johnson used, a confusion that exists to this day. The correct title of Johnson's French source is Histoire des Amazones Anciennes et Modernes, published in Paris in 1740. Though a minor item in the Johnson canon, "A Dissertation on the Amazons" reveals his interest in the faraway and exotic (which he had already exhibited in his Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia) and was later to display in Rasselas. Moreover, the "Dissertation" may be, as Edward Bloom has suggested, a source for Idler No. 87, a satire in which Johnson compares English women with Amazons.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have neither challenged Boswell's attribution of the article nor paid much attention to its content. Bloom in his Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (1957) comments more extensively on the article than most. He says, "Contemporary interest in the Amazons was colored by incredulity, as would appear from the translation of Abbé de Guyon's Dissertation on the Amazons which Boswell attributed to Johnson. Thus Johnson characteristically advised his readers that scarcity of information about this female society was no reason for disbelieving its existence.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (Providence, Rhode Island), 1957, p. 26. Referred to hereafter as Bloom.



Considering the exoticism rather than the moral implications of the subject, Johnson—as in his life of Drake—developed primitivistic details most likely to attract English periodical readers: the customs of the Amazons, their dress, warlike traits, and abnormal lives."<sup>2</sup>

Johnson in talking to Boswell at one time about the nature of translation said: "You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical."<sup>3</sup> According to this comment it would seem that Guyon's Histoire could be easily translated. But the main point I should like to make and substantiate in this chapter is that Johnson's "dissertation" is not a translation in the narrow mechanical sense of the word. A cursory comparison of Johnson's "Dissertation" and Guyon's Histoire reveals immediately that Johnson did not attempt to reproduce literally in English the French text from which he worked. The difference in the length of the two items would have made this impossible. Guyon's Histoire is around three hundred octavo pages and Johnson's article in the Gentleman's Magazine about six pages, twelve columns, and thirty-nine paragraphs.

Johnson condenses, abridges, and paraphrases his French source. He omits from the French and often adds his own comments and observations. In places he rearranges the order of events Guyon presents, rounds off Guyon's chronology, and even quotes in one place an historian that is not even mentioned in the Histoire. Generally Johnson does not come close to literal translation in his "Dissertation," for a literal rendition of the French into English was not the end he sought. Guyon's Histoire was for Johnson simply a model, a framework, or a series of guideposts to help him create a fairly original article of his own. He had no intention to translate slavishly from the French, but wished to use its substance to create his own work.

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<sup>2</sup>Bloom, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Life, III, 36.

In comparing the *Histoire* and the "Dissertation" it becomes immediately apparent that Johnson the personality was never suppressed long by Johnson the translator. That Johnson's method in translating Guyon was a success is attested, I think, by the fact that his "Dissertation" can be read without the sense that it is simply a condensation and compression of a much longer work. Johnson, quite clearly, managed to create out of Guyon's Histoire a unified and cohesive work of his own.

It is inaccurate, however, to speak of only one method used by Johnson to translate Guyon, for there are actually three. At the beginning Johnson merely echoes his source, then follows it more closely for a number of paragraphs, and toward the end of his article comes close to a literal translation. In fact, Johnson illustrates quite clearly Dryden's three methods of "metaphrase, " "paraphrase, " and "imitation, " though he was undoubtedly unaware that he was varying his method of translation in certain parts of the article. It appears, though, from this pattern that as time went on Johnson grew weary of the more arduous process of echo and paraphrase and chose the more expedient method of direct translation to hasten the completion of his article.

Obviously in twelve columns in the Gentleman's Magazine Johnson could not hope to duplicate more than a portion of Guyon's book, so his "Dissertation" represents only a sampling of Guyon's work, evidently those portions which interested Johnson and which he thought would interest his readers. Johnson does not translate any part of Guyon's long "Preface" and of the nine chapters in the Histoire Johnson translates only from II, "De l'Origine, du Temps, & des Moeurs des Amazones, " III, De l'Habillement & des Armes des Amazones, " IV, "Des Guerres des Amazones, " VIII, "Temps & Durée des Amazones, " and IV, "Amazones Etrangères ou Modernes. " In other words Johnson chooses to concentrate on those chapters dealing with the origins, times, and

customs of the Amazons as well as such items as their dress, arms, and wars. Johnson treats in considerable detail Guyon's fourth chapter on the wars of the Amazons and the five articles which accompany it, each one dealing with a particular military engagement the Amazons were involved in.

Johnson's opening paragraph (GM 202 cl. 2, C-G) is almost wholly original, though it is apparent that he had Guyon's long "Preface" in mind when he composed it. Both Johnson's introductory paragraph and Guyon's "Preface" have the same end--to give support to the idea that Amazons once existed. Johnson's opening lines, "The History of the Amazons, however disguised by poetical Fictions" (GM cl. 2, C), seems to be a faint but distinguishable echo of Guyon's comment in his "preface, " "Soit qu'on ignore ce que toute l'Antiquité nous a transmis sur leurs guerres & sur leurs établissemens, soit qu'on le prenne pour des fictions poétiques" (vi: 16-20; vii: 1). Johnson's second paragraph (GM cl. 2, H- 203 cl. 1, B) is again almost wholly his own, though it is possible to isolate its probable source in Guyon's second chapter (" De l'Origine, du Tems, & des Moeurs des Amazones"). It is only in Johnson's third and fourth paragraphs (GM 203 cl. 1, C-E) that it is possible to see him working closely with his French source. I shall give the French source and Johnson's rendition to show how he translates Guyon.

Guyon: (73:3-17; 74: 1-4) Chapter II, "De l'Origine, du Tems, & des Moeurs des Amazones"

Ilinois & Scolopite deux jeunes Princes du Sang Roïal des Scythes, furent chassés de la Cour & du païs par la faction de quelque rivaux qui aspiroient à la Couronne. Forcés de se retirer dans une terre étrangere, ils emmenèrent avec eux une nombreuse jeunesse touchée de leur malheurs; & passèrent dans la Sarmatie Asiatique, au-dessus du Mont Caucase, d'où ils firent des courses

sur les Provinces voisines du Pont Euxin. Mais les Peuples qui l'habitoient ne pouvant soutenir leur violences & leurs usurpations, se jettèrent sur eux dans le tems qu'ils s'y attendoient le moins, & les massacrèrent sans pitié.

Johnson: (GM 203 cl. 1, C-F)

By these Commotions Ilinos and Scolopites, two young Princes, near to the Throne, were driven from the Court, and obliged to seek a safer Residence in a distant Country; and such was the Art of their Address, the Integrity of their Conduct, or the Justice of their Claims, or such, perhaps, the unhappy State of Scythia, that great Numbers of both Sexes followed them into Exile, and established themselves in the impenetrable Coverts of Mount Caucasus, from whence it was their Practice to make Incursions upon the Countries about them, to destroy the Inhabitants, and drive away their Cattle.

These Ravages they continued for some Time, and were by uninterrupted Success, and a Confidence of the Impossibility of invading them in their Retreats lulled into such a State of Security, that the People whom they had so long harassed, broke in unexpectedly upon them, and considering them as the common Enemies of Mankind, slaughtered them without Mercy.

A comparison of the French and Johnson's translation reveals immediately how loosely he treats his source. It is evident throughout that although Johnson draws upon Guyon for the substance of his paragraphs, the style and expression are very much his own. Johnson not only paraphrases but adds to and omits from his source as in his addition, "and such was the Art of their Address, the Integrity of their Conduct, or the Justice of their Claims" and his omission of Guyon's phrase, "dans la Sarmatie Asiatique." A most interesting Johnsonian

intrusion is his mention of the cattle which were driven away by the invaders, a fact which has no basis at all in Guyon.

In his next four paragraphs (GM 203 cl. 1, F-cl. 2, F) Johnson continues in much the same manner, paraphrasing his source freely and using Guyon for the substance but not the language of his "Dissertation." I shall quote the French source for each of Johnson's paragraphs and comment briefly on his method of translation.

Guyon: (74: 5-19; 75: 1-16) Chapter II, "De l'Origine, du Tems, & des Moeurs des Amazones"

Ce carnage affreux donna occasion à l'origine des Amazones. Les femmes de ces victimes infortunées de leurs propres usurpations, se crurent menacées d'un sort aussi fatal. Chassées de leur patrie, & privées de leurs maris, elles prirent une résolution que le désespoir leur inspira. Ce fut de demeurer unies entr'elles de se choisir une Reine, & de former un Etat jusqu'alors inconnu dans l'univers. Depuis ce jour elles embrassèrent la profession des armes; elles s'exercèrent à manier l'arc, la lance & le bouclier; elles se livrèrent à tout ce qui est du ressort des fonctions militaires. L'ardeur avec laquelle elles s'y portèrent donna un prompt succès à leur entreprise. Elles devinrent bientôt formidables à ceux qu'elles avoient appréhendés; elles s'assurèrent la possession du païs où elles se trouvoient; dans peu elles étendirent les bornes de leur domination. Redevables à leur seule bravoure de ces prospérités rapides & flateuses, elles se persuadèrent qu'elles n'avoient pas besoin du secours de leur maris pour se soutenir.

Johnson: (GM 203 cl. 1, F- cl. 2, A)

By this Massacre was produced the Monarchy of the Amazons; for the Women seeing themselves deprived of their Husbands, by whom they had hitherto been defended, and having Reason to

imagine that their Enemies might take Occasion to compleat their Butchery by treating them in the same manner, resolved to sell their Lives at the dearest Rate, and to dye like the Descendants of the Conquerors of Asia. In Pursuance of this Resolution they applied themselves diligently to the Use of Arms, and particularly to the Bow, and, meeting probably with Success is some of their first Encounters, soon discovered that they had no need of the Government of Men for the Sake of their Protection, and that they had lived hitherto in Subordination, for want of examining into their own Abilities, and determined therefore to sink no more in Dependence, but to govern their State by their own Wisdom, and defend it by their own Valour.

Johnson's rendition is not simply a translation of the French, though it is obviously based upon it. Again, he treats his French source freely, adding, omitting, and paraphrasing throughout. Note how Guyon's "se crurent menacées d'un sort aussi fatal" is extended by Johnson to, "and having Reason to imagine that their Enemies might take Occasion to compleat their Butchery by treating them in the same manner," and how he finishes the sentence with a phrase which has no basis at all in the French. Johnson omits Guyon's lines dealing with the choosing of the queen and the forming of the Amazonian state and condenses Guyon's description of the arms the Amazons applied themselves to and the success they met in battle.

Guyon: (75:16-21, 76: 1-2) Chapter II, "De l'Origine, du Tems & des Moeurs des Amazones"

Elles massacrerent ceux qui étoient échapés a la fureur des Sarmates, & elles renoncerent pour jamais au mariage; ne le regardant plus comme le lien d'une société douce & nécessaire, mais comme une servitude & un esclavage indigne d'elles.

Johnson: (GM 203 cl. 2, A-B)

With their new Scheme of Liberty they were so much charmed, that they put to Death those Men, who by Flight or Accident had been before preserved, and established a Plan of Life so different from that of all other Communities, that the Accounts which remain of it deserve to be collected.

It is evident that the connection between the French source and Johnson's translation is quite tenuous, the French serving Johnson with the idea for his paragraph but not its language and expression.

Guyon: (76: 2-17) Chapter II, "De l'Origine, du Tems & des Moeurs des Amazones"

L'envie de perpétuer une République qu'elles avoient si glorieusement établie les mit dans l'obligation de recourir quelque fois aux hommes. Elles se firent une lois d'aller tous les ans pendant deux mois sur les frontières des Provinces voisines; d'y appeller les habitans, de se livrer à eux sans choix ni attachment, & de retourner ensuite dans leur demeures. Pour montrer que ce n'étoit point par amour pour eux qu'on les recherchoit, il falloit en avoir tué trois avant que de pouvoir faire le voiage.

Johnson: (GM 203 cl. 2, B-E)

Their State was at its first Erection like that of the Romans, as mentioned by the Historian, An Establishment that could last but for one age, and a Nation of one Sex: But their Ambition was not confined to themselves, but extended to distant Times, and prompted them to perpetuate a Race of independent Females. For this Purpose they did not marry, lest whatever Stipulations should be made, they might have been reduced by Degrees to their former Servitude, but went every Year for two Months to the Frontiers of their Country, and invited Men of the neighbouring Nation to cohabit with them, without Distinction or Affection;

and lest any Lady might give Reason for Suspicion that she had any tender Passion for the other Sex, no Virgin was allowed to pay this annual Visit, till she had, by killing three Men, shewn how much her Race deserved to be propagated.

An analysis of these two paragraphs reveals again how freely Johnson translates his French source. There is no "Historian" mentioned in Guyon, nor does the quote Johnson attributes to him have any basis in the French. Such an intrusion is just another example of how little Johnson lets himself be confined by his source. Though the relation of the French and the English is clear throughout, Johnson paraphrases, adds, and omits instead of translating literally. He omits, for example, Guyon's phrase, "& de retourner ensuite dans leurs demeures" and adds a phrase of his own, "shewn how much her Race deserved to be propagated."

Guyon: (76: 17-18; 77: 1-10) Chapter II, "De l'Origine, du Tems & des Moeurs des Amazones"

Les enfans mâles qui naissoient de ce commerce de brutalité, ainsi que le nomme Cedrene, éprouvoient en voiant le jour, la haine & la cruauté de leurs meres. Quelque-unes avoient la barbarie de les étouffer, d'autres leur tordoient les bras & les jambes pour les rendre incapables des exercices miliaries; les plus humaines les renvoïoient à leurs peres.

Johnson: (GM 203 cl. 2, E-F)

When the Children were born, the Girls only were thought worth the Attention of the Mother: Of the Boys, some were strangled, some crippled to disable them from military Exercises, and condemned to perpetual Slavery; and some, whose Mothers had not wholly divested themselves of Tenderness, sent to their Fathers.



Johnson's method of free translation is also well illustrated in this paragraph. There is no basis in the French, for instance, for Johnson's "and condemned to perpetual Slavery," and his paraphrase of Guyon's "les plus humaines" by "whose Mothers had not wholly divested themselves of Tenderness" is extreme indeed.

These paragraphs, then, reveal clearly Johnson's method of translating Guyon and call attention to the inadequacy of the term when applied to his "Dissertation." Rather than continue a close comparison of the French and English, which soon becomes tedious, I shall show through the quotation of brief passages that Johnson's method follows a fairly consistent pattern throughout his article. I shall also indicate at the same time the type of material he chooses to extract from his French source.

Johnson follows Guyon's description of the training of the Amazons quite closely but condenses his comments considerably. Thus Guyon's statement about the type of food the young Amazons had to eat, "Le plutôt qu'il étoit possible on les mettoit aux alimens communs, c'est-à-dire à la chair des bêtes fauves, très souvent crüe, & pour l'ordinaire cuite imparfaitement" (78: 7-12, Chapter II) becomes in Johnson simply, "They were fed with the strongest Food" (GM 203 cl. 2, G). Frequently, though, Johnson expands the French he translates. Thus when Guyon describes the Amazons' robes, "Mais quelque forme qu'ils eussent, les uns & les autres étoient communément faits de la peau des bêtes que les Amazones tuoient à la chasse" (4: 12-16, Chapter III, "De l'Habille-ment & des Armes des Amazones"), Johnson translates, "Their Robes were made wholly of the Skins of Beasts which they killed in the Chase, and probably nothing would have been more reproachful among them, than to have worn the Spoils which had been gained by another; their Ornaments were the Trophies of their Bravery, and she was doubtless dressed to most Advantage, who wore the Skin of the most formidable Beast" (GM 204 cl. 1, C).

