SAMUEL JOHNSON AND THE ROMANCE OF CHIVALRY

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Thesis
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The atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie scattered over all his works.

(Life of Dryden, Lives, I,418)

The susceptibility of 'the young, the ignorant, and the idle' to the influence of misleading models drawn from fiction, which 'serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life', is for Johnson a serious concern, for 'the power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will.' (Rambler 4).

Although it is well known that Johnson learned to read from the story of St. George and the Dragon, and indeed advocated such reading for children, and that he remained 'immoderately fond' of romances of chivalry throughout his life, no detailed study has yet been made of what effect this reading may have had, in Johnson's own impressionable youth, on his subsequent sense of his own identity, on his writing, or on his literary judgements. Because this is only one aspect of a complex and developing personality, I have been concerned to assemble the 'atoms of probability' which, I believe, give evidence, when combined, of a very far-reaching and significant influence.

It has been necessary to begin with a biographical survey which establishes the romances and other 'romantic' literature which Johnson can be shown to have read at different times, although
this may constitute only a fraction of his romance reading. This survey chapter also introduces Don Quixote, the mock-heroic version of romance, in relation to Johnson himself; this very significant theme of delusion by false models, literary or otherwise, is developed in chapter four.

Johnson was intimately connected with many of the antiquarians, writers, and critics who led the 'mediaevalist' revival, most notably the Wartons, Collins, Percy, and Hurd, and I have considered his collaboration with them, and the way he responded to their 'raptures'.

Much of the biographical evidence is also literary, and I have drawn heavily on the Dictionary to establish not only the considerable proportion of romance-linked illustrative material, but also to explore networks of meaning and implication connecting certain key words in Johnson's vocabulary, often through the revival of buried etymological meanings. The Faerie Queene has been a very useful exemplar, since many characteristic passages are quoted in the Dictionary. I have supplied references for Dictionary quotations where it has seemed necessary to establish or elucidate a context, and these are given in square brackets. The short chapter on metaphor gives samples of Johnson's romance imagery, but further examples of this will be found throughout the thesis.

Landscape is an extremely important component of the eighteenth-century response to romance, and in chapters one and six, I have considered Johnson's own response to 'romantic' landscape, in Derbyshire, Wales, and Scotland, and the way in which it pervades his metaphor. The Scottish journey, which allows Johnson to discover the historical basis for 'the fictions of the Gothick romances',
and even to act out his own part in them, is, in some measure, a vindication of his lifelong reading of romance.

It is essential to make clear that my treatment of romance in chapter two is both partial, and subordinate to my interest in Johnson: I have been concerned only to furnish paradigms sufficient to demonstrate the elements of plot, social structure, and dramatis personae, the pace and variety of action, and the landscapes, which I believe to have influenced Johnson. For this reason I have largely ignored the amatory aspect of romance, except for the Circean enchantress, and concentrated on 'adventure', the life of chance of the knight errant. Moreover, I have paid little attention to the deeper political or religious significance of renaissance romances (notably *The Faerie Queene*) except where I have been aware of Johnson's response to these aspects. I have, whenever possible, referred to the editions, often abridged and cheaply produced, which he is known to have read. I have felt it necessary to provide this chapter because the seventeenth-century Iberian romances are not easily accessible, and also because Johnson scholars may not be entirely conversant with the romance of chivalry.

Johnson's exceptional capacity for response to literature is interesting from both the biographical and the critical points of view. *Rambler* 60 opens with the celebrated statement that 'all joy or sorrow for the happiness or calamities of others is produced by an act of the imagination...' implying a willed identification with those who feel, but Johnson's highest commendation of
literature more often implies the power of some enchanter than rational choice. 'As we accompany [our heroes] through their adventures with delight' (Rambler 4.), we are more likely to feel that our minds are 'in pleasing captivity' (Lives, I, 454). It becomes increasingly clear that throughout Johnson's critical life, it is the romance elements of literature which cast this spell, and that without 'the magical power of raising phantastick terror or wild anxiety' (ibid. II, 132) or the 'licentious variety' by which Shakespeare 'has made his plays more entertaining than those of any other author' (Yale, VII, 49), the correctest work will fail to please.

Johnson's response to the sensational, the exotic, and the supernatural is not, however, uniform, and, while his dismissive statements tend to be offered by critics as characteristic, his sometimes contradictory enthusiasms are often neglected. It is because I am anxious to redress this balance that I have laid most stress on Johnson's value for heroic demesure, wild sallies of imagination, and 'gothic' landscape, and have emphasised his sympathetic identification, not only with the heroic 'northern adventurer', but also with the deluded Quixote. The image of Johnson as a reductive opponent of the imagination dies hard. There should be no need to stress that it is Johnson's capacity for passionate identification which makes it necessary for him to warn against the 'dangerous prevalence of the imagination'. Conversely, it is high praise that, when we read Pope's admired gothic epistle, Eloisa to
Abelard's imagination ranges at full liberty' in the romantic Middle Ages, 'without straggling into scenes of fable' (Lives, III, 235), and that, in heroic romance, 'the surprises and terrors of enchantments...afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination.' (ibid. I, 179). Johnson's commentary on Shakespeare probably contains more contradictions than any of his other criticism, but I shall be noting a large number of inconsistencies between Johnson's instinctive and passionate response to every kind of experience, and his prudential reflections upon it.

The two illustrations which I have included from romances of chivalry will show the very wide range of quality in the production of these texts. Johnson owned the 1762 edition of Hudibras illustrated by Hogarth, whose treatment of this, and of the Quixote episode, exemplifies the rather coarse response of the earlier eighteenth century to the Quixote figure. The illustrations from Percy's Reliques, on the other hand, indicate that by 1765, a very reliable iconography connected the harp, the gothic ruin, and the picturesque tree with a generalised, romantic, bardic north, while the knight, the lord and lady, the palmer and the maidens, are both actors in, and auditors of, the vigorously primitive native poetic tradition which nurtured Shakespeare.

My bibliography, while including a number of works not referred to in the text, does not, of course, include the great number of articles and books which have not proved directly relevant, among them many dealing with eighteenth-century response to archi-
tecture, landscape and gardening, and those dealing with the later
development of the romance of chivalry into the gothic novel.

Much valuable work on Johnson himself, which has undoubtedly shaped
my critical perception, is unacknowledged because it does not bear
on my preoccupations in this thesis.
The Renowned History of the Seven Champions of Christendom


Showing their Valiant Exploits both by Sea and Land, their Combating with Monsters, Lions, and Dragons; their Tilts and Tournaments, in Honour of their Masters, their Overcoming Magicians and Necromancers, putting an end to their useful Enchantments; their Knighthoods, Chivalry, and Magnificent Prowess against the Enemies of Christ, Honour of Christendom, in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

To which is Added, The True Manner of their Deaths, and how they came to be Entitled, The Seven Saints of Christendom.

Illustrated with Variety of Pictures.

Licensed and Entered according to Ordinance.

Title page of The Seven Champions of Christendom.
CHAPTER I: JOHNSON'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ROMANCE OF CHIVALRY.

1. The Development of the Image

1.1 'Immoderate Fondness'.

ROMANCE.
(a) A military fable of the middle ages; a tale of wild adventures in war and love.
(b) A lie; a fiction. In common speech.

ROMANTICK.
(a) Resembling the tales of romances; wild.
(b) Improbable; false.
(c) Fanciful; full of wild scenery.

Neither Johnson's Dictionary definition of romance, nor his critical pronouncements on romantic fiction, betray his lifelong attachment to this kind of reading. Historical accident has, I believe, prevented critical recognition of the importance of this submerged influence. A variety of causes has contributed to the idea of Johnson as a brusquely reductive opponent of romance, both as a fictional kind, and in terms of all the varieties of imaginative licence associated with it.

The decorums of neoclassical literary criticism in Johnson's youth precluded, with a few notable exceptions, any serious study of popular fiction, and the romance of chivalry was firmly classed as fit only for children and the uneducated, the chapbook public.¹

The selection of writers in *The Lives of the Poets*, Johnson's major critical enterprise, still tends to be taken to represent his own literary interests. Moreover, although Johnson was very closely involved with the most prominent promoters of early romantic literature, he did not choose to make public such perhaps excessive enthusiasm as did his contemporaries, and it is in comparison with these 'rapturists' that he has been judged.

Thomas Percy, whose *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) was one of the most influential expressions of this romantic mediævalism, provides conclusive evidence for Johnson's romance reading, and indicates one way in which Johnson felt that it had affected his own life:

> When a boy he was immoderately\(^1\) fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life; so that, spending part of a summer at my parsonage-house in the country, he chose for his regular reading the old Spanish romance of Félixmarqué de Hircania in folio, which he read/through. Yet I have heard him attribute to these extravagant fictions that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing on any profession.

(*Life*, p.36)

There is, in this frequently quoted passage, the clearest evidence that Johnson's practice did not conform to his stated critical judgements. Moreover, it provides an important indication that

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Johnson can be identified with the innumerable Quixotes in his own fiction, who are misled by the reading of romances, or by other deluding information, into making the wrong choice of life.

Johnson was fifty-three when he stayed with Percy at Easton, and one purpose of his visit was to help Percy with his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*; this, as Percy tells Shenstone, is a work for which he is peculiarly fitted, by his great acquaintance with all our English Romances, of which kind of reading he is uncommonly fond.

Before I consider the ways in which this reading helped to shape Johnson's imagination, his perception of the world, his writing, and his literary judgements, it is necessary to consider the evidence for Johnson's reading of specific chivalric romances, whether English or continental, and for other kinds of literature closely related to romance. This will, clearly, be a fortuitous selection, if we are to take Percy's claim literally. Among later works will be the Italian heroic romances of Ariosto and Tasso, Sidney's *Arcadia*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English poets and dramatists. With these I shall consider the vitally important *Don Quixote*, and many of these works will be considered in greater detail in relation to specific aspects of Johnson's life and work.

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1.2 Fable: Classical or Romantic?

In discussion of Johnson's response to chivalric romance, it is evident that many elements must be treated which are common to all heroic narrative, from Homer or the Old Testament, to seventeenth century drama. Johnson was very much aware of these shared elements, and among his uncompleted projects was 'a work to show how small a quantity of real fiction there is in the world; and that the same images, with very little variation, had served all the authors who have ever written.' (Life, p.1245-6). Johnson makes the point in Rambler 121 that

experience can boast of very few additions to ancient fable. The wars of Troy and the travels of Ulysses have furnished almost all succeeding poets with incidents, characters and sentiments.

(Yale, IV ,283)

In Idler, 66, he refers specifically to the Italian heroic romances:

We see how little the united experience of mankind have been able to add to the heroic characters displayed by Homer, and how few incidents the fertile imagination of modern Italy has yet produced, which may not be found in the Iliad and the Odyssey.

(Yale, II, 206).

1. Cf. also the Dedication to Charlotte Lennox's Shakespeare Illustrated (Yale, VII, 47), and the Preface to Shakespeare (ibid, 59). Although he does not specifically compare classical fable to romance, Addison, in his comparison of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, in Spectator, 417; describes the Iliad and Metamorphoses in the language of romance journeys: 'Reading the Iliad is like travelling through a country uninhabited, where the fancy is entertained with a thousand savage prospects of vast deserts, wide uncultivated marshes, huge forests, misshapen rocks and precipices... but when we are in the metamorphoses, we are walking on enchanted ground, and see nothing but scenes of magic lying round us.' The Spectator, ed. Donald Bond (Oxford, 1965), III, 364.
The origins of romance and its relationship to classical fable was a contentious issue in the eighteenth century. Warburton, in his preface to Charles Jervas's translation of Don Quixote (1742) had written a dissertation claiming its origin with the Moors in Spain. Jervas himself, however, traced the institution of chivalry from its beginning among the northern nations, as reported by Caesar, Tacitus and later historians, including Saxo Grammaticus, and proceeded to a disapproving account of the growth of 'punctilio'. In the same work, Cervantes' biographer, Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, also assigned a northern origin to romance, discussing early English historians, like Gildas and Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Among Johnson's friends, Joseph Warton, in his Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (1756), accepts a tenth-century Provençal origin for romances, but implies an earlier eastern origin for magic and enchantment:

- These superstitions of the East are highly striking to the imagination.
- Since the time that poetry has been forced to assume a more sober, and, perhaps, a more rational, air, it scarcely ventures to enter these fairy regions.

In the second volume, published in 1762, Warton suggests that the marvellous could have descended as an obscure legacy of the ancients, which had survived the dark ages. Richard Hurd, in his Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762) makes a specific comparison between the feudal northern states and those of Homeric Greece; he rationalises giants and savages

as feudal lords and their vassals, and continues the comparison:

Now in all these respects Greek antiquity very much resembles the Gothic. For what are Homer's Laestrigons and Cyclops, but bands of lawless savages, with each of them, a Giant of enormous size at their head? And what are the Grecian Bacchus and Hercules, but Knights-errant, the exact counterparts of Sir Launcelot and Amadis de Gaule.

In the edition of 1771, Hurd added a claim that the 'solemn fancies of witchcraft and incantation' were 'Gothick' and that 'the direst superstitions took their birth in frozen regions of the north and were naturally enough conceived in the imagination of a people involved in tenfold darkness; I mean, in the thickest shades of ignorance, as well as in the gloom of their comfortless woods and forests.

Traces of this learned controversy adorn the footnotes to many of these works; Thomas Warton in his History of English Poetry, supports Hurd's account, but lays more stress on the Crusades, and the 'infinity of marvellous tales, which men returning from distant countries easily imposed on ignorant and credulous minds.'

Unlike Hurd, Warton believed that the 'exuberance of invention' of the east was unknown in 'the cold and barren conception of a western climate.'