At least in one place the "Dissertation" is more accurate than the Histoire, and what first appears to be merely another Johnsonian paraphrase turns out to be more reliable than the French text itself. Johnson in following Guyon's description of Amazonian dress as it is illustrated on various ancient medals writes, "On another [medal] is an Amazon on Horseback, without Weapons, flying from Hercules, whose Club is held up in a menacing Posture" (GM 204 cl. 1, B). This line seems to be based on Guyon's comment, "Dans une de ces pieces anciennes on voit Hercule armé de sa massuë qui combat contre une Amazone à cheval (4: 3-6, Chapter III). A person comparing the English with the French might conclude that Johnson simply adds the phrases "without Weapons" and "flying from Hercules" and softens somewhat Guyon's use of the verb "combattre" which is stronger in meaning than "menace." Actually what happens is that both Johnson and Guyon describe this scene as it is represented on one of the medals which Guyon includes in his Histoire. Johnson's description, though, is more accurate than Guyon's. From the illustration on the medal it is possible to see that the Amazon on horseback is, indeed, without weapons, her pose is definitely one of flight, and Hercules' club is quite obviously in a menacing posture though no actual contact has been made. In this particular case, then, the translation proves to be more accurate than the original.

Of all the chapters in the Histoire Johnson is evidently most interested in the fourth, "Des Guerres des Amazones," and the five articles which accompany it. He devotes eighteen of his thirty-nine paragraphs and about five of the twelve columns in his article to a discussion of the wars the Amazons fought, the victories they won, and the defeats they suffered. For him and for his readers as well the vision of the Amazons going to battle with all kinds of opponents, including the famous Hercules and Achilles, must have been exciting. In translating

the sections pertaining to the Amazonian wars in Histoire Johnson's primary method is again paraphrase and condensation, and his eighteen paragraphs in the Gentleman's Magazine represent something over sixty pages in Guyon. Such condensation reveals again that for Johnson Guyon's Histoire is less a source from which he translates slavishly than a model or guide to help him create his own fairly original article. It is impressive, moreover, to see how much he is able to retain of the substance and excitement of the Amazonian wars even though he works in a much smaller space than Guyon.

Much of what Johnson says about the wars of the Amazons can be divided into four major conflicts concerning Hercules, Achilles and two attempted revenges by the Amazons. In three paragraphs (GM 205 cl. 1, E-cl. 2, E) Johnson compresses some eight pages of the Histoire in which Guyon tells how Hercules, commanded by Euristheus, brings back the scarf or girdle of the Amazon queen whom he defeats in a bloody battle. Though much of what Johnson writes is only loosely based upon his French source, it is possible to see him working at times quite closely with the French. Compare, for instance, Guyon's, "Les Amazones soutenaient quelque tems ses assauts, [by Hercules and his followers] mais enfin elles crurent qu'il étoit honteux pour elles de demeurer dans leur enceinte, & de se tenir toujours sur la défensive" (52: 18-19; 53: 1-4, Article II, "Seconde Guerre des Amazones") and Johnson's rendition, "Hercules pressed the Siege with his natural Bravery, and the Amazons, after having sustained his Attacks for some Time, determined that it was reproachful to act only defensively, and that it was necessary, for the Support of their Reputation, to sally out upon their Invaders" (GM 205 cl. 2, A-B).

In three paragraphs (GM 205 cl. 2, E - 206 cl. 1, F) Johnson condenses about seven pages of Guyon's third article, "Troisième Guerre des Amazones" in which the Amazons in seeking revenge for

Hercules' theft of the queen's girdle are defeated by Theseus. Though generally translating quite freely in this section, Johnson does keep an eye on the French. For instance in commenting about the monuments commemorating the dead Amazons Guyon writes, "Ces monuments seront pour tout esprit raisonnable des preuves sans réplique de la réalité des Amazons & de leur Histoire" (61: 17-21, Article III, "Troisième Guerre des Amazones") and Johnson translates, "These Monuments are a sufficient Confutation of those, whose Incredulity would question their Actions, or their Existence" (GM 206 cl. 1, D).

In one of the most extreme examples of condensation in the "Dissertation," Johnson manages to compress one of Guyon's most exciting articles, "Quatrième Guerre des Amazones" amounting to some sixteen pages in the Histoire, into two short paragraphs (GM 206 cl. 1, G-H). In this particular case, though, Johnson fails completely to capture either the substance or the spirit of the original. Guyon's article might be entitled the "Achilles Episode," and it contains one of the most rousing incidents in the whole of his Histoire--the confrontation of Achilles and the Amazon Penthesilea. There is considerable drama in Guyon's description of the meeting of these two warriors, their exchange of insults, the ensuing battle in which Achilles mortally wounds his opponent, and his joy over his victory which soon turns into a deep sorrow when he recognizes the quality of the person he has destroyed. All this, including the Amazon's burning and burial, Johnson summarizes in the statement, "Penthesilea led a Troop of Amazons to the Assistance of the King of Troy, and if she was not successful, she had at least the Honour of falling by no meaner Hand than that of Achilles, the great Achilles, by whom Hector had been slain (GM 206 cl. 1, H).

In three long paragraphs (GM 206 cl. 2, A-G), however, Johnson spends considerable time in relating how the Amazons, furious at Penthesilea's death, attempt to destroy the memory of Achilles as it was

consecrated on a magical island in the Euxine Sea. In these three paragraphs Johnson manages to compress most of the essential facts that Guyon presents in eight pages in Article V, "Cinquième Guerre des Amazones," though Johnson does omit his discussion of the curiosities found on the island. As usual Johnson condenses the French considerably, especially in his summation of the difficulties the Amazons faced in their attack on Achilles' island. He refers to the "rough Reception" they received, hardly an adequate phrase to describe the terrors they faced. Guyon, though, details vividly their disastrous invasion during which their horses went mad and chewed them up like fierce lions.

For the rest of his "Dissertation," amounting to some seven paragraphs (GM 206 cl. 2, G- 208 cl. 1, F), Johnson borrows from Guyon's eighth chapter, "Tems & Durée des Amazones" (largely for the episode of the Amazonian queen's desire to have a child by Alexander the Great) and his ninth chapter, "Amazones Etrangères ou Modernes." Johnson continues his same method of paraphrasing, condensing, and abridging, but it is evident in places that he follows the French more closely. Perhaps he grew tired of the more arduous process of creating a fairly original article out of the Histoire and wished to finish up as quickly as possible.

In chapter nine, for instance, Guyon tells of a conversation between a certain young warrior named Chardin and the son of the Prince of Georgia. Guyon reports Chardin as saying:

Je reportai à ce jeune Prince ce que les Histoires Grecques & Romaines racontent des Amazones & après avoir discoursu quelque tems sur ce sujet, son avis fut que ce devoit être un peuple de Scythes errans, comme les Turcomans & les Arabes, qui déféroient la souveraineté à des femmes, comme font les Achinois, & que ces Reines se faisoient servir par des personnes de leur

sexe, qui les suivoient par tout. Nous comprîmes aisément qu'elles alloient à cheval comme les hommes, & même aussi bien; parce qu'en Orient toutes les femmes montent à cheval, & que les Princesses y portent le poignard au côté. (185: 7-21; 186: 1-4)

Johnson writes, "His Opinion, upon hearing the Greek and Roman Accounts of the Amazons, was, that they must be some Nation of Scythia, who had conferr'd the Sovereign Power upon Women, and that their Queens had chosen Attendants of their own Sex, who followed them in all their Expeditions, which might easily be imagined in that Part of World, where the Women ride like Men, and Princesses carry their Dagger at their Sides" (GM 207 cl. 2, D-E). But such fidelity to the French is the exception rather than the rule, and the manner in which Johnson concludes his "Dissertation" is more typical. In speaking of the death of the wicked ruler Valessa, Guyon writes simply, "La mort de la Princess rétablit les choses dans l'ordre naturel" (189: 7-8, Chapter IX). Johnson translates, "But after her Death no Woman of equal Spirit or Capacity seizing upon the Throne, the Ladies lost the Pleasure of governing, forgot their military Exercises, and fell back into their original Subordination" (GM 208 cl. 1, F).

Johnson's "Dissertation," then, is much more than a mere translation. Although for the substance of his article his debt to Guyon is clear, the style, expression, and arrangement of his article are very much his own. In conclusion I think it interesting to look at Guyon's statement of aims in the "preface" to his Histoire. He says, 'Il ne s'agit pas ici de copier plusieurs lambeaux des Anciens; il faut les traduire avec goût, élaguer ce qu'ils ont d'inutile ou d'étranger, démêler le vrai d'avec le faux, arranger les faits véritables, refondre en un seul corps les endroits disparates, leur donner du stile, les réduire à une narration naturelle & coulante, attacher le Lecteur par les graces

& la netteté du récit. Tels sont les devoirs de l'Historien, qu'il est très difficile de remplir à ce degré de perfection que demanderoit la délicatesse de notre siècle" (iv: 13-20; v: 1-10). It would seem, perhaps, that Johnson had Guyon's aims in mind in writing his "Dissertation" and accomplished them more successfully than Guyon himself did in his Histoire.

## CHAPTER VI

### "A PANEGYRIC ON DR. MORIN"

"A Panegyric on Dr MORIN, By Mr FONTENELLE" appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1741 on pages 375-377. A translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge de Monsieur Morin" from his Eloges des Academiciens de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, this article illustrates Johnson's life-long interest in science and men of science. Edward Bloom comments, moreover, that "Fontenelle was a fortunate choice of biographer since both authors were compatible in moral attitudes." <sup>1</sup> Johnson's translation is generally quite faithful to his French source, although a close examination of the French and English texts reveals a number of minor variations. Johnson paraphrases the French frequently and adds to it and omits from it in certain instances. There are moreover in Johnson's "Panegyric" a scattering of those doublets which are such a conspicuous idiosyncrasy of Johnson's French translations. In the following pages I shall give sufficient citations to show clearly how Johnson handles his French source, beginning with Fontenelle's first two paragraphs.

Fontenelle: (280: 1-10; 281: 1-11)

Louis Morin nâquit au Mans le 11. Juillet 1635; son Pere,  
Controlleur au Grenier à Sel de la Ville, & sa Mere étoient tous  
deux d'une grande pieté. Il fut l'ainé de seize enfans, charge  
peu proportionnée aux facultés de la Maison, qui auroit effrayé  
des Gens moins résignés à la Providence.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957),  
p. 23.



Ils donnerent à l'éducation de M. Morin tous les soins que leur fortune leur permit, & que la Religion leur demanda. Dès qu'il put marquer une inclination, il en marque pour les Plantes. Un Paysan, qui en venoit fournir les Apoticaire de la Ville, fut son premier Maître. L'enfant payoit ses Leçons de quelque petite monnoye, quand il pouvoit, & de ce qui devoit faire son léger repas d'après-diné. Deja avec le goût de la Botanique la liberalité & la sobriété commençoient à éclore en lui, & une inclination indifferente ne se développoit qu'accompagnée de ces deux vertus naissantes.

Johnson: (GM 375 Cl. 2, B-E)

Lewis Morin was born at Mans, on the 11th of July, 1635, of Parents eminent for their Piety. He was the eldest of sixteen Children, a Family to which their Estate bore no Proportion, and which in Persons less resigned to Providence, would have caused great Uneasiness and Anxiety.

His Parents omitted nothing in his Education, which Religion requires, and which their Fortune could supply. Botany was the Study that appeared to have taken Possession of his Inclination, as soon as the Bent of his Genuis could be discovered. A Countryman, who supplied the Apothecaries of the Place, was his first Master, and was paid by him for his Instructions with the little Money that he could procure, or that which was given him to buy something to eat after dinner. Thus Abstinence and Generosity discovered themselves with his Passion for Botany, and the Gratification of a Desire indifferente in itself, was procured by the Exercise of two Virtues.

It is apparent from these paragraphs that Johnson translates Fontenelle quite faithfully, and his method as exemplified in these lines is consistent throughout his "Panegyric." Nowhere does he deviate

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greatly from his French text. At most the changes he makes are minor--a slight paraphrase of a sentence, an addition of a word or a short phrase, or a brief omission from the French. In Johnson's first paragraph (GM 375 cl. 2, B) it is evident, for instance, that he omits Fontenelle's phrase, "son Pere, Controlleur au Grenier à Sel de la Ville" (1: 2). In Fontenelle's second paragraph Johnson paraphrases quite freely the comment, "Dès qu'il put marquer une inclination, il en marque pour les Plantes" (11: 9-10). Note, however, how flat the French would be if translated literally and how much Johnson improves upon it in his rendition--"Botany was the Study that appeared to have taken Possession of his Inclination, as soon as the Bent of his Genius could be discovered" (11: 9-11). Here is a good example where a lack of fidelity to the original is a virtue and a clear indication of Johnson's constant endeavor to translate his foreign text into a forceful, idiomatic English.

Though Johnson's method of translating Fontenelle does not vary much from the examples cited above, I shall give a few additional illustrations to show how he works with his French source.

Fontenelle: (282: 25-34)

M. Morin ne savoit ni s'intriguer, ni faire sa cour, l'extrême moderation de ses desirs lui rendoit cet art inutile, & sa vie retirée lui en faisoit ignorer jusqu'aux premiers élemens. A la fin cependant on fut forcé de lui rendre justice. Mais l'argent qu'il recevoit de sa pension d l'Hôtel-Dieu y demeuroit, il remettoit dans le Tronc après avoir bien pris garde à n'être pas découvert.

Johnson: (GM 376 cl. 1, E-G)

Morin had no Acquaintance with the Arts necessary to carry on Schemes of Preferment; the Moderation of his Desires preserved

him from the Necessity of studying them, and the Privacy of his Life debar'd him from any Opportunity.

At last, however, Justice was done him in spite of Artifice and Partiality; but his Advancement added nothing to his Condition, except the Power of more extensive Charity; for all the Money which he received as a Salary, he put into the Chest of the Hospital, always as he imagined, without being observed.

The above paragraphs reveal again that although Johnson's translation of Fontenelle is far from literal, he still manages very ably to capture the spirit and the substance of the French. Characteristically, though, he makes frequent changes in his rendition, the most obvious here being a general expansion of the French passage, frequent paraphrase, and such an addition as--"in spite of Artifice and Partiality" (11: 6-7). The impreciseness of English as opposed to French, coupled with Johnson's own natural tendency to wordiness, sometimes causes him to expand Fontenelle's text considerably, especially in the following passages where Johnson takes fifty-three words to say what Fontenelle expresses in thirty-nine.

Fontenelle: (285: 1-6)

Une Plante est un monument plus durable qu'une Medaille ou qu'un Obelisque. Il est vrai cependant qu'il arrive des malheurs même aux noms attachés aux Plantes, témoin la Nicotiane qui ne s'appelle plus que Tabac.

Johnson: (GM 377 cl. 1, A-B)

For a Plant is a Monument of a more durable Nature than a Medal or an Obelisk; and yet, as a Proof that even these Vehicles are not always sufficient to transmit to Futurity the Name conjoined with them, the Nicotiana is now scarcely known by any other Term than that of Tobacco.

Johnson concludes his translation of Fontenelle in much the same way he begins--with a very close but not completely literal rendition of the French. I shall quote Fontenelle's final two paragraphs and Johnson's rendition.

Fontenelle: (286: 27-35; 287, 1-10)

Il en est de même d'un Journal de plus de quarante années, où il marquoit exactement l'état du Barometre & du Thermometre, la secheresse ou l'humidité de l'Air, le Vent, & ses changemens dans le cours d'une journée, la Pluye, le Tonnerre, & jusqu'aux Brouillards, tout cela dans une disposition fort commode, & fort abregée, qui presentoit une grande suite de choses differentes en peu d'espace. Il échaperoit un nombre infini de ces sortes d'observations à un homme plus dissipé dans le Monde, & d'une vie moins uniforme.

Il a laissé une Bibliotheque de près de 20000 Ecus, un Medaillier, & un Herbier, nulle autre acquisition. Son esprit lui avoit sans comparaison plus coûté à nourrir que son corps.

Johnson: (GM 377 cl. 2, D-F)

There is likewise a Journal of the Weather, kept without Interruption, for more than forty Years, in which he has accurately set down the State of the Barometer and Thermometer, the Dryness and Moisture of the Air, the Variations of the Wind in the Course of the Day, the Rain, the Thunders, and even the sudden Storms, in a very commodious and concise Method, which exhibits, in a little Room, a great Train of different Observations. What Numbers of such Remarks had escaped a Man less uniform in his Life, and whose Attention had been extended in common Objects?

All the Estate which he left is a Collection of Medals, another of Herbs, and a Library rated at two thousand Crowns.<sup>2</sup> Which make it evident that he spent much more upon his Mind than upon his Body.

Throughout his translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge," then, Johnson seems to have one aim in mind--to maintain the sense and spirit of the French text if not its exact language. A comparison of the "Eloge" and the "Panegyric" demonstrates clearly that Johnson fully realizes this aim in almost every instance in his translation.

Though not directly concerned with the immediate question of "how" Johnson translates Fontenelle's "Eloge," attention should be called, nevertheless, to the two notes Johnson appends to his "Panegyric." The first note is called forth by Fontenelle's comment concerning Dr. Morin's increased dosage of wine as he grew older. He writes, "Sa foiblesse augmentoit, & il falut augmenter le dose du Vin, mais toujours avec la balance" (285, 15-17).

Johnson declares in his first note (GM 377 cl. 1 G-H):

The Practice of Dr Morin is forbidden, I believe, by every Writer that has left Rules for the Preservation of Health, and is directly opposite to that of Cornaro, who, by his Regimen repaired a broken Constitution, and protracted his Life without any painful Infirmities, or any Decay of his intellectual Abilities, to more than a hundred years; it is generally agreed, that as Men advance in Years, they ought to take lighter Sustenance, and in less Quantities; and Reason seems easily to discover that as the concoctive Powers grow weaker, they ought to labor less.

Johnson's other note is in response to Fontenelle's comment about the great works Dr. Morin left behind after his death: "On a trouvé dans ses Papiers un Index d'Hippocrate Grec & Latin, beaucoup plus ample & plus correct que celui de Pini. Il ne l'avoit fini qu'un an avant sa

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<sup>2</sup>There must be a misprint here, or perhaps Johnson himself slipped. The "ecu" and the "crown" were supposed to be equivalent. See O.E.D.: "Ecu--A French silver coin commonly regarded as equivalent to the English 'crown'."

mort. Un pareil Ouvrage demande une assiduité & une patience d'Hermite" (286: 21-26). To this praise Johnson replies with obvious disdain (GM 377 cl. 2, G): "This is an Instance of the Disposition generally found in Writers of Lives, to exalt every common Occurrence and Action in Wonders. Are not Indexes daily written by Men who neither receive nor expect very loud Applauses for their Labours?"

Though resisting the urge to intrude upon the text itself (as he does in his "Dissertation on the Amazons"), Johnson nevertheless fails to refrain from commenting on two passages in Fontenelle in a couple of pungent footnotes. So it is often that Johnson the personality refuses to be suppressed by Johnson the translator.

Doublets in Johnson's translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge de Monsieur Morin"

Fontenelle 280: 6-7

qui auroit effrayé des  
Gens moins resignés à la  
Providence.

Johnson GM 375 cl. 2, B 5-8

and which in Persons less  
resigned to Providence would  
have caused great Uneasiness  
and Anxiety.

Fontenelle 281: 33-35

il se ménageoit beaucoup  
d'autorité pour prêcher  
un jour la diette à ses  
Malades

Johnson GM 376 cl. 1, A 4-6

it gave him an Authority to  
preach Diet and Abstinence  
to his Patients

Fontenelle 282: 29-30

à la fin cependant on fut  
forcé de lui rendre justice

Johnson GM 376 cl. 1, F 1-2

At last, however, Justice was  
done him in spite of Artifice and  
Partiality

Fontenelle 283: 11-12

il ne relache rien de son  
austerité dans l'interieur  
de sa vie

Johnson GM 376 cl. 2, A 3-5

he remitted nothing of his  
former Austerity in the more  
private and essential Parts of  
his Life



## CHAPTER VII

### THE MEDICINAL DICTIONARY BIOGRAPHIES

One of the most interesting sources of Johnson's French translations is Dr. Robert James's Medicinal Dictionary (1743-1745) which, according to the title page, includes material on "Physic, Surgery, Anatomy, Chymistry and Botany. In all their Branches relative to Medicine. Together with a History of Drugs; An account of their Various Preparations, Combinations, and Uses; and An Introductory Preface, tracing the Progress of Physic, and explaining the Theories which have principally prevail'd in all Ages of the World." In later years Dr. James's ponderous three-volume work with its closely-printed folio pages came under the cutting scrutiny of Mark Twain who examined it in an essay entitled "A Majestic Literary Fossil" and said that "If it had been sent against the Pretender's troops there probably wouldn't have been a survivor." Although from our vantage point the Medicinal Dictionary appears to be nothing short of a compendium of medical horrors and repetitive examples of the physician's inhumanity to man, in its own day it must have been considered definitive, by weight alone, if by nothing else.

It is really not surprising to find Johnsonian pieces scattered in the pages of this work, knowing as we do about his close association with Dr. James and his part in the Dictionary's "Dedication" to Dr. Mead. Johnson's contributions to the Medicinal Dictionary have not yet been fully determined, and more discoveries and attributions are still being made. In this chapter I am going to examine only six biographies of famous scientists and physicians, all translations from the French,

which Allen Hazen attributes to Johnson in two articles in the Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine.<sup>1</sup> Finding Johnson's translations of the lives of scientists and physicians in the Medicinal Dictionary is not unexpected, since he had already demonstrated his interest in medicine and science in his biographies of Boerhaave and Morin. We may assume, I think, that his translation of the various lives of these men for the Dictionary was a positive pleasure for him rather than an arduous mechanical task and that the substance of what he translated interested him no less than the problem of rendering his French sources into the lucid English he constantly sought in all his translations. Two of the lives I shall be considering in this chapter, those of Ruysch and Tournefort are based on Fontenelle's "Eloges" in his Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences (1708 and 1731) and four, those of Aesculapius, Archagathus, Aretaeus, and Asclepiades are all translated from Daniel Le Clerc's Histoire de la Médecine (1723).

Johnson's "Life of Frederic Ruysch" occupies about four columns in the Medicinal Dictionary and except for a single passage is a fairly close translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge de M. Ruysch" in the Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences for 1731. Though close, Johnson's translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge" is by no means literal, and as in most of his French translations he looks to the French for the substance of his own work but not the style. Johnson paraphrases Fontenelle's text throughout, adds to it (usually a phrase or a line or two), and occasionally omits a phrase, a line, or a whole passage from his source. It is clear in the "Life of Frederic Ruysch" as it is, in fact, in all the biographies Johnson translates from the French for the Medicinal Dictionary that his primary aim is not simply to bring to Dr. James's work French biographies translated into English, but his

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<sup>1</sup>"Samuel Johnson and Dr. Robert James," IV (June 1936), 455-465 and "Johnson's Life of Frederic Ruysch," VIII (March 1939), 324-334.

own fairly original articles which are based on French sources. It is evident, I think, in reading the biographies that Johnson translates for the Medicinal Dictionary that he in no way considers such endeavors an easy way out from the more rigorous process of composing completely original works. Indeed, a comparison of Johnson's translations of his French sources, not only in the Medicinal Dictionary but elsewhere, indicates that he views them less as translations and more as recreations. Translation is for him more a creative and less a mechanical act.

Johnson's freedom and flexibility in working with his French sources can be seen, for instance, in the following passages in his "Life of Frederic Ruysch."

Fontenelle: (100: 7-19)

M. Ruysch se destina à la Médecine, & il commença par s'appliquer à la matière Médicinale, aux Plantes, aux Animaux ou parties d'Animaux, aux Minéraux qui y appartiennent, aux opérations de Chimie, aux dissections Anatomiques, & de tout cela il se fit de bonne heure un Cabinet déjà digne des regards & de l'attention des Connoisseurs. Il étoit tout entier à ce qu'il avoit entrepris; peu de sommeil avec beaucoup de santé, point de ces amusements inutiles, qui passent pour des délassements nécessaires, nul autre plaisir que son travail, & quand il se maria en 1661, ce fut en grande partie pour être entièrement soulagé des soins domestiques, ce qui lui réussit aisément dans le Pays où il vivoit.

Johnson: (5Z2<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 12-26)

This Gentleman, from his Infancy, devoted himself to Physic, and began his first Researches with the Materia Medica. The Virtues of Plants, the Structures of Animals, the Qualities of Mineral Bodies, Chymical Operations, and Anatomical Dissections,

were the Objects that first struck his Fancy, and called for his improving Hand. He was none of those superficial Inquirers, who either thro' Prejudice, or Indolence, rest satisfied on this Side of Truth; for he had stripp'd his Mind of all those unreasonable Attachments, which are inconsistent with the Temper of a Philosopher; and acquir'd such an indefatigable Turn, that his hardest Labours in Pursuit of Truth became his highest Pleasures, and his only Recreations. And even when he married in 1661 it was in a great measure with a View to render his Circumstances easy, that he might pursue Truth to the greater Advantage.

It will be noted immediately in comparing the above passages how loosely Johnson treats his source. He paraphrases throughout rather than translates literally and adds to and omits from the French. Nowhere in Johnson's version, it should be pointed out, is there a mention of Ruysch's famous "Cabinet" which Fontenelle suggests was worthy of the "regards & de l'attention des Connoisseurs." Johnson's additions, however, are more striking than his omissions, especially his phrase, "He was none of those superficial Inquirers, who either thro' Prejudice, or Indolence, rest satisfied on this Side of Truth; for he had stripp'd his Mind of all those unreasonable Attachments, which are inconsistent with the Temper of a Philosopher." Such a statement both in style and substance is patently Johnsonian and accords perfectly with what we know of his attitude toward truth as reported by Boswell in the Life. In one place in the Life, for instance, Boswell writes, "He would have been under no temptation to deviate in any degree from truth, which he held very sacred" and in another, "No man was more incredulous as to particular facts, which were at all extraordinary; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive, in order to discover the truth." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Life, I, 355; II, 247.

Such an addition, then, coupled with his general method of paraphrase, shows Johnson to be less the sedulous translator carefully transmitting meaning from one language to another than a creative artist seeking to present to the world his own interpretation of the facts he has before him.

The Johnsonian intrusion and the loose paraphrase become, it seems, a means by which he may temporarily break the shackles which translation necessarily imposes upon him and a device by which he not only brings a fresh slant to his material but also expresses his own feelings about it. Consider, for example, Johnson's addition in the following passage.

Fontenelle: (100: 20-23; 101: 1-3)

En ce temps-là vint à Leyde un Anatomiste assés fameux nommé Bilsius, que le Roi d'Espagne avoit envoyé professer à Louvain. Ce Docteur traitoit avec très-peu de considération ceux qui avoient jusque-là le plus brillé dans cette Science & préferoit de beaucoup, & hautement ses découvertes aux leurs, principalement sur ce qui regarde le mouvement de la Bile, de la Lymph, du Chyle, de la Graisse.

Johnson: (5<sup>Z</sup>2<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 27-34)

About this Time, the famous Bilsius, being appointed Professor of Anatomy at Louvain, made his Appearance at Leyden. This Physician bore it with a high Hand; undervalued those who were justly esteemed the Ornaments of their Profession, and, with all the haughty and supercilious Airs of a Spaniard, extoll'd his own Discoveries above theirs, especially with regard to the Motion of the Bile, the Lymph, the Chyle, and Fat.

The phrase in the above passage, "with all the haughty and supercilious Airs of a Spaniard," is obviously Johnson's own and not Fontenelle's

and another example of how he manages to imbue the somewhat impersonal medium of translation with his own attitudes and prejudices, this time his anti-Spanish bias which also appears in London and his "Life of Blake."

Johnson's "Life of Tournefort" under "Botany" in the Medicinal Dictionary is a translation of Fontenelle's "Eloge de M. de Tournefort" in the 1708 edition of the Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences. The long opening paragraph of the biography is entirely Johnson's own and has no basis in the French. In it he says that everyone is interested in how the great achieved their glory and "as Mr. Tournefort is universally allow'd to have carried Botany to a higher Degree of Perfection than any who went before him, by enriching it with numberless Discoveries, advancing it into a Science, giving it an Air of Accuracy, which is formerly wanted, and smoothing all its Difficulties; it must, of course, be an uncommon Satisfaction to become acquainted with the Education, the Genius, the Disposition, and the Studies of this celebrated Botanist" (10C<sup>V</sup> col. 2, 11-18). In the rest of his article on Tournefort, however, Johnson works with Fontenelle's "Eloge" in much the same way he translates the life of Frederic Ruysch--he paraphrases the French in many instances, adds a few lines of his own now and then, and omits an occasional passage in the French, including one major portion of over a page in which Fontenelle describes Tournefort's somewhat complex system of plant classification. In general it seems as if Johnson's translation of the life of Tournefort is closer to the French than his rendition of the life of Ruysch, and he appears less interested in this biography in imposing his attitudes and personality upon his French source. The "Life of Tournefort" is still far from being a literal translation, though, and is marked throughout by a common Johnsonian idiosyncrasy, the doublet, which appears no less than eighteen times in this four and a half column biography. There is also in Johnson's

"Life of Tournefort" an echo of his earlier translation, "A Panegyric on Dr. Morin" in the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1741 where he writes, "Botany was the Study that appeared to have taken Possession of his Inclination, as soon as the Bent of his Genius could be discovered" (Vol. XI, 375, col 2, C-D). Compare this statement to that in his Medicinal Dictionary biography of Tournefort where he comments, "But, as soon as he saw any Plants, the Bent of his Genius discover'd the future Botanist" (10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 24-26) (My italics).

The following rather lengthy passage illustrates quite clearly Johnson's method of translation throughout his biography of Tournefort.

Fontenelle: (144: 22-37; 145: 1-5)

La Botanique n'est pas une science sedentaire & paresseuse, qui se puisse acquerir dans le repos & dans l'ombre d'une Cabinet, comme la Geometrie, & l'Histoire, ou qui tout au plus, comme la Chimie, l'Anatomie, & l'Astronomie, ne demande que des operations d'assés peu de mouvement. Elle veut que l'on coure les Montagnes & les Forêts, que l'on gravisse contre des Rochers escarpés, que l'on s'expose aux bords des Précipices. Les seuls Livres qui peuvent nous instruire à fond dans cette matiere, ont été jettés au hazard sur toute la surface de la Terre, & il faut se résoudre à la fatigue & au peril de les chercher & de les ramasser. Delà vient aussi qu'il est si rare d'exceller dans cette Science, le degre de passion qui suffit pour faire un Sçavant d'une autre espee, ne suffit pas pour faire un grand Botaniste, & avec cette passion même, il faut encore une santé qui puisse la suivre, une force de corps qui y réponde. M. de Tournefort étoit d'un temperament vif, laborieux, robuste, un grand fonds de gaieté naturelle le soutenoit dans le travail, & son corps aussi bien que son esprit avoit été fait pour la Botanique.