1. Richard Hurd, Moral and Political Dialogues, with Letters on Chivalry and Romance (London, 1771), III, 229, 231. This is the revised version of the Letters.
2. Ibid, pp.250,253. The pathetic fallacy, linked as it is here to metaphor, is interesting in relation to eighteenth-century distinctions between the northern and southern imagination.
The political implications of support for the 'gothick' north, land of patriotism and liberty, opposed to a corrupt and tyrannical 'classical' south, added further fuel to this controversy, and, as we shall see, could lead Johnson to make surprising claims for northern culture. These considerations also influenced the discussion of the extent to which romance borrowed from classical fable. Joseph Warton devotes a section of his Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser to correspondences with classical epic.

There is, clearly, a danger that, in discussing the influence of romance on Johnson's work, claims may be made for the romance origins of plot structures and episodes, imagery and landscape, which are also the commonplaces of classical fictions. However, I hope it will become clear that, in the examples to be offered, it is the romance sources which predominate in Johnson's mind, whether it is by a specific romance association - as with the landscapes of Idler 49 and Adventurer 50 - or by its expression in a vocabulary which is inextricably linked to romance, both in Johnson's own usage, and by definitions and illustrations in the Dictionary. Johnson is alertly aware of romance analogies in his unusually wide range of reading: in the Observations on Macbeth (1748) he discusses the origin of belief in witchcraft and enchantments, and refers to Warburton's claim that the first accounts of enchantments were brought back from the East by Crusaders. Johnson is himself able to anticipate this by stories of enchantments from Olimpiodorus in the seventh century, and, still more convincingly, from St. Chrysostom in the fourth.

1.3 Johnson's Early Reading.

One of Johnson's earliest memories, as recounted by Mrs. Piozzi, was of learning to read from his mother and 'her old maid Catherine, in whose lap he well remembered sitting while she explained to him the story of St. George and the Dragon' (Anecdotes, p.65.). It is probable that this would have been a version of the very popular romance *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, written by Richard Johnson in 1596, abridged in 1679, and widely sold as a chap-book, or perhaps a still further condensed version, first published in 1703, which contained only the life of St. George. *The Seven Champions* will be considered in some detail as an initial paradigm in chapter two.

There is a 1700 reprint of the 1679 abridgement in the Bodleian Library, bound together with a number of other popular romances. It is poorly printed, with crude woodcuts; as in many seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century chapbook romances, the introduction and chapter headings are in roman type, the text in black-letter, and it is interesting to note that this convention of archaising should persist so long after the supersession of black-letter printing elsewhere.¹

Johnson's first schoolmistress, he told Boswell, 'could read the black letter', and had asked to borrow a black-letter Bible from his father (Life, p.32). This suggests that the ability to read this type was not universal, and makes it the more remarkable that books intended

¹Victor Neuburg finds it hard to account for both the survival and decline of black-letter; he suggests that 'the innate conservatism of the common reader had been, perhaps, its sole reason for survival long after pretty well everything else was being printed in "white letter". *Popular Literature*, p.77.
for the lowest levels of literacy should use it. Johnson, in later life told Maxwell that he 'loved...the old black letter books; they were ... rich in matter, though their style was in-elegant.' (ibid.,p.438).

The Seven Champions transforms the patron saints of the British Isles, and of Spain, Italy, and France, into knights errant. The style and content may be illustrated from the title page:

Showing their valiant exploits both by Sea and Land, their Combating with G[gres], Monsters, lions and Dragons; their Tilts and Tournaments, in Honour of their M[stresses]; their overcoming Magicians and Necromancers, putting an end to their direful Enchantments. 1.

The Seven Champions is an unwitting reduction to absurdity of the romance of chivalry. If Johnson had, indeed, learned to read from it, he would have encountered a large number of the perennial motifs of romance at the very outset of his experience of fiction. In critical treatments of romance, Johnson commonly links it with the childhood, either of individuals, or of nations, and, however dangerous the reading of romantic fiction might be to the young adult, Johnson entirely approves its effect on the imagination of the child:

The recollection of such reading as had delighted him in his infancy, made him always persist in fancying that it was the only reading which could please an infant. [Mrs. Piozzi tells us],...

'Babies do not want' (said he) to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds.' (Anecdotes, p.65)

This insistence on 'stimulating' the youthful imagination may interestingly be compared with Johnson's remarks on the early appeal of pastoral poetry: this he attributes to the familiarity of the subject-matter. We first respond to pastoral, rather than to heroic or affective narratives, because we know the original at an age when our curiosity can be little awakened by descriptions of courts which we never beheld, or representations of passion which we never felt. (Rambler 36, Yale III, 196)

In this assumption of a universal rustic childhood which progresses to the sophistication of the urban 'court', and the entanglements of the passions, Johnson is projecting personal experience into a universal model for the individual, as for the nation. It is also the pattern of many romance narratives; the hero emerges from the humble obscurity which conceals his true worth, and goes to seek his fortune at the focal court. (See Chapter II, section 4).

Johnson's criticism is often concerned with the reader's response to these two opposite kinds of literary pleasure: that of the familiar, that 'to which every bosom returns an echo' (Lives III, 441), as opposed to that which stretches the imagination; the 'perpetual delights' of Pope's poetry, as opposed to the 'sudden wonder' of Dryden's (ibid. 223).
If the appeal of the pastoral is in great part due to its association with childhood innocence and happiness, it is reasonable to assume that, for Johnson, the romance of chivalry, similarly evokes 'that secondary and adventitious gladness, which every man feels on...recollecting the occurrences, that contributed to his youthful enjoyments;' (Yale, III, 197).

The romances bound together with the Bodleian edition of The Seven Champions, and the booksellers' lists printed at the end of each, give a representative selection of the most popular English and continental romances, as well as a wide variety of other reading. These include Amadio de Gaule, Don Belianis of Greece and Bevis of Southampton, all referred to by Johnson at various times, and versions of most of them appear in Percy's Reliques. In another celebrated romance, Valentine and Orson, the printer's list, which otherwise consists exclusively of romance, has at its head, The Famous History of the Destruction of Troy. Where The Seven Champions

1. Boswell, visiting the 'printing-office' where the chapbooks he had read as a child were printed, 'saw the whole scheme with a kind of pleasing romantic feeling to find myself really where all old darlings were printed'. F.A. Pottle, ed. Boswell's London Journal 1762-1763 (1950) p.266. Quoted by Pat Rogers 'Classics and Chapbooks', Books and their Readers in 19th century England, ed. Isabel Rivers (Leicester, 1982), p.29.
had transformed hagiography into romance, this had done the same for Greek heroic legend. It is, in fact, Raoul Lefèvre's *Recueil of the Historie of Troy*, first printed in England by Caxton. The title page of this 1676 copy, which claims to be the ninth edition, ends

> with many admirable Acts of Chivalry and Martial prowess, effected by valiant Knights in the defence and love of distressed Ladies.

The wars and loves of the gods, the Hercules stories, and Homeric legend, are all treated in this way. Since this was a popular and easily accessible work, even at chapbook level, Johnson may well have read it as a child. In *Idler* 69, he praises it with surprising warmth:

> Caxton was both the translator and printer of the *Destrucion of Troye*, a book which, in that infancy of learning, was considered as the best account of the fabulous ages, and which, tho' now driven out of notice by authors of no greater use or value, still continued to be read in Caxton's English to the beginning of the present century. *(Yale, II, 215)*.

The use of the word 'fabulous' here is interesting. The *Dictionary* definitions of the word and its cognates, all imply fiction and, more specifically, falsehood, and there is no definition of them in the sense of 'fabling': if the wars of Troy are, themselves, clearly seen as 'fable', their relation to romance is evidently closer than if they are seen as 'true history'.

There are many examples of the capacity of romance to transform every kind of material. Chaucer's *Sir Orfeo* is an obvious one. Since the fourteenth century, Greek and Roman fable, saints'
lives, travellers' tales, as well as the matters of Britain and France, had provided increasingly accessible romance literature which persisted at a submerged level during the eighteenth century. Another example of this, which Johnson may have encountered in chapbook form as a boy, is The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (printed in London about 1710). The frontispiece of an eighteenth-century edition calls Mandeville 'that renowned English Knight', and promises 'rivers, castles, giants of a prodigious height and strength' and, following other monstrosities, 'dark, enchanted, wildernesses, wherein are fiery dragons, griffins, and many other wonderful beasts of prey...'. Johnson refers to this work in a note on Othello (see Chapter 5, p. 369). If read in childhood, the book may have helped to associate travel books, which Johnson greatly enjoyed, with romance; indeed, a child whose imagination had been formed by these romanticised versions of literature would later have read classical poetry, history, or travels with a predisposition to respond to their romantic elements.

As a boy, Johnson had access to the stock of his father's bookshop, which included popular fiction, as well as the more serious works that supplied the market stalls of Uttoxeter and Birmingham. In a catalogue for one of his book auctions, Michael Johnson writes of the 'small and common books...for ordinary families and young persons' with which he begins his sales, before the 'persons of address and business' are likely to arrive. They would almost certainly have included romance chapbooks.

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Boswell reports that, while Johnson was living at home after leaving school, 'he read a great deal in a desultory manner... as chance threw books in his way' (Life, p.43), and records his reading Petrarch 'with avidity' as a boy. This almost physical appetite for reading seems to have been a striking characteristic for, in 1778, Boswell records Johnson reading an 'Account of the Late Revolution in Sweden': 'he seemed to read it ravenously as if he devoured it' (ibid, p.942). The intensity of his response to what he read is illustrated by a story of his reading Shakespeare:

When he was about nine years old, having got the play of Hamlet in his hand, and reading it quietly in his father's kitchen, he kept on steadily enough, till coming to the Ghost scene, he suddenly hurried upstairs to the street door that he might see people about him. (Anecdotes, p.66).

The child-like intensity of identification in his adult response to Shakespeare, evident in much of his critical commentary, is, I believe, characteristic of his reading of narrative throughout his life.

Michael Johnson was 'a zealous high-churchman and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate House of Stuart, though he reconciled himself...to take the oaths of the prevailing power.' (Life, p.28). Many episodes in Johnson's life and, above all, the journey to Scotland, illustrate the importance of this early environment, and it is clear that he associated the 'romantic' Middle Ages, the pre-Reformation ages of faith and chivalry, with Toryism, while Whiggery represents iconoclastic reform (cf. Life, p.193). It seems probable that the Jacobite sympathies of his father's house were early associated with Johnson's romance reading.
1.4 The Gothic Adventurer

Although there is little evidence of particular romances that Johnson read during his childhood, his opportunities for reading this kind of fiction were considerable as he began to establish himself as a 'journeyman of literature' in London and, by 1742, there are indications that his sense of himself as an adventurer was well-developed. In that year, Johnson began to collaborate with William Oldys in cataloging the Harleian library, which had been bought up by Thomas Osborne, the bookseller. Johnson wrote the proposals for printing a catalogue raisonné in 1742 and, in 1744, a Preface to the Harleian Miscellany. Oldys, who chose the pamphlets to be included in the Miscellany, evidently shared Johnson's interest in northern literature. He was, Boswell tells us,

"A man of eager curiosity and indefatigable diligence, who first exerted that spirit of enquiry into the literature of the old English writers, by which the works of our great dramatrick poet have of late been so signally illustrated."

(Life, p.127).

The Harleian library made available a quantity of old English romances and ballads in manuscript, which were bought by the British Museum and became available to scholars: Thomas Warton drew on them extensively for his History of English Poetry.

Johnson apparently learned Anglo-Saxon in the course of his reading for the Dictionary; to read Early and Middle English,

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1. There was a copy of Alfred's Orosius translation in Johnson's library sale, and a life of Alfred was among his proposed works, which he spoke of to Adams 'with great warmth.' (Life, 128). A number of romantic legends gathered round Alfred himself, cf. Reliques, I, xvi-ii. Cf. also Johnson's comment on Thomas Browne's insufficient Anglo-Saxon, Works VI, 489.
therefore, would have presented him with little difficulty, and among the Harleian manuscripts, he might have read such metrical romances as The Geste of King Horn (the oldest known to Warton) Amys and Amelion, Robert of Sicily, Sir Ipomedon and La Mort Arthur. William Shaw tells how Johnson, harried by Osborne to complete his introduction, was finally driven to retaliate when Osborne 'finding him reading with great coolness' knocked him down with a book.1 The story was retold and embroidered by later biographers, and the offending volume was reported to have been a Septuagint. However, it seems possible that the number of romances included in the collection may have contributed to Johnson's delay.

The Account of the Harleian Library is of great interest, indicating unmistakably Johnson's partisanship with the gothic north at this period. Tories and dissenting Whigs were accustomed to attack Walpole's peace policy (and Walpole as manipulator of a corrupt 'southern' empire) with 'northern' patriotism and valour, and it may be something of this political animus, added to his sympathy for 'gothic' fable, which drives Johnson, that formidable classicist, into alliance with the goths and vandals:

The Northern nations have supplied this collection...with Gothick antiquities and Runick inscriptions; which, at least, have this claim to veneration, above the remains of the Roman magnificence, that they are the works of those heroes by whom the Roman empire was destroyed; and which may plead, at least in this nation, that they ought not to be neglected by those that owe to the men whose memories they preserve, their constitution, their properties, and their liberties. 2.

2. Works V, 185. But cf. the Preface to The Italian Library, where these same heroes are 'barbarians who for a time suspended all attention to literature'. Hazen, p. 16.
Even Johnson's syntax is somewhat gothic. Addison had remarked, long before Hurd, on the peculiar characteristics of the English, 'their Gloominess and Melancholy of Temper', and their 'many wild Notions and Visions', qualities which made them so much more suited to 'the Faerie way of Writing' than the Ancients (Spectator III, 572, 570). Johnson was writing his Account in 1742, long before the full tide of interest in the gothic north was marked by Gray's Scandinavian researches and 'Norse' poems and Percy's translation of Mallet's Northern Antiquities (1770), and to which Blair's Dissertation on Ossian (1764) gave further impetus.¹ Johnson's desire to visit Iceland, of which he used to talk to Bathurst and Diamond, may have been fostered by reading Scandinavian heroic narratives, which, in many ways, resembled the romance of chivalry.

In 1744, Johnson wrote 'An Essay on the Origins and Importance of Small Tracts...' for the Introduction to the Harleian Miscellany. Having considered the happy liberty of religious and political expression in England, as compared to other countries, Johnson considers the consequences of this freedom. The essay provides an example of a favourite metaphor, in which the mind is errant (though here personified as female) progressing along a path on which she encounters dangers and difficulties, and from which she strays:

¹ Johnson might once have contributed to this tide, since, as he told Percy, 'he had intended in an early part of his Life to compose a Dictionary of English or British Antiquities.' Percy Letters: Percy-Paton, ed. A.E. Falconer (New Haven, 1961), p.157.
The mind, once let loose to inquiry, and suffered to operate without restraint, necessarily deviates into peculiar opinions, and wanders in new tracks, where she is, indeed, sometimes lost in a labyrinth, from which, though she cannot return and scarce knows how to proceed, yet, sometimes, makes useful discoveries, or finds out nearer paths to knowledge.

(Works, V, 191)

The labyrinth is a characteristic hazard in Johnson's romance metaphors and it is also characteristic that the buried metaphor in 'deviate' should be restored to its full graphic force. The government of chance is also essential to romance narrative. The image of a knight errant of literature recurs throughout Johnson's writing, whether or not directly applied to himself.¹ In Rambler 94, the chivalric image is of writers in general:

He that writes may be considered as a kind of general challenger, whom every one has a right to attack; since he quits the common rank of life, steps forward beyond the lists and offers his merit to the publick judgement.

(Yale, IV, 133-4)

In the Plan of a Dictionary..., Johnson compares his daunting enterprise to Caesar's invasion of Britain, but he continues: that 'I hope, though I should not complete the conquest, I shall, at least...make it easy for some other adventurer to proceed further...'

(Works, V, 21)

Seven years later, in the Preface to the Dictionary, Johnson's view of himself as an adventurer is interestingly developed.

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¹ For other views of Johnson in this role, see eg. Shaw, p.11, Life pp.214,449, and Garrick's poem: 'Upon Johnson's Dictionary': 'And Johnson well-armed, like a hero of Yore,/Has beat forty French, and will beat forty more!' ibid., p.215.
Initially disclaiming a heroic role, he describes the lexicographer as the 'pioneer of literature, doomed...to clear obstructions from the path of learning and genius, who press forward to conquest and glory...'. (Sig.A2). This earliest project for the Dictionary aligns him with all Quixotic heroes: The Quixote is, of course, the mock-heroic obverse of the hero, and Johnson is at his most engagingly self-mocking as he describes his comprehensive project for illustrating his definitions, and its frustration:

when the time called upon me to range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alphabetical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volume would fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in English literature.

(ibid. Sig.B2)

The pattern is that of Imlac, detailing the requirements for a poet, or Don Quixote himself enumerating the accomplishments necessary to knight errantry. In each case, the expected deflation follows.

The pattern is repeated later in the Preface beginning on a still more elevated and heroic note:

When first I engaged in this work, I...pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, with the obscure recesses of northern learning which I should enter and ransack...

(ibid. Sig.B1)

He is perhaps rather a Viking than a knight errant here, but the stress on the north is significant; to many ears, 'northern learning' might have sounded paradoxical.
In the Preface to the Dictionary, two separate images, that of the literary adventurer, and that of the British champion, are developed as Johnson describes his progress. Chance (the essential condition of romance) decided, he says, his choice of examples; 'words were found by fortuitous and unguided excursions into books' (ibid, sig.B1). Among the difficulties that the errant lexicographer encounters are triads of assailants, which are common among Johnson's journey metaphors: 'sudden fits of inadvertency will surprize vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning'. (Ibid., sig.C2V). Three common dangers of romance journeys are ambush or seizure, the seductress, and unnatural obscurity like the delusive mist or cloud created by enchantment to confuse the knight. Further metaphor aligns the Quixotic lexicographer with the Quixotic Xerxes of The Vanity of Human Wishes: 'to enchain syllables and to lash the wind are equally the undertakings of pride' (ibid, sig.C2), and the mind itself, as we saw in the Harleian Miscellany introduction, is not always governable, since 'when the mind is unchained from necessity it will range after convenience.' (Ibid.).

In spite of an ironic reference to 'the votaries of the Northern Muses' the heroic enterprise of the Dictionary emerges at last unscathed; it is to preserve 'the wells of English undefiled', as a Teutonic language, uncorrupted by French or Italian

1. Johnson's definitions of 'surprise' all carry military implications, and the sense of 'take' is revived. One illustration is 'The Castle of Macduff I will surprise.' 'Eclipse' is also illustrated from Macbeth, maintaining the connection with northern wildness.
importations, and Johnson appears most clearly as a northern champion in his last proud claim: 'I have devoted this work, the labour of years, to the honour of my country.' (ibid, C2\textsuperscript{v}).

On the completion of the Dictionary, Johnson's description of himself as errant hero, in a letter to Thomas Warton, relates him to both classical and romantic heroic fable:

I now begin to see land, having wandered...
in this vast sea of words. What reception
I shall meet with on the shore, I know not;
whether the sound of bells and acclamations
of the people, which Ariosto talks of in
his last Canto, or a general murmur of dis­
like, I know not: whether I shall find upon
the coast a Calypso that will court
or a Polyphemus that will resist. But, if
Polyphemus comes, have at his eyes.
(Life, p.197)

It is interesting that Johnson compares himself, not only to that errant giant-killer, Ulysses, but also to Ariosto, writer of romance, who, having arrived at the end of Orlando Furioso, his own heroic quest, speaks of himself as having been threatened with shipwreck, or with wandering the world for ever (Canto XLVI,i). \textsuperscript{2}

\begin{enumerate}
\item In his letter to Warton, Johnson wrote 'eat'.
\item Spenser takes up the image, Faerie Queene, VI, xxii, i, but rather to stress his digressions than the heroic journey.
\end{enumerate}
2. The Periodical Essays

2.1 The Titles

The titles of *The Rambler* and *The Adventurer* again illustrate Johnson's sense of himself as a knight errant: the choice of name for the former, which, in the *Life*, seems fortuitous, may be illuminated by the *Dictionary* definition of 'errant' as 'wandering; roving; rambling. Particularly applied to an order of knights much celebrated in romances, who roved the world in search of adventures.' Charles Jervas frequently uses the word in his translation of *Don Quixote*; Sancho tells of his master's desire 'to ramble about the world in quest of what he calls adventures.' A motto from Horace preceding the collected edition of *The Rambler* also supports a reading of the name as meaning something more than a saunterer. In Elphinston's translation it reads:

Sworn to no master's arbitrary sway,
I range where occasion points the way,

but the original has far more romantic significance:
Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes. 2.

Here, then, three of the essential elements of the

romance quest are combined, fortuitousness, extremes of weather, and the vicissitudes of the night's lodgings. Moreover, Horace's hero has been a gladiator, another parallel with the knight in single combat.

Although Johnson did not originate The Adventurer, it seems probable that he may have influenced Hawkesworth in his choice of name, since, as Boswell tells us, Hawkesworth was living 'in great intimacy' with Johnson at this time. The primary definition of 'adventurer' in the Dictionary is 'he that seeks occasions of hazard, he that puts himself in the hands of chance'. Among the quotations illustrating this is, not surprisingly, one from Spenser:

He is a great adventurer, said he,
That hath his sword through hard assay forgone,
And now hath vow'd, till he avenged be
Of that despight, never to wear none. 1.

Hawkesworth's first number makes an elaborate comparison of the periodical essayist with the knight errant: 'beings who improved the opportunities of glory that were peculiar to their own times, in which giants were to be encountered, dragons destroyed, enchantments dissolved and captive princesses set at liberty' (p. 4). He then gives a pattern romance plot, and, in metaphor very reminiscent of Johnson (on whose style he avowedly modelled his own) compares with it the modern literary adventurer who 'knows he has not far

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to go before he will meet with some fortress that has been raised by sophistry, for the asylum of error, some enchanter who lies in wait to ensnare innocence, or some dragon breathing out his poison in defence of infidelity' (pp. 5-6). The whole essay is very interesting, as providing a model of how the characteristic romance plot was seen, as seizing and imitating Johnson's own romance imagery (most strikingly, his multiple hazards used as elements of syntactical triads), but particularly as it takes up Johnson's own image of the 'heroes of literature'.

2.2 The Dangers of Fiction.

*Rambler* 4 is Johnson's most extended discussion of the power of fiction upon the imagination of the young. In writing of the dangers of fictional models, he is following a long tradition of such criticism. *Don Quixote* is itself a mirror of the dangers of reading, not only chivalric romance, but also pastoral and sentimental romantic fiction, and, in the priest's inquisition on the books, discriminations are again made within these three genres.

The grounds for denunciations of romance vary considerably. In Jervas' Preface to *Don Quixote*, he gives an account of the 'rise, progress, and continuance of chivalry itself, in which he stresses the close relationship of romance to historical fact, and he condemns the effect of extravagant ideas of honour as they operated in real life: 'infinite were the mischiefs proceeding from these
false and absurd notions.' Johnson quotes from this passage under 'adroit' in the Dictionary: 'an adroit stout fellow would apparently sometimes destroy a whole family, with justice against him the whole time.' Jervas' main intention here is to show how Cervantes destroys not only romance reading, but 'this giant of false honour,' and 'all these monsters of false wit' (ibid. xxii).

Also included in this edition of Don Quixote is Gregorio Mayans y Siscar's 'Life of Cervantes', translated by Peter Ozull. Mayans provides a history of romance, and his reasons for condemning romances are, first, that 'men's Minds are rendered effeminate' by them, but that, on the other hand, 'such books tend to make Savages of them, for therein are described most monstrous performances of certain fictitious Knights, with each of them his Lady, for whom he commits a thousand mad Brinks, even to that degree as to pray to them.' (ibid. xxii).

Mayans quotes several Spanish authorities writing against romances: Luis Vives, in De Christiana Foemina, calls them 'a poisonous pleasure'; they are

stuffed with a sort of falsities, which contribute nothing to the right Judgement of things, or to the Uses of life; but only serve to tickle the Concupiscence.

Vinegas, he says, condemns them as 'disorderly and licentious... the Devil's Sermon - Books with which in Holes and Corners he weds the Minds of young Women.'(ibid.14).

2. Juan Luis Vives, De Institutione Christianae Feminae, 1524 and Alejo de Venegas, in preface to Luis Mexia, Apologo de la Ociosidad y del Trabajo, 1546.
We note, then, three principal condemnations of romance, which are often combined, but upon which different critics lay different emphasis.

Romance is dulce without being utile: it is neither morally nor practically instructive.

Romance encourages sexual licentiousness, and this is especially applicable to young or unsophisticated readers.

Romance encourages the reader to violence.

In Henry Thomas' very useful chapter on the opponents of romance, Roger Ascham appears as foremost among English critics with his frequently quoted judgement that 'the whole pleasure of romance consists in ooen manslaughter and bold baudrye', and he questions 'what toyes the dayly reading of such a booke may worke in the will of a young gentleman, or a yonge mayde that liveth welthlie and ideleie...'

This stress on idleness is also common in condemnations of romance and provides another link with Johnson's treatment of Quixotic fantasy.

Johnson's objections to dangerous fiction are not directed to romance, but, rather, to modern novels, principally, it is supposed, those of Smollett and Fielding. The questions raised are very closely connected with the Quixotic pattern of delusion induced by reading, and with the way in which romance influenced Johnson himself. New, realistic, fiction may be termed not improperly the comedy of romance, and is to be conducted nearly by the rules of comic poetry.

2. Yale,III, 19. This is close to the Preface to Joseph Andrews, which Johnson claimed never to have read.
By implication, this may seem to dignify romance itself with the status of epic or tragedy, but, though Johnson goes on to refer to 'heroic romance', he anatomises its 'machines and expedients' dismissively: the 'province' of the modern novel

is to bring about natural events by 'easy means' and it can neither employ giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites, nor knights to bring her back from captivity; it can neither bewilder its personages in deserts, nor lodge them in imaginary castles... almost all the fictions of the last age will vanish, if you deprive them of a hermit and a wood, a battle and a shipwreck.

(ibid, 19-20)

Having appropriately brought about for romance the fate of so many enchanted castles, Johnson then wonders, rather disingenuously, why 'this wild strain of imagination found reception so long, in polite and learned ages.' It may, perhaps, be necessary to distinguish Johnson's pleasure in romance, and in the literature most closely connected with it, from a mere desire for wonders. That Johnson valued historical validation of the feudal background is made abundantly clear in both his and Boswell's accounts of the Scottish journey. Heroic courage, youthful enthusiasm, vicissitude and adventure also attracted him, and the sense of chance operating upon human endeavour is insistently present in all his work.

By 1780, when the climate had become more favourable to the acknowledgement of an interest in romance, he could praise it with some warmth:

there are good reasons for reading romances; as - the fertility of invention, the beauty of style and expression, the curiosity of seeing with what kind of performances the age and country in which they were written was delighted.

(Life, p.1076).
These are, of course, objective critical criteria, which suppose a detachment from that excitement which enchains attention and seduces the imagination, to which Johnson's own literary criticism so often gives the highest praise.