Johnson: (10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 82-90; 10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 1-16)

Botany is not an unactive and sedentary Science, which like Geometry or History, may be acquir'd by a recluse and solitary Application within the narrow Precincts of a Closet; or which, like Chymistry, Anatomy, and Astronomy, demands only such Operations as may be perform'd without a great deal of Exercise, Toil, and Fatigue. The Botanist must wander thro' Mountains and Valleys, range the gloomy Forests, climb the steepest Rocks, and expose his Life on the Brinks of hideous Precipices, in Quest of Knowledge. The only Books capable of instructing us thoroughly in this Science, are, with a rich and liberal Hand, scatter'd up and down the whole Surface of our Globe. But Resolution and Patience, Industry, and Contempt of Danger, are necessary to collect and gather them. This is the Reason why so few excel in this Science: That Degree of Ardor which is capable of rendering a Man skill'd in other Branches of Literature, is by no means sufficient for forming a complete Botanist; who, besides the insurmountable Ardour of his Soul, must have an uncommon Strength of Body, and Soundness of Constitution, to bear him up under the Toils and Fatigues he must necessarily undergo. Now, Mr. Tournefort had a brisk laborious Turn of Mind, a robust Constitution, and a large Fund of natural Gaiety in his Temper, to support him under his painful Researches; so that both the make of his Body, and the Turn of his Mind, joined their united Force to qualify him for a Botanist.

Johnson's rendition, though close to the French, is much more than a translation. Not only does he expand his French text but he intensifies Fontenelle's rather prosaic commentary, most particularly in the passage describing the wanderings of the botanist. In Johnson's version the botanist roams through "Mountains and Valleys; "not just mountains, the forests he encounters are "gloomy, " and the precipices, "hideous. "



In contrast to Fontenelle's more expository narrative, we almost feel in Johnson's that we are seeing the romantic's vision of the awful beauty of nature and following not the peregrination of a botanist but of a Manfred or a René. Yet one must admit, I think, that in Johnson's translations the variations are often a source of a vitality which is frequently missing in the original, and we can only be pleased that in viewing translation as he did as a creative rather than an imitative or mechanistic process he avoided the fidelity which would have frequently given rise to flatness.

Johnson's source for his biographies of Aesculapius, Archagathus, Aretaeus, and Asclepiades in the Medicinal Dictionary is Daniel Le Clerc's Histoire de la Medecine (1723). Something of a medical dictionary itself, though of much smaller scope than Dr. James's massive three-volume work, Le Clerc's Histoire is a storehouse of biographies of famous physicians of the past and an encyclopedia of medical practices in ancient times. It is probably fortunate for Le Clerc that Mark Twain never got hold of his work, for he would have been no less appalled by the accounts of medical horrors in the Histoire than he had been by Dr. James's descriptions of doctors who killed far more often than they cured.

The most interesting biography Johnson translates from the Histoire is that of Aesculapius. Only in the largest sense of the word, however, can this life be called a translation, for what Johnson does is to condense some forty-eight pages in Le Clerc's work into about five columns in the Medicinal Dictionary. Johnson uses Le Clerc's facts about Aesculapius but he treats them in a very original manner. Most noticeable is the way in which Johnson drastically rearranges the sequence of facts Le Clerc gives in his chapters on Aesculapius, and how he moves rapidly through the French text, extracting here and there the material he wishes to use for his own article. In many instances

Johnson's paraphrases of the French are much freer than even he is accustomed to make in most of his translations and in at least one place he adds a whole paragraph that is not found in the Histoire. Though the connection between the French and the English is frequently hard to detect, and when found, often quite tenuous, it is still evident that Johnson is indebted to Le Clerc for the substance of his life of Aesculapius. A few passages will reveal just how Johnson works with his French source to create one of his most original translations.

Le Clerc: (38: 16-19)

Ce Dieu [Aesculapius] avoit accountumé de soulager ceux à qui les mouvemens violens de l'esprit rendoient le temperament du corps plus chaud qu'il ne faut, avec des chansons, & par le moyen de la mélodie & des farces.

Le Clerc: (42: 6-9)

Galien, dans l'endroit que nous avons cité, ou il dit qu'Esclape guerissoit les maladies par la Musique, &c, ajoûte, qu'il ordonnoit à plusieurs d'aller à cheval, de prendre de l'exercise étant armez, & qu'il leur marquoit les sortes de mouvemens qu'ils devoient faire, & la maniere dont ils devoient s'armer.

Johnson: (Xx2<sup>V</sup> col. 1, 84-90; col. 2, 1-4)

AEsculapius, the Deity of our Country, prescribed entertaining Songs, Buffoonery, and some Sorts of Music, for such as by the too vehement Motion of the Mind had rendered the Temperament of their Body hotter than was consistent with Moderation: To others, and those not a few, he enjoined Hunting, Riding, and Exercises at Arms, and directed the Kind of Motion they were to be employed in, and the Arms in which they were to exercise. He did not think it enough to teach in general, how the Mind, when sunk, might be raised, without ascertaining the Measure of it from the Idea of Exercise.

From the above passages it is apparent not only how Johnson composes a single paragraph from two widely separated portions of Le Clerc's text but also how he translates his French source quite freely. Johnson's rendition, it is seen upon close examination, is more of a rewriting of the French than a simple translation of it. Such freedom in translation is pretty much the method he uses throughout his article on Aesculapius, but there are times when he is content to follow his French source somewhat more closely. Compare, for instance, Johnson's rendition of the following rather long passage from Le Clerc.

Le Clerc: (61: 17-32)

Ce fut celle [referring to the snake which came to be the symbol of Aesculapius] qu'il prit pour venir délivrer la ville de Rome de la peste, l'an CCCL de sa fondation. Les Romains, dit Aurelius Victor, envoyerent à Epidaure, par le conseil de l'Oracle, dix Députez, dont le principal étoit Q. Ogulnius, pour faire venir le Dieu Esculape à Rome. Ces Députez étant arrivez à Epidaure, comme ils admiroient la statue d'Esculape pour sa grandeur extraordinaire, on vit à l'instant sortir de son gîte un Serpent qui imprimoit dans l'esprit de tout le monde plutôt de la veneration que de la terreur, & qui passant par le milieu de la ville au travers de la foule étonnée de ce prodige, se rendit au vaisseau des Romains, & s'alla jeter dans la chambre d'Ogulnius. Les Députez ravis d'emporter avec eux le Dieu, se rendirent heureusement à Antium où il firent quelque séjour. L'agitation de la mer ne leur permettant pas de naviger pendant ce temps-là, le Serpent se glissa dans un temple voisin dédié à Esculape, mais il revint au vaisseau quelques jours après, & continua sa route en remontant le Tibre, jusqu'à qu'étant arrivé dans l'Isle que forme cette riviere, il sauta à terre. On lui bâtit un temple dans ce même lieu, & la peste cessa.

Johnson: (Xx<sup>r</sup> col. 1 47-64)

Rome, at that Time, and the adjacent Territories, were ravaged by a Plague. Upon this Occasion an Embassy, consisting of ten, with Q. Ogulnius at their Head, was dispatched to Epidaurus, in order to invite the God AEsculapius to Rome. When these Ambassadors arrived at Epidaurus, as they were admiring the extraordinary Statue of AEsculapius, a large Serpent came from under the Altar, and passing from the Temple to the Roman Ship, went into the Apartment of Ogulnius. The Ambassadors rejoiced at this Prodigy, immediately set Sail, and arrived safe at Antium with their Charge, but being detained there some Days by the Tempestuousness of the Seas, the Serpent got out of the Vessel, and lodged himself in a neighbouring Temple dedicated to AEsculapius, but as soon as it was calm, returned, and then the Ambassadors pursued their Voyage; but when they arrived at the Island of Tiber, the God in the Shape of a Serpent quitted the Ship, and went on Shore, where they built him a Temple, and the Plague immediately ceased.

More in this passage than in many other places in his biography of Aesculapius, Johnson stays fairly close to his source and although he paraphrases throughout and condenses the French slightly in a few places, he still preserves the sense of his foreign text if not its exact language. Such fidelity to the French in Johnson's life of Aesculapius, however, is the exception rather than the rule, and it is clearly one of his most original translations.

In his biographies of Archagathus, Aretaeus, and Asclepiades, all based on Le Clerc's Histoire de la Medecine, Johnson's method of translation is much like that he uses in his lives of Ruysch and Tournefort. He follows his French texts closely but not literally and looks to his sources for the substance of his articles but not the way he expresses

them. In all cases his major aim seems to be to preserve the sense of the French original but not its language. Johnson's biography of Archagathus is the shortest, occupying only two columns in the Medicinal Dictionary. There are no significant additions and no Johnsonian intrusions except for a small conclusion which has no basis in the French. There are the usual variations from the French, though, and in one place Johnson includes one of Le Clerc's footnotes in the body of text. One paragraph is sufficient, I think, to indicate just how Johnson translates Le Clerc for his life of Archagathus.

Le Clerc: (384: 23-31)

Plutarque observe touchant la Médecine de Caton, qu'il n'approuvoit pas que l'on s'abstint de manger dans les maladies; qu'il recommandoit les herbages, & les chairs de canards, de pigeons, & de lievres. Mais cet Auteur ne fait pas un si grand cas de cette Médecine de Caton, qu'en a fait Pline. Il remarque au contraire que la femme de ce Romain, & son fils moururent avant lui; ajoutant que si Caton lui-même vint à un âge fort avancé, il en avoit eu plus d'obligation à son bon temperament qu'à sa Médecine. Plutarque étant Grec pourroit être soupçonné d'avoir voulu vanger les Médecins de sa nation, quoi que ce qu'il dit soit fort vraisemblable.

Johnson: (7T<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 47-60)

Plutarque observes, with regard to the Practice of Cato, that he did not approve of Abstinence for the Cure of Diseases, but recommended Herbs, and the Flesh of Ducks, Pigeons, and Hares. But this Author does not pay so profound a Veneration to the Physic of Cato as Pliny does; he observes on the contrary, that the Wife and Son of that Roman died before himself; adding at the same time, that if Cato lived to so great an Age, it was

owing to the natural Goodness of his Constitution, and not the judicious and happy Choice of his Medicines. As Plutarch was a Grecian, he may possibly be suspected of being animated with too keen a Desire of revenging the Cause of the Greek Physicians; though, at the same time, what he asserts has very much the Air of Probability.

Johnson's method of translation, as illustrated in the above passages, is not to improvise upon his French source but to follow it quite closely. This he does in most cases except for such a slight addition as "and not the judicious and happy Choice" (of his Medicines) and his slight expansion of Le Clerc's last sentence. Johnson uses much the same method of translation in his biography of Aretaeus, one of his longer articles in the Medicinal Dictionary which covers about four and a half columns. Except for an original introductory paragraph and a few additions, usually no more than a sentence or two, as well as a few minor omissions, this biography parallels the French quite faithfully as can be seen from the following passage which is representative of the translation as a whole.

Le Clerc: (508: 7-17)

On devoit trouver quelque chose de plus précis dans les Commentaires d'Henischius, Médecin d'Ausbourg, sur Arétée; mais il est de même avis que Castellanus; & ce qu'il y a de particulier c'est qu'il semble n'avoit fait ces Commentaires que pour faire dire à Arétée des Choses auxquelles celui-ci n'a jamais pensé. Au lieu d'expliquer les endroits difficiles de son Auteur, il a tâché de suppléer ce qui manquoit au texte, pour achever de traiter chaque matiere, non pas au sens d'Arétée, mais à celui de Galien, ou au sien propre. Mercurial, qui étoit si fort versé dans la lecture des anciens Medecins, & qui n'avoit pas manqué de lire Arétée, comme il paroît par divers

endroits de ses ouvrages, n'a pas pris garde non plus à la Secte de ce Medecin.

Johnson: (7U<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 75-89; 7U<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 1.)

Something more accurate and explicit might have been expected from Henischius, a Physician of Ausburg, who wrote Commentaries upon Aretaeus; but he declares himself of the same Opinion with Castellanus, and all along discovers such a Fund of Prejudice and Partiality, that one would be tempted to think he had written his Commentaries with no other View than to misrepresent Aretaeus, and make him say things he never so much as thought of. Instead of explaining the difficult Passages of his Author, he endeavours to supply the Defects of the Text in such a manner as to speak his own or Galen's Sentiments, and not those of Aretaeus. And what is still more surprising, Hieronymus Mercurialis, who was so thoroughly [sic] acquainted with the Writings of the antient Physicians, and who had undoubtedly read Aretaeus, as appears from several Passages in his Works, forgets to take Notice of the Sect to which this Physician belonged.

For his brief, three-column biography of Asclepiades in the Medicinal Dictionary Johnson borrows from chapters four, nine, and ten in Le Clerc's Histoire.<sup>3</sup> His method of translation in this article is much the same as that in his lives of Archagathus and Aretaeus, except that he seems to stay even closer to his French source. The following

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<sup>3</sup>Though Professor Hazen feels that the life of Asclepiades is "very probably" by Johnson, Professor Sherbo informs me that he doubts that Johnson is the author. In my examination of the biography I found a sprinkling of doublets, a definite Johnsonian idiosyncrasy in his French translations and the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive, rendered in typical Johnsonian fashion. Compare, for instance, Le Clerc's statement, "L'Auteur que l'on vient de citer" (409: 12), and the English translation, "The Author last quoted" (8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 36). Such evidence, I feel, tends to confirm Professor Hazen's attribution.

short paragraph is sufficient to illustrate his manner of translating  
Le Clerc's comments on Asclepiades.

Le Clerc: (392: 23-30; 393: 1-5)

Le voye la plus sûre que ce Médecin trouva pour se mettre en crédit, ce fut de prendre tout le contrepied d'Archagathus, qu'il savoit avoir été blâmé à cause de la méthode cruelle qu'il avoit suivie, & de condamner, non seulement cette méthode, mais encore une grande partie des remedes que les autres Médecins pratiquoient tous les jours. Les remedes qu'Asclépiade improuvoit, consistoient, selon la remarque de Pline, à étouffer les malades à force de les charger de couvertures pour tirer de la sueur de leurs corps à quelque prix que ce fût, ou les rôtir auprès du feu, ou aux rayons du Soleil. Asclépiade condamnoit encore une ancienne maniere de guérir les esquinancies, en introduisant dans la gorge avec beaucoup de peine & d'effort un certain instrument qui servoit à ouvrir le passage. Mais ce contre quoi il se récrioit le plus, c'étoit contre les Vomitiss, que l'on prenoit alors très frequement, & même contre les Purgatifs, qu'il regardoit comme nuisibles à l'estomac.

Johnson: (8M<sup>r</sup> col. 15-28)

The Method this Physician used to establish his Character was, to run directly counter to the Practice of Archagathus, who had been condemned for his Cruelty; and to decry not only his Method but also a great Part of the Medicines daily recommended by other Physicians. The Practice of Asclepiades consisted principally, in throwing the Patient into a Sweat, by means of warm Coverings, or by exposing him to the Heat of the Fire, or the Rays of the Sun. Asclepiades also condemned the antient Manner of curing Quinseys by thrusting an Instrument forcibly down the Throat, in order to



clear the Passages. But of all other things, he made the highest Remonstrances against Vomits, which, in these Days, were frequently used; and even against Purgatives, which he looked upon as hurtful to the Stomach.