In _Rambler_ 4, contrary to the long historical tradition of romance criticism, Johnson denies to romance the power to influence its youthful readers:

In the romances formerly written, every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men, that the reader was in very little danger of making any applications to himself; the virtues and crimes were equally beyond his sphere of activity, and he amused himself with heroes and with traitors, deliverers and persecutors, as with beings of another species, whose actions were regulated on motives of their own, and who had neither faults nor excellencies in common with himself. (Yale, III, 21)

This is surprising judgment, and consistent neither with Johnson's own history, nor with his usual psychological acuteness. It conflicts with judgments on romance going back at least as far as Dante, whose Paolo and Francesco fell in love through reading about Lancelot. The long history of adverse criticism which insisted that romances turned young readers' thoughts away from righteousness and towards lust and violence, and of support, which claimed that romances led men to noble deeds, assumed, without question, the great power that romance reading had over the imagination.¹

¹ I shall consider further examples of these judgments in relation to _Don Quixote_ in Chapter 4. For Dante's treatment of romance, see _Inferno_, Canto V, 124-136. Sidney wrote, in _A Defence of Poetry_, 'Truly, I have known men that even with reading _Amadis de Gaule_ (which God knoweth wanteth of a perfect poesy) have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage.' _Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney_ ed. Kathleen Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten (Oxford 1973)p.92. For romance as mirror, see below, Ch. II, Sect. 3. Both Arthur Johnston and Henry Thomas have useful chapters on the condemnations of romance and the varying grounds for it.
The essay goes on to discuss the modern novel in precisely the terms so long applied to romance and, as always, it is the unso-
phisticated who are at risk:

These books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life.  

(Yale,III.21)

It is to these categories that romance also appeals; to those who have no power to distinguish the marvellous from truth, and who correspond to nations in their infancy. In the passage from the Life, quoted above, Johnson continues:

At the time when very wild improbable tales were well received, the people were in a barbarous state, and so on the footing of children.

In Rambler 4, the danger of fiction is described in a metaphor expressive of tyrannical violence and mysterious, or magic, power.

The power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost beyond the intervention of the will...

(Yale,III,22)

Johnson praises the novelists for their close adherence to nature, but urges a censoring of material:

Many characters ought never to be drawn... Many writers, for the sake of following nature, so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages, that they are both equally conspicuous; and as we accompany them through their adventures with delight, and are led by degrees to interest ourselves in their favour, we lose the abhorrence of their faults. (my italics; ibid.)

It is noticeable that Johnson, describing the process of identification, should speak in the first person, again in a
romance metaphor so commonplace as to be almost invisible. In demanding 'why there should not be exhibited the most perfect idea of virtue' attainable by imperfect human beings, Johnson is, in fact, bringing the novel closer to romance, and still more in his requirement for the villain:

Vice, for vice is necessary to be shewn, should always disgust;...wherever it appears, it should raise hatred by the malignity of its practices, and contempt by the meanness of its stratagems. (ibid, 24)

It is hardly necessary to say that the romance reader is entirely partisan; having accepted the convention of slaughter, he can assent with entire approval to the good knight who destroys the forces of evil, and unless the reader is deceived together with the hero, he knows who is good and who is evil. Moreover, he is expected to approve the hero's ingenuous inability to suspect the malignant wiles of enchanters.

Johnson wishes the young to preserve their innocence:

That observation which is called knowledge of the world will be found much more frequently to make men cunning than good.

The young, like the heroes of fiction, must rely, not on outwitting evil men, but on simple virtue. Fiction should only 'teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence,' that is, it must not teach us to set these snares ourselves, but it must 'initiate youth by mock encounters into the art of necessary defence, and...increase prudence without impairing virtue.'

This important essay makes clear Johnson's view of the dangers of
fiction: the same emulative process that draws Quixote to imitate the heroes of chivalry may lead the young to imitate 'men splendidly wicked', for vice, 'while it is supported by either parts or spirit, it will be seldom heartily abhorred.' Much of Johnson's discussion of literature implies an enchanting power which is beyond the reach of sober reason, so that the reader is reduced to the level of barbarians, or children.

2.3 Don Quixote.

The influence of Cervantes on eighteenth-century writers, notably Pope, Fielding and Sterne, has been very fully explored, and in studies of the development of the Quixote figure from the buffoon of the early seventeenth century to the martyr of the mid-eighteenth, Johnson is often noted as the first writer to speak of him with pity. But Johnson's response is not merely sentimental. If we are to give weight to Percy's statement quoted at the opening of this chapter, Johnson identified himself with Quixote

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at the most literal, biographical level, that of the man whose life has been radically altered by the immoderate reading of romances of chivalry. But, few as are Johnson's direct references to Quixote, they also make clear an identification with him at the level of Johnson's profoundest anxieties.

In his 'Life' of Samuel Butler, Johnson describes Don Quixote as 'a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace' (Lives, I,209), and the summary which follows that claim introduces the process of Quixotic delusion.¹

Cervantes shows a man, who having, by the incessant perusal of incredible tales, subjected his understanding to his imagination, and familiarised his mind by persevering meditation to trains of incredible events and scenes of impossible existence, goes out in the pride of knighthood, to re-dress wrongs and defend virgins, to rescue captive princesses, and tumble usurpers from their thrones; attended by a squire, whose cunning, too low for the suspicion of a generous mind, enables him often to deceive his master.

(ibid, 210)

Johnson uses many elements of this pattern, alone or in combination, in the periodical essays. Some examples stress the reading of 'incredible tales'; more significant, perhaps, are many passages where the understanding is subjected to tyrannical imagination. Heroic valour and enterprise are often baffled by baseness, and the implied conflict between guileless generosity and low cunning constantly recurs, in contexts, or in language, which link it to romance.

¹ I shall use this adjective to refer to the state of delusion induced by this process, and its results, rather than in the modern sense of being imprudently disinterested.
Johnson's attitude to Don Quixote is made still clearer in his description of Cervantes' relation to his hero, in comparison with Butler's to Hudibras: the latter is given up 'to laughter and contempt', while

Cervantes had so much kindness for Don Quixote, that, however he embarrasses him with absurd distresses, he gives him so much sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem; wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchless dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

(ibid, 210)

Quixote's 'generous mind' and his 'sense and virtue' are as significant in Johnson's perception and use of the Quixote figure as his delusions.

I have noted that the essence of romance is fortuitousness: Don Quixote's goals may be empires and the hand of a princess, but he must achieve them by putting himself in the hands of Chance. As Cervantes tells us, Quixote went on his way following no other road but what his horse pleased to take, believing that therein consisted the life and spirit of adventurers.

(Jervas, 1,6) 1

In Rambler 141, Johnson maintains that such accident shapes all men's lives:

Whoever shall review his life will generally find, that the whole of his conduct has been determined by some accident of no apparent moment, or by a combination of inconsiderable circumstances, acting when his imagination was unoccupied, and his judgement unsettled.

(Yale, IV, 383-4, and cf. Rambler 184)

Eighteenth-century writers expounding theories of obsession, of partial, or deranged, perceptions of the world, found Don

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Quixote a valuable exemplar. Throughout the century he was com-
monly used as a type, either of the enthusiast, or of the man
 driven by a ruling passion, or, in Shandean terms, of the man
 riding a hobby-horse. Many of these states were arrived at
 through the reading of misleading literature, and the treatments
 may be more or less sympathetic. For example, in his
 translation of 1700, Peter Motteux had claimed that 'every man
 has some of Don Quixote in his humour, some darling Dulcinea in
 his thoughts, that sets him upon mad adventures.'

In the Tatler, no. 178, Steele provides an outline of Don
Quixote and equates the confusion engendered in Quixote's mind
by the complexity of romance style, with that produced on obses­
sive readers by the evasions of newspaper reports; and claims
that 'we have crowds among us far gone in as visible a madness
as his.' This concept of Quixote as Everyman persists and grows
throughout the century, although the spirit of the comparison may
vary. Johnson, in Rambler 2, did much to promote a sympathetic
view. This essay attacks the received wisdom which censures
those who 'suffer the imagination to riot in the fruition of some
possible good,' one of Johnson's commonest metaphors for the dan­
gerous pleasures of Quixote delusion. (The censurers, ironically,

1. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, The History of the Renown'd
Don Quixote de la Mancha, trans. from the original by several
hands and published by Peter Motteux, 4 vols. (London, 1700)I,
sig. A5.
(London, 1711) III, 313.
are themselves captivated by 'the pleasures of wantoning in common topics'. In another romance metaphor, the mind is shown as essentially errant:

The mind of man is never satisfied with the objects immediately before it, but is always breaking away from the present moment, and losing itself in schemes of future felicity. (Yale, III, 9)

Johnson grants the danger of this tendency to escape, but, most characteristically, asserts the heroic value of emulative imagination, and extends the Quixotic delusion to all his readers:

There would...be few enterprises of great labour or hazard undertaken, if we had not the power of magnifying the advantages which we persuade ourselves to expect from them. When the Knight of La Mancha gravely recounts to his companion the adventures by which he is to signalize himself in such a manner that he shall be summoned to the support of empires, solicited to accept the heiress of the Crown which he has preserved, have honours and riches to scatter about him, and an island to bestow on his worthy squire, very few readers, amidst their mirth or pity, can deny that they have admitted visions of the same kind; although they have not, perhaps, expected events equally strange, or by means equally inadequate. When we pity him, we reflect on our own disappointments; and when we laugh, our hearts inform us that he is not more ridiculous than ourselves, except that he tells what we have only thought.

( Ibid, 11.)

Comparing this to the passage from the 'Life of Butler' we see a very consistent response to Quixote over nearly thirty years. This passage refers to Part I, Chapter 1, of Don Quixote, and is particularly relevant; although Quixote continually refers to
romances, and describes individual incidents, this passage is unique in being a complete story, made up of characteristic incidents from the Peninsular romances, and the fantasy is applied to himself. It is the most sustained narrative that he is given.

Johnson goes on to apply this delusion more particularly to his own case:

Perhaps no class of the human species requires more to be cautioned against this anticipation of happiness, than those that aspire to the name of authors. (ibid, 12.)

Like Quixote, authors are motivated by a desire for fame and glory. The Rambler, however, who is speaking in his own persona in this number, claims that he is 'but lightly touched with the symptoms of the writer's malady', and, himself succumbing to the enchantments of criticism like the censurers, then proceeds to offer 'frigorifick' warnings to writers like himself at risk from Quixotic delusions.

Delusions bred by solitary musing or reading, and 'the dangerous prevalence of the imagination' so excited, is a recurring theme with Johnson, and it is often expressed in the vocabulary of knight errantry, as in Rambler 5, where 'Every man is sufficiently discontented with...his present state, to suffer his imagination to range more or less in quest of future happiness.' In romance, as in the Christian pilgrimage, future felicity is what governs the protagonist's actions: by the nature of romances, especially the very long ones, the goal is either deferred, or superseded by
a new quest. Unlike the fairy tale, which usually ends in marriage and living happily ever after, the romance cycle interlaces one adventure with another, and the pressure is continually to travel on, rather than to create a stable environment for the trivial round.

Adventurer III gives an unusually positive view of this progress:

He that labours in any great or laudable undertaking, has his fatigues first supported by hope, and afterwards rewarded by joy; he is always moving to a certain end, and when he has attained it, an end more distant invites him to a new pursuit. (ibid. II, 455)

Much of Johnson's narrative, however, whether in the periodical essays, or in Rasselas, uses the bathetic pattern of Don Quixote, rather than the optimistic pattern of romance, and we shall be considering different forms which this can take.

'Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state.' Imlac's description of the delicate balance between harmless delusion and insanity illustrates a profounder identification between Johnson and Don Quixote. The Astronomer in Rasselas, who is, like Quixote, wise and good, is also, like Quixote, mad, and Boswell makes clear that, in the depiction of this psychological state, Johnson was describing his own fears and anxieties, and what he felt had been the development of his own melancholy.

Insofar as Everyman is deluded by false expectations of the future, sometimes noble, sometimes ludicrous, Everyman is Quixote. This is a dominant theme in the periodical essays and throughout Johnson's life.

3.1 The Italian Heroic Romances: Ariosto and Tasso.

Among Johnson's proposed literary undertakings was a new edition of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in Fairfax's translation, including the full scholarly apparatus of 'notes, glossary, etc.' (*Life*, 1363). This was never begun, but, in 1763, Johnson wrote a dedication to the Queen for a new translation by his friend, John Hoole, and when, in 1781, Hoole also published his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Johnson wrote to Warren Hastings praising both translations.¹

In the long-running controversy between French and Italian critics over the status of Italian heroic romance, Tasso's epic was agreed by the French to have at least some kind of unity of action, while Ariosto was dismissed as licentious in both form and matter. This status fluctuated during the eighteenth century. Dryden's admiration had been wholehearted; he had spoken of 'Tasso, the most excellent of modern poets, and whom I reverence next to Virgil,'² and in his preface to *The Conquest of Granada*, he owns his debt to Ariosto, quoting the significant opening lines of *Orlando Furioso* (translated here by Harjington):

1. *Life*, p.119. In Hoole's Postscript to his translation of *Orlando Furioso*, he wrote: 'among those whose good wishes have always gone along with this translation, it is with particular satisfaction that I can insert the name of Dr. Samuel Johnson.' *Orlando Furioso* (London, 1783, Postscript, v.)
Of Dames, of Knights, of armes, of love's delight,
Of courtesie, of high attempts I speake.

In this discussion, 'Of Heroic Plays', he lists Homer, Virgil, Statius, Ariosto, Tasso and 'our English Spenser' as indebted for the beauties of their poems to the supernatural, 'those enthusiastic parts of poetry', and Johnson quotes from this discussion under 'heroick' in the Dictionary. The catalogue of epic writers is here, as elsewhere, a useful indication of its writer's position in the controversy. Johnson also quotes Dryden's disparagement of Ariosto's narrative digressions under 'novel' in the Dictionary.

Shaftesbury leads negative eighteenth-century criticism: in his Characteristics he proclaims it bad taste to prefer an Ariosto to a Virgil, and a romance to an Iliad, and in this, he was following Boileau and other French critics. Hughes, who edited Spenser in 1715, wrote approvingly of Ariosto's invention and imagery, in preference to Tasso's. Pope, in the Preface to his translation of the Iliad, compares marvellous incidents in Homer, Virgil, and Tasso, establishing at least an implicit parallel.

Among Johnson's friends, the later 'mediaeval revivalists', we naturally find an enthusiastic response. Joseph Warton refers to both Italians with approval, finding Ariosto an 'agreeably extravagant writer', and, quoting Voltaire, who, comparing the

Iliad and Tasso, and 'the degree of pleasure each of them excited', gives 'the entire preference to Tasso.'