In the above passages from the life of Asclepiades it is clear as in Johnson's translation of his biographies of Archagathus and Aretaeus that he is content for the most part to follow the French quite closely. A careful comparison of the French and English, however, reveals frequent minor variations from the French text, most of which I think, tend to make his version more palatable and interesting to the English reader.

In his biographies in Dr. James's Medicinal Dictionary Johnson uses several methods of translation. There is, first of all, his fairly close approximation of the French in his articles on Tournefort, Archagathus, Aretaeus, and Asclepiades. Secondly, there is his somewhat freer approach in his rendition of the life of Ruysch and, finally, his extremely loose handling of Le Clerc's material on Aesculapius which is really the method Dryden termed "imitation." What emerges from a close study of Johnson's biographies in the Medicinal Dictionary and their French sources is more, though, than simply Johnson's methods of translation. More important is the fact that in Johnson's hand translation is not so much a tool of transmission as one of creation. In the Medicinal Dictionary we read not the writings of Le Clerc and Fontenelle as translated by Johnson, but Johnson's biographies which are based upon the works of these authors. The lives in the Dictionary, if not substantively Johnson's own, are very much his in style, arrangement, expression, and spirit. He is never subsumed by his foreign sources but consistently leaves the stamp of his personality and attitudes upon them. A translation of Le Clerc or Fontenelle by almost any other author would remain simply a translation, but with Johnson we see

combined both substance of value and the sensitive interpretation and vigorous style of a great man of letters. A study of the "translated" lives in the Medicinal Dictionary and of Johnson's French translations in general is important, then, not only in that it reveals just how he works with his sources but also because it demonstrates that even within a medium which on the surface appears to be a mechanistic destroyer of personality, that which we term with many feelings and meanings, "Johnsonian," is still very much present.

## Doublets in the "Life of Frederic Ruysch" (in "Anatomy")

Fontenelle 101: 9-10

Johnson 5Z2<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 40-41

& leur mettre en main  
dequoi étonner Bilsius

presented them with Materials  
proper for encountering and  
confounding Bilsius

102: 24-25

5Z2<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 38-39

ce qui demande, comme on  
voit, une grande précision

This, no doubt, required a  
very nice and discerning  
Judgement

104: 13

5Z2<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 15-16

& de s'attacher à l'ancienne  
doctrine si solidement établie

and tread in the safe  
and beaten Paths of his  
Predecessors

106: 28-29

6A<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 14-15

Il les dissequoit avec la même  
adresse que les Animaux

which he dissected and  
preserved with incomparable  
Art

## Doublets in the "Life of Tournefort" (in "Botany")

Fontenelle 143: 8

Johnson 10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 26-27

il vouloit sçavoir leurs noms

for he was anxious and  
uneasy, till he found out  
their Names

143: 20

10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 39-40

&amp; n'y touchent point

without enriching it  
with any thing that is  
solid and satisfactory

144: 3

10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 59-60

dans tous les Lieux fermés

to the most close and  
conceal'd Places

144: 6-7

il se resolvoit plutôt à  
y entrer furtivement

10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 62-63

that he would make his  
Way into them in an  
unlawful and clandestine  
manner

144: 23

qui se puisse acquérir

10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 83-84

by a recluse and solitary  
Application

144: 27

Elle veut que l'on coure  
les Montagnes

10C<sup>v</sup> col. 2, 87-88

The Botanist must wander  
thro' Mountains and Valleys

145: 11-12

& en rapporte des Plantes  
inconnuës aux Gens même du  
Païs

10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 22-23

found Plants unknown and  
unheard of by the Inhabitants  
of the Country

145: 35-36

une magnifique Bibliotheque

10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 49-50

a magnificent and well stor'd  
Library

146: 13

de tout ce qu'elles lui  
avoient coûté

10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 67-68

for the Toil and Pains they  
cost him

147: 19-21

La Patrie d'un Sçavant ne  
seroit pas sa véritable Patrie,  
si les Sciences n'y étoient  
florissantes

10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 42-26

for the native Country of a  
genuine and unfeign'd  
Virtuoso would be but a dull  
and uncomfortable Scene to  
him, if the Sciences did not  
thrive and prosper in it.

147: 27-28

qu'il ne connoissoit ni l'un  
ni l'autre que par le nom qu'ils  
s'étoient fait.

10C2<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 33-35

tho' he was no Stranger to  
the Fame and Reputation  
they justly acquir'd.

149: 19

& même assés polie de part &  
d'autre

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup> col. 2, 45-45

but even with a certain Air  
of Decorum and Politeness

149: 20-21

ne valoit guerre la peine  
qu'on s'échauffât

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup> col. 2, 48

to ruffle their Spirits or  
inflame their Passions

152: 21-22

& sur terre ils prennent les  
chemins les plus battus

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup> col. 1, 55-56

they take the most beaten  
and patent Roads by Land

152: 24-25

On lira bien-tôt avec un  
plaisir mêlé d'horreur

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup> col. 1 58-59

A Pleasure, blended with  
Gloom and Horror

153: 11-12

où tant de Plantes étrangères

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup> col. 1 84

to which so many foreign  
and unexpected Plants

153: 27-28

il voulut travailler à la  
Relation de son grand Voyage

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup> col. 2, 9

he wanted to revise and  
polish and Relation of his  
last Voyage

154: 15-16

qui à été trouvé dans un état  
où il n'y avoit rien à desirer

10C<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup> col. 2, 25-26

which was found perfect and  
and finished

Doublets in the "Life of Archagathus"

Le Clerc 383: 24-25

Johnson 7T<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 64-65

tant il y a eu d'autres  
choses considerables en sa  
personne

since so many other Circumstances  
concurr'd in his Person to render  
him venerable and awful

384: 3-4

Croirons-nous donc, dit-il  
pour conclusion, que Caton  
ait condamné une chose si utile,  
c'est à dire, la Médecine

384: 21-22

parmi les plus habiles d'entre  
les premiers Medécins Grecs

384: 29

sa Médecine

385: 4-5

bien loin d'y être estimée;  
parce que ce peuple étoit encore  
fort grossier en ces temps-là

Doublets in the "Life of Aretaeus"

Le Clerc 508: 7-8

On devoit trouver quelque de  
plus précis dans les Commen-  
taires d'Henischius

508: 24-25

lequel recevant quelque  
alteration cause diverses  
maladies

509: 6-7

qui ont du rapport aux  
extérieures

7T<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 4-5

Must we then believe that Cato  
condemn'd a thing so useful and  
beneficial as Physic

7T<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 45-46

among the most learned  
and skilful of the first  
Greek Physicians

7T<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 55-56

the judicious and happy  
Choice of his Medicines

7T<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 73-75

much less was it esteemed  
and valued, because the  
People of these Days were  
yet savage and unpolite

Johnson 7U<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 75-76

Something more accurate and  
explicit might have been  
expected from Henischius

7U<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 6-8

the Changes and Alterations  
of which, according to them,  
laid the Foundations of  
various Diseases

7U<sup>v</sup> col. 1, 35-36

which bear an Analogy and  
Resemblance to such as are  
external

511: 24

& afin d'adoucir leur mal &  
leur inquiétude

7U<sup>V</sup> col 2, 41-42

and in order to mitigate  
and allay their Disorder  
and Inquietude

512: 22

de quelque superstitieux

7U<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup> col. 1, 2

by some weak and superstitious  
Trifler

513: 13-14

aux maigres

7U<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup> col. 1, 49

to those who were lean and  
extenuated

516: 3

qui ont été les premiers des  
pneumatiques

7U<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup> col. 2, 60

who were the first and  
most celebrated of the  
Pneumatic Sect

### Doublets in the "Life of Asclepiades"

Le Clerc 392: 14

Johnson 8M<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 1+2

qui la remit en crédit

who reestablished its  
Character and Reputation

393: 6

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 29-30

En même temps qu'Asclépiade  
condamnoit les remedes

At the same time that  
Asclepiades condemned and  
decried the above Medicines

393: 14-14

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 1, 40-42

contribuerent encore beau-  
coup à faire recevoir cette  
nouvelle Médecine

contributed not a little to  
the favourable and ready  
Reception of this new Physic

394: 21-22

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 1+2

quelque invention nouvelle pour  
faire du plaisir à ses malades

some new Invention to please  
and humour his Patients

409: 11-12

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 35

devenoient utiles lorsque lui-  
même les avoit ordonnez

became safe and salutary,  
when prescribed by him

409: 23

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 49

dans un lieu clair

to a clear and open  
Light

409: 30-31

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 58-59

c'est à dire, une  
cure extraordinaire

he calls the Cure here  
mentioned, bold and  
extraordinary

410: 5

8M<sup>r</sup> col. 2, 74-75

eût été assez fou pour  
parler de cette maniere

would have talked in  
so ridiculous and foolish  
a manner



## CHAPTER VIII

### A SOURCE FOR IDLER NUMBER 8

In Idler Number 8 for Saturday, 3 June 1758, a satiric commentary on preparing English soldiers for battle, Johnson confesses that he borrows a passage from a Frenchman. The Yale editors in a footnote write, "Johnson, if he borrows 'from a Frenchman,' as he says, certainly refers to the account by the Abbé de Vertot, in Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean (4th ed. 1755), II. 194-203. However the earlier volumes of Giacomo Bosio's Dell 'istoria . . . di S. Gio. Gierosol<sup>no</sup> (1621-84), where a more complete account is given (II. 71-74), had also appeared in French (1643), and the Gallicized name of the author, Pierre de Boissat, may have lingered in Johnson's memory as that of a 'Frenchman'." <sup>1</sup> I have secured both sources mentioned in note one above and will present them below with Johnson's paragraph to show just what he does with the French.

Johnson: Idler No. 8. Saturday, 3 June 1758 (27: 1-22)

When the Isle of Rhodes was, many centuries ago, in the hands of that military order now called the Knights of Malta, it was ravaged by a dragon, who inhabited a den under a rock, from which he issued forth when he was hungry or wanton, and without fear or mercy devoured men and beasts as they came in his way. Many councils were held, and many devices offered, for his destruction; but as his back was armed with impenetrable scales

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<sup>1</sup>The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson. Idler and Adventurer, ed. W. J. Bate, J. M. Bullitt, L. F. Powell (New Haven, 1963), 27.

none would venture to attack him. At last Dudon, a French knight, undertook the deliverance of the island. From some place of security he took a view of the dragon, or, as a modern soldier would say, "reconnoitred" him, and observed that his belly was naked and vulnerable. He then returned home to take his "arrangements"; and, by a very exact imitation of nature, made a dragon of pasteboard, in the belly of which he put beef and mutton, and accustomed two sturdy mastiffs to feed themselves, by tearing their way to the concealed flesh. When his dogs were well practised in this method of plunder, he marched out with them at his heels, and shewed them the dragon; they rushed upon him in quest of their dinner; Dudon battered his scull while they lacerated his belly; and neither his sting nor claws were able to defend him.

Pierre de Boissat: Histoire des Chevaliers de l'Ordre de S. Jean de Hierusalem. (67-68)<sup>2</sup>

Il y avoit en l'Isle de Rhodes un grand Dragon en une caverne, d'où il infectoit l'air de sa puanteur, & tuoit les hommes & les bestes qu'il pouvoit recontrier: & estoit defendu à tous Religieur sur la peine de privation de l'habit, & à tous sujets de passer en ce lieu-là, qui s'appelloit Maupas. Le Dragon qui estoit de la grosseur d'un cheval moyen avoit une teste de serpent des oreilles de mulet couvertes d'une peau fort dure & escaillée, des dents fort aiguës, la gorge grande, les yeux caves, luisans comme feu, avec un regard effroyable, quatre jambes comme un Crocodil, les griffes fort dures & aiguës; sur le dos deux petites aisles, dessus de couleur d'un Dauphin, dessous jaunes & verdes comme estoit le ventre, & la queue comme un Lezart. Il couroit batant de ses aisles autant qu'un bon cheval, avec un horrible sifflement. Le Chevalier de Gozon ayant entrepris de le

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<sup>2</sup>I preserve the original spelling but for typographical clarity change the French "u" and "i" to the modern "v" and "j".

combattre, s'en alla à Gozon chez son frere, où il fit un fantosme qui representoit naïfvement le Dragon, & accoustuma son cheval & deux chiens à l'approcher & attaquer courageusement sans crainte. Apres retourné à Rhodes, il fit un jour porter ses armes à l'Eglise de saint Estienne prés du Mau-pas, où il envoya ses serviteurs, et lui avec un seul valet s'y en alla, sans qu'aucun reconneut son dessein. Il laissa ses gens sur le coustau, & leur commanda qu'ayans veu le combat s'il estoit vaincu & tué, ils s'enfuissent; sinon qu'ils vinssent à lui pour le secourir. Alors armé de toutes pieces, la lance sur la cuisse, il marcha vers la caverne, laquelle il trouva suivant contre le courant d'un ruisseau qui en sortoit. Dans peu de temps le Dragon vint à lui la teste levée, & batant les aisles avec son sifflement accoustumé, Le Chevalier lui courut courageusement contre, & baissant sa lance l'atteignit à une espaule, qu'il trouva couverte d'écailles si dures, que la lance se mit en pieces sans l'offencer. Cependant les chiens assaillirent vivement le Dragon de tous costez, & l'un d'eux l'assera par les genitoires: chose qui vexa & retarda aucunement le Dragon: de sorte que le Chevalier eut loisir de mettre pied à terre, - retourna l'espée au poing contre le Dragon, & lui plongea sous la gorge, où la peau se trouva tendre, & la maniant & l'enfonçant tousjours de plus en plus, lui trencha le gosier, & soustint ainsi son espée, & soi-mesme buté contre le Dragon jusques à ce qu'il eut jetté & perdu tout son sang: & lors le Dragon se sentant faillir se laissa tomber en terre, & accueillit dessous soi le Chevalier, à qui les forces failloient de lassitude & de la puanteur & pesanteur de cette épouvantable charongne. Ses serviteurs voyant le Dragon par terre, y accoururent, & comme il ne bougeoit plus, avec grande peine & travail, ils l'osterent de dessus leur maistre, qu'ils trouverent

tout pasmé. Mais voyans que le poux lui battoit encore ils le rafraichirent promptement avec l'eau du ruisseau, & incontinent il reprit ses esprits & son sens. Alors ils le desarmerent, & le remirent à cheval, & s'en retourna plein d'alegresse telle qu'on peut penser, ayant mis si heureusement à fin une si haute entreprise.

Abbe de Vertot: Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean.<sup>3</sup>  
(22-25)<sup>4</sup>

Ce fut par ce même esprit de charité & par des vûes de prudence, qu'il [Le Grand Maître] défendit à tous les Chevaliers, sous peïn de privation de l'habit, de s'attacher à combattre un Serpent ou un Crocodile, espece d'animal amphibie qui vit & qui se nourit dans les marais & au bord des grandes rivières. Ce Crocodile étoit d'une enorme grandeur, causoit beaucoup de désordre dans l'Isle, & il avoit même dévoré quelques habitans. Pour l'intelligence d'un événement si extraordinaire, & que quelques Auteurs ont traité de fabuleux, nous rapporterons simplement ce qu'on en trouve dans l'histoire, & nous laisserons au lecteur à juger de la verité d'un fait si étonnant, selon ses lumieres, & le degré de probabilité qu'il trouvera dans notre narration.