As we should expect, both Thomas Warton and Richard Hurd are also generally approving of the Italians. Warton introduces his Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser with the received neoclassical disapproval of the 'bad taste' which enjoyed the Italian epics; as he warms to his subject, he includes Ariosto's plan in his commendation of the 'graces beyond the reach of art' which transport us, as readers rather than critics, in The Faerie Queene. However, although his fifth section is spent in demonstrating what Spenser borrowed from Ariosto, his final conclusion is that, while Spenser's genius abounded with beautiful and sublime representations, Ariosto's genius was essentially comic. Moreover, since Ariosto's material comes mainly from earlier romance, he cannot be praised for his invention.

Hurd, writing some twenty years later, does not question the genius of the Italians, although he also defensively dismisses romance:

The greatest geniuses of our own and foreign countries, such as Ariosto and Tasso in Italy, and Spenser and Milton in England were seduced by these barbarities of their forefathers; were even charmed by the Gothic Romances.

and later he expands even more approvingly: 'let it not surprise you...that I presumed to bring the Gierusalemme Liberata into competition with the Iliad.'

In Johnson's references to Italian romance, there is implicit recognition of their right to serious literary discussion, and no impatient dismissal of those marvellous elements which they share with the romance of chivalry. His attitude to Ariosto is, however, cautious; he would not have wished to expose his readers to Ariosto's well-known 'pravity' (Lives, I, 179), and I have found no quotations from Harington, the obvious Tudor source, in the Dictionary. However, it is suggestive that in Johnson's library sale, three editions of Orlando Furioso are catalogued besides Hoole's translation, including one, presumably Italian, of 1550, while the only edition of Tasso listed is Hoole's translation; this does not, of course, preclude there being other copies, inferior or mutilated, hidden in the many 'parcels' and 'etceteras' in this catalogue. Johnson also owned copies of Boiardo's Orlando Inamorato, and of Hoole's 1767 translation of Metastasio's Works. Under 'magical' in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes Dryden:

They beheld unveiled the magical shield of your Ariosto, which dazzled the beholders with too much brightness; they can no longer hold up their arms.

This may indicate that, for Johnson himself, the dangerous attraction of Ariosto plays the part of Ruggiero's invincible shield. His comments on Tasso are more consistently approving; no less than eighteen stanzas from Bk. VII of Godfrey of Bulloigne are included at the end of the 'Life of Waller', with the explanation that 'as Waller professed himself to have learned the

art of versification from Fairfax, it has been thought proper to subjoin a specimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's translation, will perhaps not be soon reprinted.¹

In the 'Life of Cowley', Johnson discusses Rymer's comparison of Cowley's Dauidis to Tasso's epic, and includes a couplet in Italian, which he analyses. On the whole, Johnson finds Tasso superior to Cowley, although he finds Rymer's comparison rather meaningless, since the poets share little but 'the agency of celestial and infernal spirits.'²

There is a further approving reference to Tasso in the 'Life of Dryden'. Referring to Dryden's own unwritten romantic epic, which was to have been on either King Arthur, or the Black Prince, Johnson comments, 'that this poem was never written is reasonably to be lamented', and goes on to discuss the epic machinery of heroic romance. He much approves Dryden's intention to have used the guardian angels of kingdoms and continues:

The surprises and terrors of enchantments, which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of pagan deities, afford very


². *Lives*, I,55. It seems likely that Johnson could read Italian fairly fluently since he could improvise translations of Italian verse. His *Diary* for 1776 includes a resolution 'to study particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues' (*Yale, I,261*), and he was reading the romance *Il Palmerino d'Inghilterra*, in preparation for the proposed Italian tour (*Life, 718*). Baretti certainly helped Johnson's studies, and Johnson wrote a dedication for his *Introduction to the Italian Language* (*Hazen, pp.13-14*).
striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but as Boileau observes, ...
with this incurable defect, that in a contest between heaven and hell we know which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

(Lives, I, 179.)

This is very different from the impatience with which the mature mind is supposed to reject wonders in Johnson's other comments on romance. The Enchanted Wood is the most important of the magic ordeals in Tasso's epic, and it is interesting that Johnson should stress with such approval the expansive effect of enchantments on the imagination. We always know who will prevail in romance, of course, but this does not rob it of its appeal to our curiosity, and Johnson is here using the image of imaginative participation already noted in Rambler 4.

Fairfax is quoted from time to time in the Dictionary (fourteen times in 'A' and 'B'), and often to illustrate archaic words. Although Johnson had accused Tasso of being 'very sparing of moral instruction,' many of these passages have a religious significance. For 'fortress', for example, we find:

The trump of death stands in their hearing shrill
Their weapon faith; their fortress was the grave,
while a more purely chivalric passage illustrates 'argent':

Rinaldo flings
As swift as fiery lightnings kindled new.
This argent eagle with her silver wings
In field of azure fair Erminia knew.
3.2 Spenser in The Dictionary.

In a letter acknowledging a copy of Warton's Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser, Johnson had praised him for directing 'students of our ancient authors' to

the perusal of the books which those authors had read... The reason why the authors, which are yet read, of the sixteenth century, are so little understood, is, that they are read alone... Some part of this ignorance I hope to remove by my book.

(Life, 190)

The 'book' is the Dictionary and it is indeed illustrated by a wide range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors, many of whose works are closely related to romance. 'The dialect of English poetry and prose', could, Johnson says, be properly illustrated from among these by Spenser and Sidney.

In Rambler, 191, Johnson discusses the imitation of Spenser, 'which, by the influence of some men of learning and genius, seems likely to gain upon the age.' Warton's Observations marked a stage in the revival of interest in Spenser, which had already produced two extended Spenser imitations, Shenstone's The Schoolmistress (1737-42) and Thomson's The Castle of Indolence (1748). Johnson writes slightly, though approvingly, of both in The Lives of the Poets; he finds The Schoolmistress 'surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's compositions' (Lives, III, 358), and remarks that the first canto of The Castle of Indolence 'opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination.' (ibid, 294). His attitude to Spenser imitation in Rambler, 121, had been far less approving. He had allowed that 'to imitate the fictions of Spenser can incur
no reproach, for allegory is perhaps one of the most pleasing
vehicles of instruction,' and Johnson's own allegories, of which
there are many examples in the periodical essays, owe much to
The Faerie Queene, especially Rambler 102. This is a dream
voyage of life whose landscape is very reminiscent of Book II,
canto v. Johnson's 'Gulph of Intemperance', 'Rocks of Pleasure',
and such seductive personifications as Ease, who 'spread couches
of repose', and Pleasure, who 'warbled the song of invitation,'
are close to Phaedria's Idle Lake, and the inhabitants of her
island. The seduction of the Bower of Bliss, common in some
form to most romance, provides a source for many of Johnson's
metaphors. The Vision of Theodore, Johnson's most sustained
allegory, was written in 1748 for The Preceptor, a compendium of
instruction for the young, and it also owes a good deal to Spenser,
although many of its images are common to all romance; here, too,
the echoes are mainly from Book II of The Faerie Queene.

Mrs. Piozzi tells us that Johnson expressly avoided quoting
from any author whose work might prove morally harmful, so we may,
I think, conclude that he approves the matter of his sources. The
religious, ethical, and political, meanings available at the dif­
ferent layers of Spenser's allegory are all such as Johnson would
approve. Moreover, The Faerie Queene is also thoroughly enjoy­
able on the narrative level of other romances of chivalry. There
is, however, no stylistic justification for its inclusion in the
Dictionary. In Johnson's own terms, Spenser is indefensible. 'I
have' he says:
Been cautious lest my zeal for antiquity might drive me into times too remote, and crowd my book with words now no longer understood. I have fixed Sidney's work for the boundary, beyond which I make few excursions.

(Dictionary, sig.C).

Johnson was perfectly aware that Spenser's language was full of deliberate archaisms, some of them coinages of his own, and in *Rambler* 121, although he allows that Spenser's allegory may be imitated, he specifically excludes his metre and language:

His stile was in his own time allowed to be vicious, so darkened with old words and peculiarities of phrase, and so remote from common use that Johnson boldly pronounces him "to have written no language".

And yet, to take only the letters 'A' and 'B', *The Faerie Queene* appears some hundred and forty-two times.¹ A large proportion of these quotations illustrate words no longer current in the eighteenth century, as well as many that were archaic in Spenser's own time. In these examples, Johnson only occasionally indicates that a word is obsolete, and makes no further comment on Spenser's archaisms. Spenser's practice does, of course, allow Johnson to illustrate a much greater range of words than he could otherwise have done without violating his self-imposed boundary, but there

¹In a series of articles in *N. & Q.* on 'The Sources of Johnson's Dictionary', A.D. Atkinson reports on the frequency of source occurrences in F, W, X, Y and Z. Out of 6,009 quotations in all, he found that Dryden came second only to Shakespeare, with 1,195 to 1,859, while Milton followed well behind with 719, followed by the Bible, Apocrypha and Prayer Book, with 520. Spenser comes seventh, after Addison and Bacon, with 432, followed by Pope with 426. N. & Q. 195 (Jan.1950), p.36. D.L.Clifford gives an average of 800 quotations per letter for Shakespeare, and 50C for Dryden, *Dictionary.* Johnson, p.147. See also Maxine Turnage, 'Samuel Johnson's Criticism of the Works of Edmund Spenser,' *E.L.H.* 10, (1970)557-567. She finds Johnson growing increasingly impatient with Spenser's 'licentious' coinages; she has counted 2,878 quotations from Spenser, of which 1,520 are from the *Faerie Queene.*
are also many occasions where Spenser is used to illustrate current words alongside eighteenth-century authorities.

Johnson almost never adds Spenser's name to his quotations from *The Faerie Queene*, identifying passages variously by *Fairy Queen*, *Fairy Q*, *F.Q.*, etc., sometimes giving a book reference, very occasionally a canto and stanza reference. The omission of an author's name is very unusual; even *Paradise Lost* is nearly always distinguished as 'Milton's'. In the 'vexation of expunging' too long quotations, Johnson has often spared passages of from four lines up to a stanza from Spenser. The procedure is justified in the Preface, in a metaphor which suggests the contrasts of romance landscape:

> Some passages I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches, and intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty desarts of barren philology.  

(Sig.B2v)

It seems probable that some, at least, of the Spenser quotations in the *Dictionary* were written out by Johnson, or dictated from memory. In spite of his own statement that he had relied for his examples on memory, there is little external evidence for his transcribing of passages in his own hand. His practice was to underline passages in books, and then hand them over to his amanuenses, and this is attested by the surviving copy texts. But the Spenser quotations are very often inaccurate, and it seems hard to account for this as transcriber's error.

Johnson owned the 1679 three-part edition of Spencer's Works, which he took with him to Oxford, and later asked to have sent on to him, but the quotations in the *Dictionary* correspond neither
to this, nor to the original editions of 1596 and 1609, nor to Hughes' edition of 1715, nor are the variations consistent.

Sometimes, but not always, Johnson modernises spellings to correspond with Hughes' version, although nouns in the Dictionary are never capitalised as they are in that edition. In some cases, a word is completely misremembered by Johnson. So, for 'dreary', where Spenser has 'with drearie shriekes did her also betray' (I,v,xxx), Hughes modernises to 'dreary', and 'Shrieks', keeping 'betray',¹ but Johnson gives 'with dreary shrieks did also yell', an aberration which leaves the line a foot short. In the last line of the stanza, he substitutes 'so horrid and so foul' for Spenser's 'so filthie and so fowle.' In the passage that he quotes from Spenser's 'Letter to Raleigh' to illustrate 'rusticity', he has compressed Spenser's account of the Red Cross Knight's début. Spenser says that the Red Cross Knight

> desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feaste she might not refuse: which was that he might have the atchievemeht of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen, that being granted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place.

(Spenser, p.408)

Johnson not only compresses this, he also misquotes:

> desired that he might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during the feast might happen; that being granted, he rested him on the floor unfit for a better place by his rusticity.

It is hard to escape the possibility that Johnson saw himself in the 'tall clownish young man', who becomes a knight errant in spite of his 'rusticity'. It seems, in any case, likely, from a comparison of many Dictionary quotations from the various editions, that Johnson supplied many quotations from memory. Anna Seward wrote, in a letter to Thomas Park, that all his knowledge of poetry was the result of juvenile avidity of perusal, and that 'the wealth of poetic quotation in his admirable Dictionary was supplied from the hoards of his early years.' However unreliable her evidence may sometimes be, she supports the probability that Johnson knew a major part of The Faerie Queene by heart and that it probably furnished material for his imagination, as it sometimes influenced his spelling, throughout his adult life.

3.3 Other Romantic Illustrations

However unrepresentative of late sixteenth-century poetry Spenser's language may be, there is, clearly, stylistic justification for using Sidney's *Arcadia* to illustrate Tudor prose, and, although Johnson disapproved of its mixture of pastoral and chivalric fiction, there are numerous quotations from it in the Dictionary. 'A' and 'B' are illustrated by some ninety passages. The romance content of these is not so immediately striking as that of *The Faerie Queene*, although their contexts often provide very interesting associations, but we may note, for instance, 'lance' illustrated by: 'he carried his lances, which were strong, to give a lancely blow.' An advantage of Sidney's use of *traductio* is that one quotation often illustrates two different forms of the word.

Johnson quotes rather less from the Bible than might be expected. A number of quotations from the Apocryphal books of *Maccabees* indicate their attraction as heroic narrative. For 'charge', for example, is quoted:

> And giving a charge upon their enemies like lions they slew eleven thousand footmen, and sixteen hundred horsemen, and put all the others to flight.

(2 Macc.XI,ii)

This episode, in which the hero Judas Maccabeus sallies forth from a besieged tower against an hubristic enemy and his 'four-score thousand' men, aided by an angel sent down by God, who appeared before them on horseback, clad in white clothing and shaking his armour of gold, is interestingly close to Dryden's proposal for
King Arthur. Not surprisingly, the story of the Maccabees had undergone the same romanticising process as the history of Troy; Warton describes how Josephus's Jewish History was turned into fable, which 'at length enrolled the Maccabees among the most illustrious heroes of romance,'¹ and, although there is no evidence that Johnson read any of these romance versions as a child, it is at least possible. The Harleian MSS. contain at least one metrical version.