La retraite de ce furieux animal dont nous parlons, étoit dans une caverne située au bord d'un marais au pied du mont Saint Etienne, à deux milles de la Ville. Il en sortoit souvent pour chercher sa proie. Il mangeoit des Moutons, des Vaches, & quelques fois des Chevaux quand ils approchoient de l'eau & du bord du marais: on se plaignoit même qu'il avoit dévoré de jeunes

<sup>3</sup>There is a close translation of this version in volume nineteen of the Gentleman's Magazine for 1749 on pages 196-198.

<sup>4</sup>These are the page numbers of the photoduplication I used of this passage.

Pâtres qui gardoient leurs troupeaux. Plusieurs Chevaliers & de plus braves du Couvent, en differens temps, & à l'insçu les uns de autres, sortirent séparément de la Ville pour tâcher de le tuer; mais on n'en vit revenir aucun. Comme l'usage des armes à feu n'étoit point encore inventé, & que la peau de cette espece de monstre étoit couverte d'écailles à l'épreuve des fleches & des darts les plus acerez, les armes, pour ainsi-dire, n'étoient pas égales, & le Serpent les avoit bien-tôt terassez. Ce fut le motif qui obligea le Grand Maître à défendre aux Chevaliers de tenter davantage une entreprise qui paroissoit au-dessus des forces humaines.

Tous obéirent à l'exception d'un seul Chevalier de la Langue de Provence, appelé Dieu-donné de Gozon, qui, au préjudice de cette défense, & sans être épouvante du sort de ses confreres, forma secretement le dessein de combattre cette bête carnaciere; & il résolut d'y périr, ou d'en délivrer l'Isle de Rhodes. On attribua cette résolution au courage déterminé de ce Chevalier. D'autres prétendent qu'il fut encore engagé par des railleries piquantes qu'on fit de son courage dans Rhodes, & sur ce qu'étant sorti plusieurs fois de la Ville pour combattre le Serpent, il s'étoit contenté de le reconnoître de loin, & que dans ce péril il avoit fait plus d'usage de sa prudence que de sa valeur.

Quoiqu'il en soit des motifs qui déterminèrent ce Chevalier à tenter cette aventure, pour commencer à mettre son projet execution, il passa en France, & se retira dans le château de Gozon, qui subsiste encore aujourd'hui dans la Province de Languedoc. Ayant reconnu que le Serpent qu'il vouloit attaquer n'avoit point d'ecailles sous le ventre, il forma sur cette observation le plan de son entreprise.

Il fit faire en bois ou en carton une figure de cette bête énorme, sur l'idée qu'il en avoit conservée, & il tâcha sur-tout qu'on en imitât la couleur. Il dressa ensuite deux jeunes Dogues à accourir à ses cris, & à se jeter sous le ventre de cette affreuse bête, pendant que monté à cheval, couvert de ses armes, & la lance à la main, il seignoit de son côté de lui porter des coups en differens endroits. Ce Chevalier employa plusieurs mois à faire tous les jours cet exercice, & il ne vit pas plutôt ses Dogues dressez à ce genre de combat qu'il retourna à Rhodes. A peine fut-il arrivé dans l'Isle que sans communiquer son dessein à qui que ce soit, il fit porter secretement ses armes proche d'une Eglise située au haut de la montagne de Saint Etienne, où il se rendit accompagné seulement de deux domestiques qu'il avoit amenez de France. Il entra dans l'Eglise, & après s'être recommandé à Dieu, il prit ses armes, monta à cheval, & ordonna à ses deux domestiques, s'il périssoit dans ce combat, de s'en retourner en France, mais de se rendre auprès de lui, s'ils s'appercevoient qu'il eût tué le Serpent, ou qu'il en eût été blessé. Il descendoit ensuite de la montagne avec ses deux chiens, marcha droit au marais & au repaire du Serpent, qui, au bruit qu'il faisoit, accourut la gueule ouverte, & les yeux étincelans pour le dévorer. Gozon lui porta un coup de lance que l'épaisseur & la dureté des écailles rendit inutile. Il se préparoit à redoubler ses coups; mais son cheval épouvanté des sifflemens & de l'odeur du Serpent, refuse d'avancer, recule, se jette à côté; & il auroit été cause de la perte de son maître, si, sans s'étonner, il ne se fut jetté à bas; & mettant aussi-tôt l'épée à la main, accompagné de ses deux fideles Dogues, il joint cette horrible bête, & lui porte plusieurs coups en differens endroits, mais que la dureté des écailles l'empêcha d'entamer. Le furieux animal d'un coup

queue le jetta même à terre, & il en auroit été infailliblement dévoré, si les deux chiens, suivant qu'ils avoient été dressez, ne se fussent attachez au ventre du Serpent qu'ils déchiroient par de cruelles morsures, sans que malgré tous ses efforts, il pût leur faire lâcher prise.

Le Chevalier, à la faveur de ce secours, se relève, & se joignant à ses deux Dogues, enfonce son épée jusqu'aux gardes, dans un endroit qui n'étoit point defendu par des écailles: il y fit une large playe dont il sortit des flots de sang. Le monstre blessé à mort, tombe sur le Chevalier qu'il abbat une seconde fois; & il l'auroit étouffé par le poids & la masse énorme de son corps, si les deux domestiques, spectateurs de ce combat, voyant le Serpent mort, n'étoient accourus au secours de leur maître. Ils le trouverent évanoui, & le crurent mort; mais après l'avoir retiré de dessous le Serpent avec beaucoup de peine, pour lui donner lieu de respirer, s'il étoit encore en vie, ils lui ôterent son casque, & après qu'on lui eut jetté de l'eau sur le visage, il ouvrit enfin les yeux. Le premier spectacle & le plus agréable qui se pouvoit presenter à sa vûe, fut celui de voir son ennemi mort, & d'avoir réussi dans une entreprise si difficile, où plusieurs de ses confreres avoient succombé.

Pierre de Boissat's version and the Abbé de Vertot's rendition of the story of the knight and the dragon are quite similar, and it is evident that Johnson bases his paragraph on one of them. The Yale editors in the note quoted above feel the Abbé de Vertot is the more likely source and from my analysis of the passages, I would confirm their view. For instance, Johnson in his passage uses the word "reconnoitred" (143: 4 above) which while not appearing at all in Pierre de Boissat's version is seen in the Abbé de Vertot's phrase, "il s'étoit contenté de le reconnoître de loin" (146: 21 above) Johnson mentions

that the dragon's belly "was naked and vulnerable" (143: 5 above), a comment which has no parallel in Pierre de Boissat's text but which is apparently based on the Abbé de Vertot's line, "Ayant reconnu que le Serpent qu'il vouloit attaquer n'avoit point d'écailles sous le ventre" (146: 27-28 above). Finally, Johnson's statement that the knight "made a dragon of pasteboard" (143: 7 above) while having no basis in Pierre de Boissat's version seems to be close to the Abbé de Vertot's comment, "Il fit faire en bois ou en carton une figure de cette bête enorme" (147: 1-2 above). I would hesitate, however, to dismiss Pierre de Boissat's rendition as a possible source if only because of one striking parallel with Johnson's paragraph. Pierre de Boissat writes in the opening lines of his narration that the beast "tuoit les hommes & les bestes qu'il pouvoit rencontrer" (143: 2-3 above) which appears to be the source of Johnson's comment that the dragon "devoured men and beasts as they came in his way" (142: 5 above). Perhaps the closeness is purely coincidental, but it appears that Johnson's line is a fairly close translation of Pierre de Boissat's phrase and if this is the case, then he is indebted to both French sources quoted above. At any rate the paragraph in Idler No. 8 shows how necessary it is to qualify the term translation when Johnson is the translator. Here, it is seen, we are not dealing so much with a translation from the French but a recreation of it in which Johnson uses only the substance of his French source to create a highly original passage of his own.



## CHAPTER IX

### "A DISSERTATION UPON THE GREEK COMEDY" AND THE "GENERAL CONCLUSION"

Pierre Brumoy's monumental three-volume Le Théâtre des Grecs was published in 1730 and became in its own time the definitive commentary on the classical theater. In the Nouvelle Biographie Générale it is said, "Rien ne prouve mieux le mérite réel de l'ouvrage du P. Brumoy que le succès qu'il obtint à l'époque où il parut. Depuis longtemps les auteurs grecs et surtout ceux qui illustrèrent le scène antique n'étaient accessibles qu'aux savants de profession et à un petit nombre d'érudits, hommes de goût. L'heureuse idée du savant jésuite et son exécution, tout imparfaite qu'elle fut d'abord, répandirent et popularisèrent en France la connaissance et la juste appréciation des chefs-d'oeuvre du théâtre d'Athènes."<sup>1</sup> In 1759 there appeared an English version of Brumoy's work which was translated by Charlotte Lennox and a distinguished group of scholars, including Samuel Johnson. Allen Hazen in Samuel Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications says the translation was apparently undertaken by Mrs. Lennox as a commission from the booksellers but met with little success and was never reprinted.<sup>2</sup>

Volume one of the English version contains a "Dedication" entitled "To His Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales" which is signed by Mrs. Lennox but actually written by Dr. Johnson. The Earl of Corke and Orrery is the author of a lengthy "Preface" in which he discusses the condition of the theater through the ages and the sad condition of

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<sup>1</sup>Tome Septième (Paris, 1885), 593.

<sup>2</sup>(New Haven, 1937), p. 91.

the present English stage. He also praises Johnson's contributions to the text. Lord Orrery translates Father Brumoy's first three essays, "Discourse upon the Theatre of the Greeks," "Original of Tragedy," and "Parallel of the Theatres." Mrs. Lennox translates the whole of the second volume which includes plays, synopses of plays, commentary, and criticism. In volume three, however, she receives considerable help: the comedies, The Birds and Peace, are translated by an unidentified "young gentleman"; The Frogs by Dr. Gregory Sharpe; The Cyclops by Dr. Grainger, famous for his translation of Tibullus; the Discourse on the Cyclops by John Bourryau; and "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" by Dr. Johnson.

Next to the translations of Lord Orrery and Mrs. Lennox, Johnson's are the longest. It is not too surprising, really, to find him joining this company of translators of Brumoy's volumes, knowing as we do his high admiration of Mrs. Lennox and his undoubted interest in the material he was asked to translate. Johnson's method of rendering the French of Brumoy's "Discours sur la Comedie Grec" and "Conclusion Generale" is not, however, that of the translations from the French we have already investigated. A close analysis of the more than eighty-six quarto pages he translates for Mrs. Lennox's text reveals that he works with his French source quite closely and avoids the method of loose paraphrase, condensation, compression and "recreation" which is evident in such works as "A Dissertation on the Amazons," "The Life of Father Paul Sarpi," the biographies in the Medicinal Dictionary, and the opening pages of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia. There are in the sections he translates from Brumoy's text no Johnsonian intrusions which in his previous renditions allowed us to get a glimpse of his personality, his attitudes, and in some cases his feelings about the work he translated. One would hardly expect, though, to find Johnson working in such a manner in a text where the presence of

many translators necessarily precluded the expression of individuality and interpretation and required a common effort to reach a certain stylistic uniformity in all the translations. I have compared all the translations in the English version with their French sources and found for the most part that all the renditions are a fairly close approximation of Brumoy's text. More fidelity to the French is seen, I think, in the work of "the young gentleman," Dr. Sharpe, and Lord Orrery and somewhat less in that of Dr. Grainger, Mrs. Lennox, and Dr. Johnson.

To indicate as concisely and clearly as possible just how Johnson translates Brumoy's text closely, but with frequent variations from the French, I shall quote the opening lines of "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion." Mainly, however, I rely on a series of tables to reveal the kinds of variations Johnson makes from his French source. Under "Paraphrases," for instance, it is possible to see how he frequently recasts the French in a different form and avoids a slavish, literal translation; under "Variations in Diction" are examples of how he sometimes chooses a word in English that is not quite the equivalent of the French; under "Changes in Word Order" are illustrations of how he often rephrases a French sentence, mainly, I think, to give his English rendition either more smoothness or force, though some variations in this section have no logical basis; and under "Additions to the French" and "Omissions from the French" are seen further deviations which indicate that in a very limited way Johnson treats his foreign source with a certain amount of freedom. Also, I have listed in one table fourteen doublets which appear in the pages of his translation, one variation which seems even in the Brumoy to be peculiar to Johnson alone and which more than any other marks "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" as Johnsonian. Finally, I have included three examples of Johnson's

translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive. Although this idiom is probably best rendered into English with the idea of having just done something, Johnson chooses to convey its meaning in different ways.

The opening lines of "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" give a fairly clear picture of just how Johnson translates Brumoy's text.

Brumoy: (i: 1-21) "Discours sur le Comedie Grecque" J'ai balancé long-tems si je toucherois l'article de la Comédie des Grecs, tant à cause du petit nombre de Pieces qui nous en reste, qu'à cause de la licence effrenée d'Aristophane leur Auteur, & de la difficulté d'établir une idée sûre de la Comédie Grecque sur les oeuvres d'un seul Poète. D'ailleurs la Tragedie m'avoit paru mériter toute l'attention dont j'étois capable pour la bien peindre, comme le morceau le plus estimé des Atheniens & des Grecs sensés, particulièrement de Socrate qui n'estimoit ni les Comédiens ni les Comédies. Mais le seul nom d'un ouvrage de Théâtre qui dans les beaux siecles, & beaucoup plus dans le nôtre, a fait tant de progrès, qu'il est devenu égal, pour ne pas dire préférable au Tragique même, m'a fait juger qu'on pourroit peut-être me reprocher de n'avoir pas rendu mon Ouvrage complet, si après avoir approfondi, autant qu'il m'a été possible, ce qui regarde le Tragique des Grecs, je n'ébauchois au moins le caractere de leur Comique.

Johnson: (367: 1-17) "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy"<sup>3</sup>

I was in doubt a long time, whether I should meddle at all with

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<sup>3</sup>All citations from "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" are from The Works of Samuel Johnson, ed. F. P. Walesby (Oxford, 1825), Vol. IV which I have collated with Charlotte Lennox's, The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy (London, 1759).

the Greek comedy, both because the pieces which remain are very few, the licentiousness of Aristophanes, their author, is exorbitant; and it is very difficult to draw, from the performances of a single poet, a just idea of Greek comedy. Besides, it seemed that tragedy was sufficient to employ all my attention, that I might give a complete representation of that kind of writing, which was most esteemed by the Athenians and the wiser Greeks, particularly Socrates, who set no value upon comedy or comick actors. But the very name of that drama, which in polite ages, and above all others in our own, has been so much advanced, and it has become equal to tragedy, if not preferable, inclines me to think that I may be partly reproached with an imperfect work, if, after having gone, as deep as I could, into the nature of Greek tragedy, I did not at least sketch a draught of the comedy.

Brumoy: (297: 1-11) "Conclusion Generale"

Voilà l'exposé fidelle des restes d'Aristophane. Je ne crains pas qu'on se plaigne que je les aye déguisés. J'ai rendu compte de tout, autant que la matiere & les bonnes moeurs ont pu s'accorder. Nulle plume, fût-elle payenne & cynique, n'oseroit produire au grand jour les horreurs que j'ai dérobées aux yeux des Lecteurs: & loin d'en regretter le moindre trait, de ce silence nécessaire on conclura aisément quel étoit le libertinage d'esprit, & quelle la corruption du coeur qui regnoit parmi les Atheniens.