Among seventeenth-century writers, Dryden is second only to Shakespeare in the Dictionary. Johnson's response to the heroic and romantic aspects of Dryden's work will be considered in some detail in chapter 5, and the Dictionary provides interesting support, with a wide range of quotations from the heroic plays, from the critical writing, and from the Fables. For 'heroic' Dryden is allowed to state a claim which is also made by many romances of chivalry:

An heroic poem is the greatest
which the soul of man is capable to perform:
the design is to form the mind to heroic
virtue by example. 2.

'Love and Valour' are the proper subjects for this kind of poem.

There are many quotations from Aurengzebe, The Indian Emperor and The Conquest of Granada, (which Johnson particularly enjoyed) and several from Dryden's opera King Arthur. Among Dryden's translations, the Aeneid naturally has a very large share, but a favourite


among the Fables is 'Palamon and Arcite' from Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale', in which Trojan history is transformed into romance in the same way as in the Receuil of Troy. Dryden, in his Preface to the Fables had placed it above the Iliad and Aeneid; it is hardly surprising that Johnson should challenge such hyperbolical praise, and he censures the tale for 'containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed.' But, as in his response to Spenser and to Shakespeare, conformity to literary rules is of less importance to Johnson than his relish for romantic fiction, and 'The Knight's Tale' is also quoted from Chaucer's original, for 'donjon'.

Pope is used surprisingly little in the Dictionary, especially in comparison with Dryden, and, although Dryden's oeuvre was greater, I hope to demonstrate that it was Dryden's romantic qualities which influenced Johnson's judgements here. One poem of Pope's, of which Johnson did approve, and used a great deal in the Dictionary, is Eloisa to Abelard, whose plot, sentiment, and landscape contains so much that the eighteenth century saw as 'romantic'. In 'A' and 'B', there are only eight quotations; many of them have the holy resignation of the convent for their subject, sometimes combined with romantic hyperbole.

1. There are also many quotations from the other chivalric Fables, Chaucer's 'The Flower and the Leaf', and Boccaccio's 'Theodore and Honoria'. See, e.g. 'ardent' and 'another'.
The number of quotations from Shakespeare is so great that, although there are, of course, many 'romantic' passages, it is not possible to argue a romantic bias in Johnson's selection of illustrations. Similarly, although I shall be pointing out some very significant uses of Milton, these are much outweighed by neutral quotations.

The mock-romantic is quite well represented in the Dictionary. I have found no quotations from Don Quixote, although Jervas' Preface is quoted, but there are many passages from Hudibras; Drayton's Nymphidia was also a favourite with Johnson, and he uses it at rather unnecessary length to gloss Shakespeare. There are also, of course, passages from Spenser where anti-romantic characters, like Braggadoccio, are given heroic speeches. However, it may be worth noting that for 'ridicule' Johnson quotes Temple's remark on Don Quixote:

I wish the vein of ridiculing all that is serious and good may have no worse effect upon our state, than knight errantry had on theirs. 1.

This brief and partial survey of the Dictionary has indicated some of the wide range of romance and romance-linked material with which Johnson was familiar, and this will be developed in the context of individual writers. In the Preface to the Dictionary, Johnson stresses the fortuitousness of his selection of illustrations, and admits that he 'trusted more to memory

than...memory can contain '(sig. CI), and his whole discussion of his choice of illustration indicates the appetite and enjoyment which he brought to this great undertaking.

I shall be using the Dictionary throughout this study in a number of ways: I am using The Faerie Queene as one romance paradigm, and it has been particularly useful when I could use passages which are quoted by Johnson for obviously romantic words. Rather more significant are Spenser passages suggested to Johnson by words with no such connections, demonstrating, as I believe they do, how persistently romance connotations are present to his mind. This has also been true of a wide variety of sources, including less obviously romantic works, like Paradise Lost. Since Johnson's avowed intention had been 'to include all that was pleasing or useful in English literature', I have felt justified in putting toward passages that he has quoted as, in some measure, supporting his own opinions.

Semantically, the Dictionary has been invaluable in establishing the validity of my contention that a significant number of Johnson's metaphors refer to romance rather than to other narrative models, and in alerting the reader to significant dead metaphors which either definitions or illustrations revive.
4. The Antiquarian Milieu.

4.1 The Wartons and Collins.

Sympathetic literary response to popular fiction, romance and ballad, to the supernatural, the irrational, and the imaginatively exorbitant, continued to grow during the eighteenth century. Johnson was closely connected with many of those who were most instrumental in this change, the foremost among whom were the Warton brothers. During the time when Johnson was compiling the Dictionary, he was in close touch with them, especially Thomas, whose Observations Upon the Faerie Queene of Spenser had marked a significant development by referring to popular romances, as part of a scholarly analysis of sources and influences. While Spenser's debt to Ariosto could previously have been acknowledged, with reservations, as being critically respectable, the Morte Darthur and Bevis of Southampton would scarcely have been expected to enhance literary reputations. Warton quotes at length from The Art of English Poesie, where Puttenham lists romances commonly sung to the harp, including Chaucer's Sir Topas, Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick, and the ballad Adam Bell and Clym of the Clough. Warton further enlarges the Tudor and Jacobean context by references to the Entertainment at Elvetham, and to Ben Jonson's chivalric masque, Prince Henrie's Barriers. It is Warton's attention to the contemporary context to which Johnson refers with such approval in his letter, and which he himself had so notably provided in his Miscellaneous Observations on Macbeth. Johnson
had met the Warton Brothers in 1753 through *The Adventurer*, to which he asked them to contribute, but the rapidly developing warmth of their relationship is illustrated by a letter of March 8th 1754, when he writes to Thomas:

> I enter my name among those that love, and that love you more and more in proportion as by writing more you are more known. *(Letters, I, 53-54).*

Warton gives a very attractive account of Johnson's first return to Oxford, which was made in order to visit the libraries. During this visit, Warton and Johnson several times visited Francis Wise, the Radcliffe Librarian, at Ellsfield:

> Here was an excellent library; particularly a valuable collection of books in Northern literature, in which Johnson was often very busy. *(Life, p.192)*

Wise, Warton tells us, was 'eminently skilled in... Anglo-Saxon Antiquities' *(ibid., p.193)*, and was one of the growing body of scholars whose work on the hitherto 'barbarous' literature and culture of the north furnished material for the romantic revivalists. On his return to London, Johnson sent Wise a Finnish dictionary, and, in a later letter, referred to his 'nest of British and Saxon antiquities' *(ibid., p.208)*. A further indication of the tone of the Oxford visit is Johnson's response to the ruins of the abbeys of Oseney and Rewley, visited, appropriately, on evening walks. Warton recounted that

> After at least half an hour's silence, Johnson said, "I viewed them with indignation"! We had then a long conversation on Gothick buildings; and in
talking of the form of old halls, he said "In these halls, the fire place was anciently always in the middle of the room, till the Whigs removed it on one side." 1.

Johnson would have been encouraged in his enthusiasm by Warton, who became a leading authority on gothic architecture, and was already writing of it in the style of *Il Penseroso* in *The Pleasures of Melancholy*, at the age of nineteen. The fervour of Johnson's emotional response to mediaeval buildings, whether ruined abbeys and cathedrals or feudal castles, and his intense antipathy to reforming iconoclasm, is seen most strikingly on his Scottish journey. It has little to do with aesthetics and, although its branches may be orthodox Anglican doctrine and Jacobite sympathies, its roots are firmly in romance.

In 1754, Johnson was writing warmly to both Warton brothers and expressing concern for their mutual friend William Collins, who had been at Winchester and Oriel with Joseph Warton, and whom Johnson had known well in 1745 in London. Joseph had written to tell Johnson of Collins' mental disturbance, and he wrote back 'Poor dear Collins...I have often been near his state, and therefore have it in great commiseration' (*Letters*, I, 60).

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On Collins's death, in 1763, Johnson wrote a 'Character' of him, which was later inserted in *The Lives*. This shows further affinities with Johnson's own life: both follow the Quixote pattern of devotion to romance reading and subsequent (if not consequent) mental disturbance. Like that of the Wartons, Collins's poetry cultivated the imaginative wildness of romance and enchantment, expressed in irregular verse forms, and he had planned to publish a joint volume of odes with Joseph Warton.

Although Collins does not write about knight errantry, his poetry can provide a comprehensive selection of those elements which the eighteenth century associated with romance, mediated through Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Intense emotions are evoked, notably in the odes to Fear and to Pity: subject matter includes phantoms, giants and fairies, violent action, romantic landscapes, storms, and hermits in holy retreat. The north is expressly celebrated in the ode on the death of Thomson, and, most interestingly, in the 'Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands'. In a fragment on 'A Friend about to visit Italy', Collins refers to Italian heroic romances and their influence on the English poets Fairfax, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Like the Wartons, Collins cultivated Spenserian language.¹

Johnson was, then, intimate with three of the writers most instrumental in the re-establishment of 'romantic' early fiction as the mode and matter of poetry. Unquestionably, Johnson disapproved of romanticising 'raptures', and, as the cultivation of sensibility grew to a modish cult, he was irritated by the 'cant', of 'enthusiasm'. He described Thomas Warton to Fanny Burney as 'a rapturist', and 'once characterised an ingenious writer of his acquaintance (Warton) as "an enthusiast by rule"' (Life, p.1089). His well-known parody of Warton's Spenserian archaism is an amusingly accurate model of countless stanzas of minor poetry (Life, 1089). However, Boswell recounted that 'such was his sensibility, and so much was he affected by pathetick poetry, that, when he was reading Dr. Beattie's Hermit in my presence, it brought tears into his eyes' (Life, p.1210). The lines of Johnson's parody would pass almost un-noticed in this poem.

It seems at least possible that Johnson, living in frequent contact with Collins, the Wartons and, later, Percy, Farmer, Hurd, Beattie and many other men engaged in serious research into earlier non-classical literature, or in the creation of a 'gothic sublime' poetry, should have reacted with characteristic perversity to demands for excessive and prescribed responses to early literature, or to the landscape, or the emotional register, that came to be attached to it.  

2. Jackson Bate explores this psychological mechanism very interestingly in his Samuel Johnson (London, 1975-7).
4.2 The Reliques.

In 1756, Johnson wrote his review on Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*. He again approves the procedure of producing contemporary documents to give historical verification for romantic fiction, in reference to *Eloisa to Abelard*. On the whole, he approves of Warton's critical judgements and procedures, and only rebels against the enthusiastic excess which can abandon a whole structure of literary value, and thus be led to the absurdity of questioning Pope's right to be called a poet.

In 1756, Johnson also issued the *Proposals* for his edition of Shakespeare, and from then until 1765, he was engaged on this great task. He was also closely involved at this time with another very significant literary undertaking, the publication of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. In 1751, Percy had found a folio manuscript, a seventeenth-century transcript of a very large number of romances and ballads.

In a letter from Percy to Shenstone in November 1751, Percy writes: 'Mr. Johnson has seen my MS and has a desire to have it printed.' (*Percy-Shenstone Letters*, p.4). Percy wrote an affidavit on the cover of the folio in 1769, which includes the information that, after having found it,

> It was afterwards sent, most unfortunately, to an ignorant bookbinder, who pared the margin, when I put it into boards in order to lend it to Dr. Johnson.'

Another letter to Shenstone, of January 1758, makes clear the extent of Johnson's responsibility for the publication of the
Reliques:

If I regarded my own private satisfaction, I should by no means be eager to render my Collection cheap by publication. It was the importunity of my friend Mr. Johnson that extorted a promise of this kind from me. Most indeed, he made me very tempting offers; for he promised to assist me in selecting the most valuable pieces, and in revising the text of those he selected. Nay, further, if I would leave a blank page between every two that I transcribed, he would furnish it out with proper Notes ... After all I shall be in no hurry to enter upon my task; it was agreed that I first was to receive a summons from Mr. Johnson and he has his hands full at present.

Percy-Shenstone pp. 9-10)

It is significant that Johnson, who was already engaged on his edition of Shakespeare, should have been so insistent that Percy publish his collection of ballads and romances. Rambler 177, written some thirteen years earlier, is a sustained satire on virtuosi and mediaevalists, among them Hirsutus, a collector of black-letter books, and Cantilenus, who turned all his thoughts upon old ballads, for he considered them as the genuine records of the national taste. He offered to show me a copy of The Children in the Wood, which he firmly believed to be of the first edition, and by the help of which, the text might be freed from several corruptions; if this age of barbarity had any claim to such favours from him.

(Yale, V, 171)

In his 'Life of Addison', written some fifteen years after the publication of the Reliques, Johnson writes of Addison's 'serious display of the beauties of Chevy Chase', but he finds in the ballad 'a chill and lifeless imbecillity,' and insists that 'the story cannot be told in a manner that shall make less impression
on the mind (perhaps implying that this heroic story could have impressed the mind had it been told in some more dramatic way).

Addison had been one pioneer in the ballad revival, writing enthusiastically of 'Chevy Chase' in Spectators 70 and 74, and supporting his claims for the universality of its sentiments by parallels from Homer and Virgil, which also, he ingenuously admits, lend respectability to his own 'singular' judgement.

As so often with Johnson's criticism of 'romantic' and popular fiction, it is the dismissive comments which become accepted and quoted as his unwavering opinion, while the paradoxes of his practice are ignored.