Johnson: (414: 1-11) "General Conclusion"

Thus I have given a faithful extract of the remains of Aristophanes. That I have not shown them in their true form, I am not afraid that any body will complain. I have given an account of every thing, as far as it was consistent with moral decency. No pen, however cynical or heathenish, would venture to produce, in open

day, the horrid passages which I have put out of sight; and, instead of regretting any part that I have suppressed, the very suppression will easily show to what degree the Athenians were infected with licentiousness of imagination, and corruption of principles.

In these passages it is possible to see how closely Johnson translates Brumoy. It is also evident, however, that there are a number of minor variations from the French, variations, as the following tables show, that are found throughout Johnson's rendition of the two sections from Le Théâtre des Grecs. In his translation of Brumoy's text, then, we do not see the expression of Johnson's personality and attitudes which are such an interesting and integral part of many of his translations from the French. Charlotte Lennox's work was simply not the proper place for the display of the idiosyncratic and the personal. If we miss, though, in "A Dissertation upon Greek Comedy" and in the "General Conclusion" those elements which so clearly identify his other translations as Johnsonian, we must still compliment Dr. Johnson on his skill and proficiency in rendering the French of Brumoy into a supple and readable English.

## Paraphrases

Brumoy v: 15 ("Discours sur le Comedie Grecque)	Johnson 370: 16
elles sont nées dans le même berceau	they had both the same original
vi: 2	371: 8
qu'il me paroît démontré	as to amount to demonstrative proof
vi: 12-13	371: 17
leur donna des masques	covered their faces with masks
viii note	372: note
Il étoit aussi timide guerrier que hardi Comedien	he was a daring writer, but a cowardly warrior
xii: 27-28	376: 23
Il n'en faut pas séparer celle qu'on appelloit <u>Trabeata</u> à cause de <u>Trabea</u>	This is the same with that called trabeata, from trabea
xiii: 25-26	377: 11
que ne nous apprend presque rien de solide	affords us no solid satisfaction
xiii: 27	377: 13
nous instruisent mieux	give us a fuller notion
xvi: 28-29	379: 27
si l'on peut former un jugement juste sur les fragmens	if we may venture to judge upon the fragments
xix: 4	381: 7
une facilité admirable	a wonderful readiness of composition

## Paraphrases

Brumoy xxi: 8-9

& que ses caprices, même les plus vifs & les moins attendus paroissent comme des suites nécessaires des incidens qu'il a préparés

xxi: 26-27

on ne connoît pas encore tous les charmes & toutes les beautés de Grec

xxiii: 13-14

vrai Elixir de tous les thrésors nés de la Grèce

xxiv: 6-8

que pour des hommes perdus d'envie, de noirceurs & de débauches

xxix: 7-9

Ce n'est donc pas sur cet assemblage de serieux & de comique qu'il faut condamner Aristophane pour élever Menandre

xxx: 2-3

Tel étoit le goût d'une Comedie licencieuse que se permettoit tout

xxxi: 26-28

un Poëte pouvoit être excusable de peindre les ridicules & les scélerats publics tels qu'ils sont

Johnson 382: 25-27

and even the most quick and unexpected of his desultory sallies appear the necessary consequences of the foregoing incidents

383: 4-5

we cannot yet know all the charmes and beauties of that language

384: 14

an extract of all the treasures of Greece

384: 37-38

as for minds blackened with envy, and corrupted with debauchery

388: 29-31

It is not, therefore, this mixture of tragick and comick that will place Aristophanes below Menander

389: 13-15

Such was the turn of a species of comedy, in which all licentiousness was allowed

390: 20-21

a poet could be excused for painting publick folly and vice, in their true colours



## Paraphrases

Brumoy xxxiii: 9-10

Comme je joins ici mes raisons  
bonnes ou mauvaises, pour &  
contre Aristophane

xlii: 8

quel siecle ne mérite pas  
d'être condamné

lix: 28-29

A bien pénétrer ces deux  
fins

## "Conclusion Generale"

297: 1-2

Voilà l'expose fidelle des  
restes d'Aristophane

297: 6-7

les Horreurs que j'ai  
dérobées aux yeux des  
Lecteurs

297: 13-14

la Religion & la probité ne  
permettent pas d'en faire  
parade

300: 19-20

il n'y a nul lieu de  
comparer siecle à siecle, &  
Comedie à Comedie

Johnson 392: 4-5

As I add my own reasons,  
such as they are, for or  
against Aristophanes

398: 21-22

what age shall we spare

411: 7

To go to the bottom of those  
purposes

414: 5

Thus I have given a faithful  
extract of the remains of  
Aristophanes

141: 10-11

the horrid passages which  
I have put out of sight

414: 17-18

religion and virtue at least  
oblige us not to spread it  
before the eyes of mankind

416: 33-34

there can be no comparison  
made of one age or comedy with  
another

## Paraphrases

Brumoy 306: 25-26

Cela ne peut s'accorder

307: 13-14

Voici mon dénouement en  
deux mots

311: 26-27

Il avoit deux sortes de  
mimes moins distingués par  
leur objet que par leur  
étendue

Johnson 421: 9

These are glaring incon-  
sistencies

421: 22-23

I shall not solve the  
question with great brevity

424: 22-23

These mimi were of two  
sorts, of which the length  
was different, but the  
purposes the same

## Changes in Word Order

Brumoy iii: 23-25 ("Discours  
sur la Comedie Grecque")

Johnson 369: 11-13

S'il eût fallu prouver aux  
Grecs & aux Troyens qu'Helene  
étoit belle, il n'y auroit  
point eu de guerre de Troye

If Helen had not appeared  
beautiful to the Greeks and  
Trojans but by force of  
argument, we had never been  
told of the Trojan war

v: 7-9

370: 9-10

Un précis de tout à la fin  
achevera peut-être le dessein  
que je me suis proposé

I shall conclude with a  
short view of the whole and  
so finish my design

xi: 8-9

375: 13-14

C'est là proprement la belle  
Comédie, la Comédie de Menandre  
& celle de Terence

The comedy of Menander and  
Terence is, in propriety of  
speech, the fine comedy

xi: 14-15

375: 18-19

Une histoire nue de la poésie  
& des Poètes

A naked history of poets  
and of poetry

xi: 24-25

375: 27

sans médisances personnelles  
& sans choeurs

without chorus or personal  
abuse

xii: 18-19

376: 16

le fidelle copiste de  
Menandre & l'ami de Lélius

the friend of Lelius, and the  
faithful copier of Menander

xiv: 16-17

377: 30-31

L'on sçait peu de chose de  
la personne d'Aristophane

Of the personal character  
of Aristophanes, little is  
known

## Changes in Word Order

Brumoy xviii: 18-19

Je ne dirai rien de Cecilius  
dont il ne nous est resté que  
des fragmens

xix: 13-15

Il ne consultoit point d'autre  
commentaire quand il composoit,  
que le goût de ses Auditeurs

xviii: 18-19

Plutarque ne sçauroit finir  
sur l'article de Menandre

xxvi: 2-3

On n'est point Poëte pour  
sçavoir précisément divertir  
ses sots ou des libertins

xxxiii: 12-14

& qui peut être a mis  
Plutarque de mauvaise humeur  
sans compter le reste

liv: 23-24

Heureux génie, qui sans  
imitation & sans regles

"Conclusion Generale"

297: 2-3

Je ne crains pas qu'on se  
plaigne que je les aye  
déguises

303: 27-29

Les plaisanteries sur les  
Poëtes les plus estimés sont  
encore une partie considerable  
d'Aristophane

Johnson 380: 28-29

Of Cecilius, since we have  
only a few fragments, I shall  
say nothing

381: 15-16

When he wrote, he consulted  
no other laws than the taste  
of his auditors

384: 18-19

Upon this article of Menander,  
Plutarque does not know how  
to make an end

386: 15-16

To be able, in the highest  
degree, to divert fools and  
libertines, will not make a poet

392: 6-8

and which, perhaps, without  
taking in the rest, put  
Plutarque out of humour

407: 16

Happy genius! that, without  
rule or imitation

414: 6-7

That I have not shown them in  
their true form, I am not afraid  
that any body will complain

419: 5-6

Another part of the works  
of Aristophanes, are his  
pleasant reflections upon  
the most celebrated poets

## Variations in Diction

Brumoy iii: 1' ("Discours  
sur la Comedie Grecque)

Johnson 368: 30

Mais outre cet obstacle

But, besides this objection

viii: 7-8

373: 2

qu'Aristophane étoit le  
plus celebre

that Aristophanes had  
the greatest character

ix: 9-10

373: 23

& de la liberté qu'elle  
s'étoit donné

and of the licentiousness  
which is practised

xvii: 8

379: 34

Une femme effrontée

and abandoned prostitute

xxvi: 4-5

368: 18

le talent d'Aristophane

the character of Aristophanes

xxviii: 16

388: 8-9

que le yeut Plutarque

as Plutarch has vented

lii: 24

406: 2

leur dit nettement

he tells them, in plain terms

liv: 20-21

407: 13-14

& par cet élan extraordinaire  
de son génie

and, by that prodigious  
flight of his genius

"Conclusion Generale"

302: 8

418: 1

Il est aisé de conclure

It may easily be gathered

304: 20-21

419: 24

C'etoit l'art de contrefaire

it was the art of gross mimickry

## Additions to the French

Brumoy ("Discours sur la Comedie Grecque") "Avertissement": 35-36

Johnson 367: 12

que j'abandonne au jugement du public

which I leave entirely to the judgement of the publick

iv: 1-3

369: 20

il est l'unique dont on puisse tirer l'idée de la Comedie de son tems

we find him the only author from whom may be drawn a just idea of the comedy of his age

v: 26-27

371: 2

avec le même artifice

by the same artifice of representation

ix: 18

374: 2-3

en masques

as far as could be done in a mask

xix: 16

381: 17

que sur la raison

than by the rules of reason

xxv: 14-16

386: 2

Il passe d'abord condamnation sur les obscénités & les bouffonneries

he condemns, with mercy his ribaldry and obscenity

lvi: 1-2

409: 3-4

Le violent Achille laissera lieu au tableau du violent Alexandre

The stormy violence of an Achilles will always leave room for the stormy violence of Alexander

"Conclusion Generale"

297: 20

414: 22-23

Elle ne ressemble à rien

which has no likeness to any thing in nature

## Omissions from the French

Brumoy ("Discours sur la  
Comedie Grecque") ii: 3

Johnson 368: 4

quelques Pieces séparées  
d'Aristophane

some pieces of Aristophanes

iii: 14-17

369: 4-6

car le petit nombre des  
Sçavans qui aiment les  
délices Attiques, (pour  
parler leur vrai langage)  
s'embarrasse assez peu des  
traductions

As for that small number of  
writers, who delight in  
those delicacies, they give  
themselves very little  
trouble about translations

v: 13

370: 14

il y a grande apparence

and there is an appearance

xii: 21

376: 17

distinguoient communément  
les Comedies

distinguished their comedies

xii: 29; xiii: 1

376: 24-25

& des Generaux triomphans  
après la guerre

and the generals in triumph

xiv: 27-28

378: 5-6

Il fut toutefois déclaré  
citoyen d'Athenes, malgré  
ses ennemis

He was, however, formally  
declared a citizen of  
Athens

xv: 21-22

378: 27

par les divers jugemens

by the judgement

xx: 14-16

382: 5-6

mais le'ordonnance de ses  
Comédies est toujours defectuese  
en quelque chose, & ses dénoue-  
mens ne sont point heureux

but the disposition of his  
comedies is always defective  
some way or another

## Omissions from the French

Brumoy xx: 19-23

Quoiqu'elles ne soient pas  
toutes des oracles, on en peut  
tirer avantage; & elles approchent  
beaucoup de la vérité que les juge-  
ments de Baillet, dont le goût un  
peu Bèotien étoit plus propre à  
complier qu' à juger

xxi: 28-29

mais suspendons notre jugement  
& daignons écouter Plutarque

xxiii: 14-15

digne d'être toujours lu,  
représenté, appris par  
memoire & toujours digne de plaire

xxvi: 19-21

L'Apologiste a oublié une  
raison qui me paroît essentielle  
pour fonder le déchaînement de  
Plutarque contre Aristophane

xxxi: 20-23

disons ici seulement que l'esprit  
regnant, ou l'amour des peintures  
parlantes, & des fortes touches  
de pinceau justifieroient encore  
Aristophane

## "Conclusion Generale"

309: 9-13

Ils n'osoient attaquer overttement  
le religion réelle. Ils ne s'en  
prenoient qu'a la fable: & comme  
celle-ci tenoit de près a celle-la,  
en attaquant la fable, ils détruisent  
insensiblement la religion du país

Johnson 382: 10-11

though they are not all  
oraculous, some advantages  
may be drawn, as they always  
make some approaches to truth

383: 6-7

but let us suspend our opinion,  
and hear that of Plutarch

384: 14-15

who deserves always to be  
read, and always to please

386: 29-30

The apologist has forgot one  
reason, which appears to be  
essential to a just account

390: 16-17

in this place we say only  
that the reigning taste,  
or the love of striking likenesses,  
might justify Aristophanes

422: 29-30

They durst not openly attack  
real religion; but destroyed  
it by attacking fable



## Doublets

Brumoy xvi: 12-14 ("Discours  
sur la Comedie Grecque")

& gâta un peu le génie qu'il  
avoit de railleur, par ses  
manieres rudes & outrées

xix: 26-27

& ses graces deviennent  
froides pour être trop fines

xxii: 13-14

sans négliger le comique  
un peu fort

xxiv: 15

de ses libertés en paroles

xxxv: 11-12

les Anglois nos voisins ne  
le trouvent-ils pas un peu  
froid

xxxix: 25-26

& aller bride en main

lxii: 9

Rapportons tout au goût  
universel

lvi: 10-12

Or les caracteres bien  
marqués de la nature sont  
eux-mêmes très-bornés

Johnson 379: 13-15

and the turn of his genius  
to ridicule was disfigured  
and corrupted by the indelicacy  
and outrageousness of his manner

381: 25-27

and his beauties lose their power  
of striking by being too delicate  
and acute

383: 23-24

rising, when it is necessary,  
to vigorous and sprightly  
comedy

385: 5-6

to the indecent or malicious  
sallies

393: 21-22

our neighbours, the English,  
think he wants force and  
fire

396: 32

and proceed with caution and  
timidity

398: 22-23

Let us refer every thing to  
permanent and universal taste

408: 22-23

but distinct and remarkable  
characters are very rare

## Doublets

## "Conclusion Generale"

Brumoy 297: 20-21

Son génie est si bizarre

298: 11-13

concluons que la Comedie  
d'alors consistoit dans  
l'allegorie pour le fonds

304: 20

une imitation fine

314: 11-12

pour faire sentir l'abus  
qu'on fit du plus noble  
des spectacles

314: 30

comme si elle s'y passoit  
réellement

Johnson 414: 23-24

Its genius is so wild and  
strange

415: 12-14

we may conclude, that the  
comedy of those days consisted  
in allegory drawn out and  
continued

419: 23-24

a remote and delicate  
imitation

426: 17-18

to show how the most noble  
of publick spectacles were  
corrupted and abused

426: 33-34

as if it was a present  
and real transaction

Johnson's Translation of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive

Brumoy xlv: 16-17 ("Discours  
sur la Comedie Grecque")

Johnson 400: 36

nous venons d'en voir trois  
especes

we shall again find three sorts

l: 13-14

404: 14-15

tout différent des trois que  
je viens de dire

wholly different from the  
three I have mentioned

liii: 7-9

406: 11-12

Or la question proposée revient  
à la comparaison que je viens de  
faire entre le talent & la  
correction

The question proposed comes  
back to the comparison which  
I have been making between  
genius and corruption

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

An examination of Dr. Johnson's French translations reveals both what and how he translated. In every case there is a close relationship between his translations and his known interests, a relationship which supports the view that he took his translations seriously and considered them no less worthy of attention than his more original compositions. In his Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia and "A Dissertation on the Amazons," for instance, we see his fascination with the faraway and exotic; in his "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" his absorption with religious matters; in his translation of Crousaz's Commentaire and "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" and the "General Conclusion" from Brumoy's Le Théâtre des Grecs his life-long pre-occupation with philosophy, literary history, and criticism; and in his "Panegyric on Dr. Morin" and the Medicinal Dictionary biographies his curiosity about science and men of science. Thus in the choice of subjects which he translated from the French Johnson demonstrated a clear attitude toward his work, an attitude which reveals that he turned to the French not in a desperate search for new material but because it held out to him fresh information about areas in which he was vitally interested.