In a letter to Shenstone of 22nd May, 1761, Percy describes in detail a plan for the Reliques as agreed in 'a council of war with Mr. Johnson.' (Percy-Shenstone, p.96). Johnson and Anna Williams spent two months with Percy at Easton Maudit in the summer of 1764, during which time the proofs of his Shakespeare were being sent to Johnson. In the 1765 edition of the Reliques, the second book of the first volume is of 'Ballads that illustrate Shakespeare', of which Johnson uses a number in his notes; indeed, all the ballads referred to in his edition of Shakespeare are to be found in the Reliques. It was on this visit that Johnson read Felixmarte de Yrcania: Percy had a considerable collection of Spanish romances, a number of which he later sold to Lewis Dutens, for use in his new edition of Don Quixote. ¹ It is

¹. John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth century (London, 1812) VIII,188.
attractive to speculate on the conversation during this visit between the two scholars, steeped in heroic and amorous ballads and romances of chivalry.

Johnson wrote the dedication of the Reliques to the Countess of Northumberland, describing the ballads, in the deprecating tone adopted by so many of the early apologists for popular fiction, as 'the barbarous productions of unpolished ages', and 'the rude songs of ancient minstrels'. They are offered (as Addison had offered 'Chevy Chase') 'not as labours of art, but as effusions of Nature'; and it should be remembered that both Shakespeare and Homer were frequently praised as poets to whom Nature herself supplied material.

A letter from Percy to Farmer in November 1764 shows how completely Percy relied on Johnson's advice: 'I have made no alteration in it [the dedication] because I shall reserve your remarks and those of many other friends until I consult my oracle, Johnson.' Johnson had, by then, been in more or less close collaboration with Percy on this project for at least seven years.

Percy printed a very mixed selection of verse, some taken from the Folio MSS, but many added from a variety of sources, including the Pepys Collection, manuscripts in the British Museum and the Bodleian, and some extracted from earlier collections like Alan Ramsay's Evergreen. Many are ballads on semi-historical events, public or private, which may be heroic or satirical.

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There are ballads of disastrous or successful love, pastorals, tales of abandoned or astute maidens. Anti-romance is represented by 'The Tournament of Tottenham', and, besides the older poems, there are ballads with Arthurian subjects, stories of Guy of Warwick, a version of Valentine and Orson by Percy himself, a number of versions of the St. George story, including eighteenth-century burlesques and anti-romance like 'The Dragon of Wantley', and there is also 'The Children of the Wood', to which Johnson had referred in *Rambler*, 121. The three volumes include a remarkable mixture of styles and dates, and the organization appears to have little logic. It is easy to see why Johnson should have parodied the sometimes misguided effusions of the revivalists. It is a paradox of the kind that one grows to expect in Johnson's responses to romance and to popular fictions of all kinds, that, although he dismissed the excesses of 'rapturists', he should have been the unmistakable driving force behind Percy's decision to publish, and have spent so much time engaged with Percy in editorial decisions, and this at a time when he was preoccupied with his own great task of editing Shakespeare.
5. Literary Criticism and Romance

5.1 Shakespeare.

Shakespeare had long been identified by English critics (with passionate approval) with the northern, the gothic, the irrationally splendid, the British; all this in clear distinction to the classical latin south, characterised by rationality, critical systematising, and political and religious repression. Already, in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Dryden had celebrated Shakespeare's wild and universal genius, and Pope, in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare, specifically likens him to 'an ancient majestical pile of gothick architecture, compared with a neat modern building.'¹ I shall argue that Johnson himself responds to the romance elements in Shakespeare as much as to his re-creation of the world of men.

Johnson had praised Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen*... for providing a literary context for Spenser and his contemporaries by directing readers 'to the perusal of the books which those authors had read.' (Life, p.190). These works were now to be judged historically, considering them, not as an example of some notional timeless continuum of literature, whose absolute value could be judged against the equally contextless poetics of Aristotle or Horace, but as a product of a particular social and mental conjunction. Clearly, this historical relativism is not easy to

combine with an appeal to universal human nature, or with a demand for mimetic accounts of human experience to which, if it is correctly portrayed, 'every bosom returns an echo'. This difficulty is a further fruitful source of paradox as Johnson praises Shakespeare both for unromantic realism, and for the 'licentious variety' of incidents, place and character which distinguish his plays, not only from the classical theatre, but also from the everyday life of real men and women.

Johnson was particularly fitted to undertake the glossarial work, since he had already used Shakespeare and his contemporaries so extensively in the *Dictionary*, and this reading had also supplied considerable knowledge of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century background.

However, Johnson's references to romance in the Preface are, as we should expect, thoroughly dismissive: Shakespeare is distinguished from the writers of barbarous romances [who] invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf, since his heroes are men, unlike those of romance who have hyperbolical or aggravated characters...fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity...his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion...Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful.

(Yale, VII, 64-5)

It is significant that here, as in much of his Shakespeare criticism, Johnson speaks of readers, not of a theatre audience; although there are passages where he discusses the suspension of disbelief...
in the theatre, most of his comments on imaginative participation in Shakespeare speak of 'perusing', rather than 'watching'.

In this passage, Shakespeare is not censured for importing the remote and the wonderful. Instead, Johnson praises his capacity for transplanting them into a mode in which the reader can penetrate with a conviction of truth into the romantically remote or violent, the passionate or magical circumstances of Shakespeare's fiction.

Johnson concludes this praise of Shakespeare with two characteristic and significant images:

He who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious extasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

(ibid.,65)

Here, the reader's imagination is itself seen as a wanderer, 'mazed' by 'phantoms'; that is, a knight errant, led from his path into labyrinths by the delusive creations of an enchanter, or, on a slightly more literal level, he is a Don Quixote, his wits turned by reading romance. This is one of Johnson's commonest metaphors for the mind of either reader or writer. Perhaps more significant still, the hermit and confessor are themselves romance figures, so that Shakespeare's realism is seen even to instruct romance. Instead of the two-dimensional heroes and heroines of romance, whose greatest attraction lies in the excitement, pace and variety of the events they are involved in,
Shakespeare gives us similar varieties of plot, but, since the protagonists are real men and women, our imaginative participation is founded on 'the stability of truth'.

5.2 Romance references.

Here, I am mainly concerned to note the sources which Johnson uses to illustrate romance in Shakespeare, and to consider his tone when handling 'childish' or 'barbarous' romances. The notes deal with Tudor and Stuart experience from several viewpoints. Romances of chivalry are cited for a number of purposes; primarily to illustrate the imaginative condition of Shakespeare's audience and readers, whose judgement had been corrupted by 'luscious falsehood' to reject sober truth as uninteresting. Johnson also explains Shakespeare's own references to romance and, in one case only, that of The Merchant of Venice, a fourteenth-century romance is paraphrased at length, ostensibly to illustrate Shakespeare's use of his source.

Secondly, there are weightier works which Johnson uses to establish the context of Tudor society, among them Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (from which Johnson frequently quotes in the Dictionary), James I's Daemonologie, Samuel Harsnett and Reginald Scott on witchcraft and even St. Chrysostome, all cited to illustrate that not only the credulous vulgar, but the highest and the most scholarly of men accepted, without question, the existence of supernatural beings and of supernatural powers.
To this more or less serious and respectable evidence, which hardly supports the barbarousness of the Shakespearean context, Johnson adds such contemporary poets as Drayton, whose own use of native romance material in *Nimphidia* attracted Johnson, and whose work had the status of literature.

A third requirement, for an editor, was to explain words and phrases relating to chivalry, or to more general feudal customs, and here, although Johnson often contents himself with explanation without authority, he also refers to a number of early chronicles.

Many of these authorities had been cited in the *Observations on Macbeth* in 1745, where Johnson's tone varies interestingly from defensive mockery of the 'romance' elements in the play, to evident sympathetic involvement.

There are occasions in his Shakespeare criticism where Johnson seems to introduce romance analogues gratuitously. On the phrase 'the common enemy of man', for instance, Johnson says deprecatingly that

> it is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source, and therefore though the term "enemy of man" applied to the devil, is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of *The Destruction of Troy*, a book which he is known to have read.

Johnson continues:

> That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of Milton evidently copied from a book of no greater authority, in describing the gates of hell, Book 2, v, 879, he says,
On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
Th'infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.

In the History of Don Bellianis when one
of the knights approaches, as I remember, the
castle of Brandezar, the gates are said to
open, "grating harsh thunder upon their
brasen hinges".

(Yale VIII 776-7).

In fact, as Percy pointed out, the reference to Don Bellianis was
inaccurate. J.P. Hardy located the passage that Johnson remembered
in John Shirley's 1683 translation, and pointed out that it had
been borrowed from Milton.1 It is interesting that Johnson thought
he knew Don Bellianis well enough to quote it from memory. It also
indicates a connection in Johnson's mind between Milton and ro­
mance, which, though not stated in the Lives, is demonstrated by
a number of passages with romantic associations in the Dictionary,
from Paradise Lost and Comus.2

1. J.P. Hardy 'Dr. Johnson and Don Bellianis', R.E.S. XVII (1966), 297-9
2. Many eighteenth-century critics point out Milton's debt to ro­
mance. The companion poems and Comus offer clear evidence of it,
supported by Milton's own account, in the Apology for Smectymnuus.
of the influence of 'those lofty Fables and Romances, which re­
count in solemn Cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our vic­
possessed him, to make Michael fight with a two-handed sword';
for 'two-handed'. Not surprisingly, Joseph Warton, in Adventurer
101, and in his Essay on...Pope, Thomas Warton, in his Observations
on the Faerie Queene and Hurd in Letters on Chivalry and Romance,
all stress Milton's attraction to, and use of, romance. Although
Johnson makes no comment on this attraction, see Dictionary illustra­
tions for 'giant' 'tournament' 'tyrant', 'joust', 'romance', 'prowest'.
'Giants of mightie bone and bold emprise' was a favourite quotation
and, for 'fable' he quotes 'Ladies of the Hesperides that seemed/
faire and of old of fabled since;/fairy damsels met in
forest wide/By Knights.' (P.R. II, 557-60).
Among references to specific romances, three, in the Preface, establish the popular context, in the expected dismissive terms:

The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. The Death of Arthur was the favourite volume. (ibid., VII, 82).

Johnson's only other reference to the Morte Darthur elucidates Shallow's speech 'When I lay at Clement's Inn, I was then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show.' (III, iii, 271.). Here, Johnson is able to supply the reference which Theobald had failed to find:

The story of Sir Dagonet is to be found in La Morte d'Arthure, an old romance much celebrated in our author's time, or a little before it. "When papistry," says Ascham in his Schoolmaster "as a standing pool overflowed all England, few books were read in our tonguesaving certain books of chivalry, as they said, for pastime and pleasure; which books, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle monks. As one, for example, La Mort d'Arthure." In this romance Sir Dagonet is King Arthur's fool. Shakespeare would not have shown his Justice capable of representing any higher character.

In spite of Ascham's scorn, Johnson finds it possible to imply that a more heroic character might still have performed a part in this pageant, and praises Shakespeare for observing

1. Ibid. 506-7. In 1761, Johnson had edited Ascham's Scholemaster and written a life of Ascham for it.
the decorum due to it. Ascham's connection of romance with papistry and with monks, would have helped to strengthen the sympathetic link between romance and a romantic mediaeval world of faith, and to connect 'Whiggish' reformers with the anti-romance party. Malory was surprisingly unpopular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was only reprinted once, in 1634, between 1585 and 1817.¹

Two of the most popular romances are also mentioned in the Preface:

> The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste for the insipidity of truth. A play which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of Palmerin and Guy of Warwick, have made little impression. (ibid., 82)

Palmerin of England was, I believe, quite influential in supplying Johnson with metaphors, and contains a number of significant images not found, for example, in Spenser. Guy of Warwick's story was known at every level of fiction, and Johnson may well have read it in a chapbook as a child.² A note in The Two Gentlemen of Verona on the line 'ay, but her forehead's low, and mine is high'

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1. See Enchanted Ground, p.29
2. In a copy of The Black Prince bound up with The Seven Champions, The Famous and Renown'd History of Guy, Earl of Warwick, is offered to 'country chapmen', with 'all sorts of histories, books, and ballads.' John Shirley published an abridged version in 1681.
locates one version which Johnson knew. He comments

A high forehead was in our author's time a feature accounted eminently beautiful so, in the History of Guy of Warwick, Felice, his lady, is said to have "the same high forehead as Venus".

Arthur Sherbo has traced this to a version of 1609 by Samuel Rowlands (ibid., 172, n.). In a note on King John, I.i.225, Johnson glosses 'Colbrand the giant', by a note which suggests a more respectable source:

Colbrand was a Danish giant, whom Guy of Warwick discomfited in the presence of King Athelstan,
The combat is very pompously described by Drayton in his Polyolbion.

(bid., 409)

but Drayton's account is only a summary of a story which he assumes that his readers already know. A similar note on Henry VIII (V, iv. 20) makes clear Guy's popularity: 'I am not Sampson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colebrand.' Here, Johnson notes:

Of Guy of Warwick everyone has heard Colebrand was the Danish giant Guy subdued at Winchester. Their combat is very elaborately described by Drayton in his Polyolbion.

(ibid., VIII, 655)

The only reference there is

O most renowned Knight,
That Colbrond overcam' st: at whose amazing fall
The Danes removed their campe from Winchester's sieg'd wall.

Drayton's lady, less romantically than Rowlands's, is called Phyllis.

For 2 Henry VI Johnson refers to Bevis of Southampton, another English romance, whose popularity was only equalled by that of Guy of Warwick. Here, too, he is only glossing a reference in the play, 'as Bevis of Southampton fell upon Ascapart.' Johnson does not find it necessary to explain Bevis, but tells us that 'Ascapart - the giant of the story - a name familiar to our ancestors, is mentioned by Dr. Donne...(Yale, VIII, 585), and gives a quotation from the Satires. This seems again to be lending respectability to romance.

Cymbeline, whose plot details and structure are almost pure romance, reminded Johnson of Don Belianis. Posthumus, like Amadis and Palmerin, is a parentless child brought up at the royal court. Although praised and loved by all, he is exiled when he marries the king's daughter. In the lines which Johnson explains, we are told that Posthumus is 'To the more mature, a glass that feared them.' Johnson dismissed the emendation 'featured' for 'feared', and explains that

'mirror' was a favourite word in [Shakespeare's] age for an 'example' or a 'pattern', by noting which the manners were to be formed, as dress is regulated by looking in a glass. When Don Belianis is stiled the mirror of knighthood, the idea given is not that of a glass in which every knight may behold his own resemblance, but an example to be viewed by knights...that they may know, not what they are, but what they ought to be.