Johnson's attitude toward translation is even more clearly expressed in the way he translated from the French. From the preponderance of creative translations he did from the French as opposed to more literal ones it is possible to see that Johnson viewed the translator less as a mimic or mirror and more as a creator and commentator.

In many of his own French translations Johnson acted not only as translator but also as critic and editor. Translation for him was not only a process of transmission but of interpretation as well and he rarely regarded his French source as something so sacrosanct that it had to be translated into English intact and unchanged. Often Johnson used his French source only for the substance of his own highly original work and in doing so abandoned the more mechanical role of translator for the more original one of creative artist. In many of Johnson's French translations what we read is not a French work translated by Dr. Johnson but a Johnsonian composition which he happened to take from the French. The shift in emphasis is important, for if Johnson had been content merely to translate his French sources literally, we would have little interest in reading them today. They would be simply French works translated by Dr. Johnson and in this role he was not that much better qualified than many of his contemporaries. But Johnson's French translations are important because they are often Johnsonian, with all that term implies, and because they tell us more about a man we wish to know better.

Throughout this dissertation, then, I have emphasized those aspects of Johnson's French translations which are personal, idiosyncratic, and interesting, those aspects, in short, which reveal Johnson the individual rather than Johnson the translator. Only through a careful comparison of the French and the English is it possible to identify those elements which show how Johnson's biases, feelings, and attitudes permeate a medium which is usually thought to suppress personality and individuality; only through an analysis of the French and English is it possible to determine whether we are reading Johnson or Fontenelle, Le Clerc, and Le Grand.

In his "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" we see not only Johnson the critic, commentator, and editor at work but also the fact that the

supposedly objective medium of translation can present real problems of interpretation. E. L. McAdam, Jr., as I point out, accuses Johnson of an omission which distorts the true meaning of his source while I cite textual evidence to mitigate his charge somewhat. The important point here, it seems, is not so much the dispute but the fact that in a Johnsonian translation there is often more to deal with than simple questions of how he renders the language of the foreign text. In making an interpretation of his French source Johnson also requires us to be as sensitive to the validity of such an interpretation as McAdam is in his article. What emerges, finally, is the realization that a translation like the Father Paul biography demands as much attention as a wholly original item and repays in full any such consideration. Johnson's "Life of Father Paul Sarpi" reveals, moreover, his biases and attitudes, particularly in his handling of the twelve principles by which the supporters of Pope Paul attempted to defend his interdict of the republic of Venice and in the way he concludes his article with Sarpi's attack on the Jesuits. In working with these episodes as he does Johnson gives his biography an anti-papal tone that is scarcely present in the French original.

In his "Dissertation on the Amazons" we see another example of how Johnson uses his French source only for the substance of his article while its style, expression, and arrangement are entirely his own. Here, especially, it is apparent how freely Johnson treats the French and how close his article comes to being wholly original. Parts of it actually are. There is no mention in Guyon's text, for instance, that the followers of Illos and Scolopites drove away the cattle of various peoples and neither does the historian Johnson quotes appear in the French. Another indication of the freedom with which Johnson treats the French is in his description of the medal which depicts Hercules fighting an Amazon. Here we see that Johnson renders the scene more accurately

than does Guyon and the translation proves more reliable than the original. Such a silent correction, though minor, still is indicative of how Johnson works with his French sources more as an interpreter than simply as a sedulous translator.

The Medicinal Dictionary biographies are particularly good good examples of how Johnson transforms his French sources into compositions that are very much his own. . What we read in the Medicinal Dictionary are not really the works of Fontenelle or Le Clerc but Johnson's biographies which are clearly stamped with his personality and attitudes. For instance, the Spanish physician whom Fontenelle in his "Eloge" of Frederic Ruysch describes in quite neutral terms becomes in Johnson's rendition a man with "all the haughty and supercilious Airs of a Spaniard," an example of a Johnsonian prejudice we would miss if we failed to compare the French and the English texts. In Johnson's rendition of Fontenelle's "Eloge" of Tournefort we see him acting as interpreter as well as translator as the forests and precipices Fontenelle's botanist encounters become "gloomy" forests and "hideous" precipices in Johnson's version. Among the other biographies in the Medicinal Dictionary which are at once Johnsonian and quite original, the life of Aesculapius stands out clearly. For this item Johnson borrows only a few facts from Le Clerc and in style and presentation it is entirely his own.

Though Johnson's style of translation stands out most vividly in his more creative renditions, this study has revealed that in all his translations there is a constant pattern of variation from the French--paraphrases, additions, omissions, changes in diction and in word order. Undoubtedly the chief stylistic idiosyncrasy of Johnson's French translations, though, is the doublet, a feature so common that it almost amounts to a signature. The presence of doublets in the life of "Asclepiades" in the Medicinal Dictionary, for instance, and in the

"Preface" to Sully's Memoirs would certainly lend support to those who feel these are translated by Johnson. Also, Johnson's various translations of the French idiom, "venir de" plus an infinitive serve as a useful idiosyncrasy to keep in mind in determining whether Johnson is the author of a particular work in question. One of the useful adjuncts of this study, then, is the delineation of Johnson's style as a translator from the French. Just as his style in his English compositions is used to make attributions so too does a knowledge of his style as a translator from the French equip one with a tool in making attributions where translations from the French are involved.

Ultimately, though, what this dissertation has demonstrated is the need to qualify the term "translation" when applying it to Johnson's French renditions. Though in theory Johnson felt the translator had a duty to approximate his foreign text quite closely, in his own practice as a translator from the French he often deviated considerably from his sources. Thus I have been forced to resort to such terms as "rendition" or "recreation" to describe the works Johnson translated from the French. Edward Bloom after his analysis of Johnson's "Panegyric on Dr. Morin" states, "In an evaluation of Johnson's early biographical writings, the Morin translation may be considered as much a part of the canon as the original pieces, both for choice and treatment of subject."<sup>1</sup> After my examination of the whole of Johnson's translations from the French, I feel that many of them deserve the high estimation Bloom accords the Morin rendition. "The Life of Father Paul Sarpi," "A Dissertation on the Amazons," and the lives of Ruysch, Tournefort, and Aesculapius, for instance, are worthy of full membership in the Johnson canon, with none of the stigma the term translation so often brings to a work and with all the consideration

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Johnson in Grub Street (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p. 23.



we grant an original Johnsonian composition. These items, along with some others, reveal that even in this less creative aspect of his work Johnson's personality, abilities, and attitudes manage to emerge with force and vigor.

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## APPENDIX I

### POEMS

This dissertation has been entirely concerned with Johnson's prose translations from the French. For the sake of completeness, however, I am including three poems Johnson translates from the French. They do not add any new knowledge about how he translates the French but they do illustrate that he is just as capable of handling French verse as French prose in a pleasing and skillful manner.

#### "Translation of Verses from a French Pantomime" <sup>1</sup>

Je suis Cassandre descendu des Cieux  
Pour vous faire entendre, Mesdames et Messieurs,  
Que je suis Cassandre descendu des Cieux--

Johnson:

I AM Cassander, come down from the Sky,  
To tell each Bystander, what none can deny,  
That I am Cassander come down from the Sky.

#### "Translation of Lines by Benserade"

Theatre des Ris et des Pleurs,  
Lit on je nais et ou je meurs;  
Tu nous fais voir comment Voisins  
Sont nos Plaisirs et nos Chagrins.

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<sup>1</sup>I take these poems from The Poems of Samuel Johnson, ed. David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam (Oxford, 1941), 173, 183-184, 202-203.

Johnson:

In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,  
And born in bed, in bed we die;  
The near approach a bed may shew  
Of human bliss to human woe.

"Translation of French Verses on Skating"

Sur un mince chrystal l'hyver conduit leurs [vos] pas,  
Le précipice est sous la glace;  
Telle est de nos [vos] plaisirs la légère surface;  
Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas.

Johnson: (two renditions)

O'ER ice the rapid skaiter flies,  
With sport above and death below;  
Where mischief lurks in gay disguise,  
Thus lightly touch and quickly go.

O'er crackling ice, o'er gulphs profound,  
With nimble glide the skaiters play;  
O'er treacherous pleasure's flow'ry ground  
Thus lightly skim, and haste away.

In these poems, then, we see Johnson, as in his prose translations, using the French for the substance but not the language of his own work, and in doing so he becomes more of the creator and less a translator.

## APPENDIX II

### "PREFACE" TO SULLY'S MEMOIRS

Allen Hazen in Samuel Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications examines in some detail Johnson's connection with Charlotte Lennox's Memoirs of Maximillian de Bethune, Duke of Sully (1756). He points out that although Johnson once gave the impression to Mr. Levett that he was the author of the "Preface" to this work, he later told Boswell that he had not written it. Hazen comments, "Perhaps it is a dangerous expedient, but I am inclined to believe that Boswell was a literal-minded man, and that when Johnson asserted that he had not furnished the Preface, it never occurred to him that Johnson might very well have written the Dedication." <sup>1</sup> Hazen also cites a certain Tyers who indicated that Johnson had written the "Preface" to Mrs. Lennox's work, but he feels that he, too, might have been referring to the "Dedication." Hazen makes a convincing case for Johnson's authorship of the "Dedication" on stylistic grounds, but he dismisses the "Preface" as a possible Johnsonian piece. The fact remains, though, that rightly or wrongly the "Preface" to Sully's Memoirs has been linked to Johnson. Professor Sherbo has suggested to me an alternate explanation of Johnson's comment to Boswell that he had not written the "Preface." He says that that what Johnson might have meant to imply was that he had translated the "Preface" which, in a way, is not the same as writing it.

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<sup>1</sup>(New Haven, 1937), p. 112.



There is, after all, nothing strange about the possibility that Johnson might have had a hand in both the "Preface" and "Dedication," and in light of what I have discovered about his method of translating French, I have compared the "Preface" of the French edition of Sully's Memoirs with that of the English. Also, since Charlotte Lennox is the only other logical candidate for the authorship of this item, I have examined her method of translation not only in the Memoirs but in her translation of Pierre Brumoy's Le Théâtre des Grecs as well. Although the results of my investigation are not as conclusive as I might wish, I feel that the "Preface" to Sully's Memoirs could very well be by Johnson. There is nothing in it that could not have been translated by him and much that could have been. Though the translation of the French is quite close throughout, it is not literal. There are fairly frequent paraphrases, occasional omissions and additions of words and phrases, and minor changes in diction--all characteristics of Johnson's method of translating French. Moreover, I found three doublets, a fairly good sampling for the number of pages in the "Preface," though more would strengthen the case for Johnson's authorship. In addition, in examining the Memoirs I felt I detected a slight difference in the exactness of the translation of the text as compared with the "Preface." Such a variation, if really there, would suggest the presence of another pen and that pen might be Johnson's. Below, in order to illustrate this difference in translation, I shall quote a brief passage from the Memoires and Charlotte Lennox's rendition and then two short citations from the "Preface."

Mémoires: (1: 1-9; 2: 1-4)<sup>2</sup>

On se flattoit, à le cour de Charles IX, que les malheurs, arrivés aux Réformés sous les règnes précédens, les obligeroient de

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<sup>1</sup>I use the London, 1788 edition.

céder, enfin, aux volontés du roi, ou de sortir du Royaume.  
 La mort du prince de Condé, leur chef, la perte de deux  
 grandes batailles, l'entière dispersion de leur gens de guerre,  
 le peu d'apparence qu'on pût rassurer ce foible reste de  
 troupes, abattues par une longue suite de mauvais succès;  
 tout faisoit croire qu'ils touchoient au moment de leur ruine.

Memoirs: (l: 1-12) <sup>3</sup>

They flattered themselves at the court of Charles IX that the miseries which befel the protestants under the preceding reigns, would at last oblige them either to submit to the king's will, or to leave the kingdom. The death of the prince of Condé, their leader, the loss of two great battles, the utter dispersion of their soldiers, and the little probability of their being able to re-animate the feeble remainder of their troops, discouraged by a long train of misfortunes, all contributed to persuade them, that the moment of their ruin approached.

"Preface": (v: 1-11)

Les Mémoires de Sully ont toujours été mis au rang des meilleurs livres que nous ayons. Cette vérité, établie, depuis long-temps, par le jugement de tous nos bons critiques, & de tous les amateurs de la littérature, me dispensera d'entrer, ici, dans une discussion, inutile, pour ceux qui connoissent ces memoires.

"Preface": (l: 1-7)

As in the judgment of good critics and lovers of literature, THE MEMOIRS OF SULLY have been ranked amongst our best books, I have no need to enter here into a disquisition which will be of little use to those who are acquainted with the work.

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<sup>3</sup>I use the London, 1778 edition.

"Preface": (vi: 15-28)

Les mémoires de Sully tirent un autre prix, peut-être, encore plus grand, d'une infinité de récits plus particulieres, qui ne sont pas du ressort d'une histoire; c'est l'avantage propre aux mémoires. Ils souffrent la multiplicité des sujets, & toute la variété des incidens qu'on y veut faire entrer: Et d'ailleurs, ils se sont point assujetis au joug que la nécessité impose à l'histoire, de ne rien omettre de ces choses trop générales, dont on sent soi-même tout le dégoût, en les écrivant.

"Preface": (ii: 9-20)

The Memoirs of Sully take their value, perhaps their greatest value, from the innumerable recitals of a private kind, which scarcely belongs to the province of history; this is the particular advantage of memoirs, they admit all subjects, however numerous, and all incidents however various, which one can desire to insert; and they are not subject to the burthen imposed upon history, of continuing the narrative through dry generalities, with which even the writer finds himself disgusted.

Mrs. Lennox's translation of the opening lines of the Memoirs is almost literal and there are few variations from the French. So it is throughout her rendition of Sully's Memoirs. In the first citation from the "Preface" above it is apparent how the translator has condensed the French slightly and rephrased it considerably and in the second there are minor variations from the French, particularly in the last four lines. Note, for instance, how the French phrase, "de ces choses trop générales" becomes in the English "dry generalities," and how the translator omits the final words, "en les écrivant." Yet such examples are hardly irrefutable proof of authorship, and in a fairly literal translation like the "Preface" to the Memoirs something quite tangible is

needed to distinguish one translator from another. I must conclude, then, that while there is much evidence to point to Johnson's authorship of the "Preface, " there is not enough to say categorically that he wrote the piece.

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