( Ibid., 875)

The mirror function of romances of chivalry is constantly stressed by their seventeenth-century translators, and one of the best known Spanish romances was translated in England as The Mirror of Knighthood.
For 'knight' in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes Hudibras:

A knight he was whose very sight would
Entitle him mirror of knighthood.

In a later note on Cymbeline, on Belarius' speech

...Gates of monarchs
Are arch'd so high, that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbants on,

Johnson comments that 'the idea of a 'giant' was, among the readers of romances, who were almost all the readers of those times, always confounded with that of a Saracen' (ibid. VIII, 890). This is rather a surprising generalisation; Saracens certainly play the part of adversaries in many romances, but there are few giants among them; conversely, there are innumerable giants who are not Saracens.

Throughout the plays, Johnson provides notes which show a considerable knowledge of the details of mediaeval life. In The Winter's Tale, for example, in a long note on 'men of hair', Johnson explains that these are 'hairy men', or 'satyrs' and tells a story of a dance of satyrs in the French Court in the Middle Ages, which, according to Steevens, he had read in Froissart (ibid., 304 and note). Johnson knew and enjoyed a number of mediaeval and later chronicles. His library sale included a copy of Stow's Annals (which he quotes on p. 268) and his London. Johnson also owned Camden's Remains (quoted five times in this edition) and his Britannia, a 1742 reprint of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, an edition of Grafton's Chronicle of 1580, and Selden's Titles of Honour. In the Shakespeare edition, Johnson refers to Geoffrey of Monmouth, and quotes Pulydore Virgil on Richard III's insomnia;
he also, of course, refers to Hall and Holinshed. No doubt these histories gave two kinds of pleasure: they described events and customs which were romantic by virtue of belonging to feudal and earlier British history, and which were often very similar to romance story, but they also provided a structure of fact that gave historical credibility to romance (as the Scottish journey did), and Johnson attached great importance to this. The chronicles, like Shakespeare's plays, 'approximate the remote and familiarise the wonderful.' Froissart would have been a particularly fruitful source of romantic anecdote and chivalric manners.

Many of Johnson's notes refer to jousting, tilting and armour; here, for instance, is a note from Richard II:

...Aumerle has challenged Bagot with some hesitation, as not being his equal, according and therefore one whom, to the rules of chivalry, he was not obliged to fight,

and, on the next speech, he comments on the introduction of a rapier:

the edge of a sword had served Shakespeare's purpose as well...
and he had then escaped the impropriety of giving the English nobles a weapon which was not seen in England till two centuries afterwards. (Yale, VII, 445).

In Henry IV, there are further authoritative notes which indicate how vividly Johnson had envisaged the wearing of armour:

The reason why his 'cuisses' are so particularly mentioned, I conceive to be, that his horsemanship is here praised, and the 'cuisses' are that part of armour which most hinders a horseman's activity.

1. Ibid., 482. Cf. also Rambler 78, in which it appears that Johnson had indeed tried on a suit of armour. Yale IV, 45.
In *Hamlet*, Johnson explains 'the sea, o'erpeering of his list', by telling us that 'the lists are barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass' (ibid. 997).

The first Act of *Henry VIII*, where Norfolk describes that triumph of chivalric nostalgia, the field of the Cloth of Gold, makes very clear how the author of the prologue sees its relation to English romance:

...when those suns,  
for so they phrase them, by their heralds challeng'd  
The noble spirits to arms, they did perform  
Beyond thought's compass: that former fabulous story  
Being now seen possible enough, got credit  
That Bevis was believed.  

(I, i, 33-8)

Many of these notes illuminating the social history of chivalry, the proprieties of jousting, tilting, armour, and the observance of chivalric decorum, are given without documentary support. The great variety of mediaeval, Tudor and Stuart material quoted, cited, or owned by Johnson provide evidence of great antiquarian and romantic interest in 'peculiar forms of life' in the past.
6. The Quest for actuality

6.1 'Striking scenes and terrific grandeur': some romance associations of landscape.

The suggestive association between romance and certain kinds of landscape was already established in the late seventeenth century when Aubrey, writing of the ruined abbey of Wilton and the 'romancy plaines and Boscages' of Wiltshire, supposed that they conduced 'to the heightening of Sir Philip Sidney's Phansie' in writing his Arcadia.¹

The landscape is as essential to romance as the quest. It not only provides a setting for action, but initiates and controls it, and this inextricable dependence of plot and landscape elements forms a deeply significant part of Johnson's metaphor. However, the discussion of landscape in the eighteenth century was much complicated by a variety of aesthetic and associative theories, which could result in an emblematic landscape like Stowe, programmed to evoke amorous, Bacchanalian, or political, sentiment, or, later, in the varieties of reconstruction of the landscapes of Claude, Salvator Rosa, or Ruisdael, where the initial reference

was painterly, rather than literary. Later in the century, the language of picturesque travel, systematised by such writers as Gilpin, Payne Knight and Price, reduced landscape to formulae adapted to amateur water-colorists. It is against this background that Johnson's impatience with 'improvements' must be seen.¹

From Mrs. Piozzi's Anecdotes, it is clear that Johnson was impatient with the contrived 'nature' of landscape gardening, and with the conventions of the picturesque tour, with its limiting vocabulary. Since the Thrales were devoted to both, we may suspect that the spirit of contradiction made him more dismissive than he might otherwise have been. 'He hated to hear about prospects and views and laying out ground, and taste in gardening', Mrs. Piozzi comments (Anecdotes, p.141; cf. p.93). Johnson's dismissive commentary on The Leasowes indicates his disapproval of the elevation of landscape gardening to a passion, and also his sense of it as a popular cult. He questions whether 'such performances [were not] rather the sport than the business of human reason', but grants that 'some praise must be allowed...to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well' (Lives, III, 350-1).

A letter from Daniel Astle to Boswell again illustrates the 'exalted encomiums' lavished on 'a pleasing assemblage of sylvan

imagery', and Johnson's response that 'there was just timber enough' in a stately oak-grove 'to put one in mind of the want of it.' Mrs. Piozzi acknowledged that Johnson 'loved the sight of fine forest trees', and that 'walking in a wood when it rained was, I think, the only rural image he pleased his fancy with' (Anecdotes, p.147). This is significant: the kinds of landscape to which Johnson responded were not the artful constructions of the improvers, but the savage, apparently unmediated, landscape of forest, precipice, rocky crag and cave, seen in storm, characteristic of romance. This is the wildness he went in search of in Scotland, and it seems surprising that neither Mrs. Piozzi nor Boswell should have acknowledged his response to 'the rough music of nature' which he there enjoyed: (Yale, IX, 158. See below, Chapter 6).

Two landscapes did elicit an unusually detailed commentary from Johnson, not as picturesque spectator, but as 'adventurer' in physical contact with their pleasures and dangers. Boswell describes the first, Ilam in Derbyshire, as 'a romantic scene', and supposes that it will have been 'well described in some of the Tours', that is, systematised into picturesque categories. He tells of its 'very fine ampitheatre', its woods, 'rocky steeps' and 'walks neatly formed', and is very much surprised that Johnson in spite of his defective sight, had described it distinctly and vividly. (Life, pp.865-6).

1. Boswell, Correspondence, II,183
However, the landscape which inspired Johnson to a most elaborate written description was rather sublime than romantic, and, thus, paradoxically, closer to the landscape of romance. This was Hawkstone in Shropshire, to which Johnson travelled with the Thrales in 1774, when his imagination was excited by the journey to Scotland. The travellers were guided over a large tract of rocks and woods, a region abounding with striking scenes and terrifick grandeur. We were always on the brink of a precipice, or at the foot of a lofty rock, but the steeps were seldom naked; in many places Oaks of uncommon magnitude shot up from the crannies of stone, and where there were not tall trees, there were underwoods and bushes.

Here are the precipices of Johnson's metaphor: and 'terrifick' has here the full force of 'dreadful; causing terror'. Here, too, are the trees of romance, which Johnson had missed in Scotland, oaks, moreover, with all their 'northern' associations. As nearly as possible we have nature without 'the Improver's desolating hand.'

The whole circuit is somewhat laborious [Johnson continues]; it is terminated by a grotto cut in the rock to a great extent with many windings and supported by pillars, not hewn into regularity, but such as imitate the sports of nature, by asperities and protruberances. The place is without any dampness, and would afford a habitation not uncomfortable.

(Yale, I, 174)

We shall consider the importance of the cave as a dwelling-place in romance; it is interesting that here, as in Scotland, Johnson should comment on the use of caves as dwellings, as strongholds, or as the scenes of violent action, while the artificial grottos of Twickenham evoked his ridicule. Johnson goes on to describe the romantic elements of the Hawkstone scene, and their effect on the mind:

Though it wants water it excels Dovedale by the extent of its prospects, the awfulness of its shades, the horrors of its precipices, the verdure of its hollows and the loftiness of its rocks. The Ideas which it forces upon the mind, are the sublime, the dreadful, and the vast. Above, is inaccessible altitude, below, is horrible profundity.

(ibid., 174-5)

This is Burke's sublime, whose elements approach the absolute: infinite positive categories of height, length, depth, recession; or negative categories of darkness, solitude, absence. This is the landscape which frequently appears in Johnson's metaphors and which he uses for the dream vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe.

1. I am discussing landscape in the aesthetic and associative terms in which it was apprehended as 'romantic' in the eighteenth century. For some symbolic interpretations of romance motifs, including landscape, however, see eg. Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London, 1931, rpr. 1971); Sigmund Freud The Interpretation of Dreams, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol.4 (London, 1976); Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957); Joan Malory Webber, Milton and his Epic Tradition (Seattle, 1978).
He develops the comparison of Hawkstone and Ilam; the first excels the Garden of Ilam only in extent. Ilam has grandeur tempered with softness. The walker congratulates his own arrival at the place, and is grieved to think that he must ever leave it. As he looks up to the rocks, his thoughts are elevated; as he turns his eyes on the vallies, he is composed and soothed.

More than once on the Scottish journey, Johnson had found romantic 'paradises', where he 'tasted lotus' and which he found it hard to leave; still, the emotions raised by Ilam are within the bounds of calm pleasure. Not so at Hawkstone:

He that mounts the precipices at Hawkeston wonders how he came hither, and doubts how he shall return. His walk is an adventure and his departure an escape. He has not the tranquillity, but the horrour of solitude, a kind of turbulent pleasure between fright and admiration.

(ibid)

The romance traveller, transported by enchantment in cloud or fiery chariot, often wonders how he came there; it is hardly necessary to point out the implications of 'adventure' and 'escape'. Johnson ends by comparing the proper literary connotations of the two scenes: Ilam is 'the fit abode of pastoral virtue', while 'Hawkeston' can have no fitter inhabitants than Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise, men of lawless courage and heroic violence. Hawkestone should be described by Milton and Ilam by Parnol.' (ibid).

The only landscape outside Scotland, then, which Johnson is moved to describe, in terms not unlike those of the conventional traveller, is, significantly, one in which he can project himself, as adventurer, into the dangers of romance, signalled by its living-cave, its extreme wildness contrasted with its verdurous hollows, and its giant inhabitants, and to which he seems to travel by mysterious agency.
6.2 The Scottish Quest

In this chapter I have outlined the evidence for Johnson's engagement with the romance of chivalry at all levels, both through his biography and through his writing. Remarkably significant evidence of this is to be found in the various accounts of the journey to Scotland. Here, Johnson's identification of himself with heroic adventurers, and his delight in finding evidence of the historical truth of romance, is unmistakable. In 1774, Johnson, aged 65, came as close as was then possible to success in a Quixotic quest for the life of an errant knight, and became 'lord' of an island, wearer of heroic martial costume, observer of castles, hermitages and abbeys. Here, he moved through the extremes of romance landscape, and heard of the lawless feudal society which had so recently disappeared. He was at last able to claim that 'the fictions of Gothic romances were not so remote from credibility as they are now thought...' (Yale, IX, 71).

This emotional involvement with feudal Scotland is, I believe, unlike any other recorded episode in Johnson's life. The only comparable physical experience was his visit to the Welsh castles the following year, but the Welsh journey did not 'hang upon [his] mind' (Life, p. 818) as did that vindication of a life of romance reading, and it may be that this difference was due to his companions. Neither Johnson's letters to Mrs. Thrale, nor her Anecdotes give any evidence of Johnson's capacity for romantic enthusiasm. Since he had no patience with any kind of affectation of sensibility, he may have felt that Mrs. Thrale needed to be
repressed, rather than encouraged, in romantic notions, and she appears not to have known of his continued romance reading (see *Anecdotes*, p.65); it is interesting to compare his Scottish letters to the Thrales with other accounts of his response to the journey. Boswell, on the other hand, was perfectly equipped to understand and encourage Johnson's quest. He had an intense romantic attachment to the idea of feudal Scotland and to the Jacobite cause, and had been temporarily converted to Catholicism in his youth. Moreover, it becomes clear that Johnson himself was closely connected in Boswell's mind with many of these ideas, and that the journey was an apotheosis of a 'romantic' Johnson, as Tory, as Jacobite, as expositor of *Macbeth* and as a 'rover' in the Western Isles.

6.3 Welsh Castles.

Although Johnson took none of these romantic expectations to Wales, he did gain further evidence for the historical truth of romance there. He comments, at the end of his discussion of Highland castles that

> for all the castles which I have seen beyond the Tweed, the ruins yet remaining of some of those which the English built in Wales, would supply materials. 

*(Yale, IX,155.)*

While the *Journey* was in process of being printed, Johnson and the Thrales went to visit Mrs. Thrale's estate in Wales. It was perhaps fortunate for his enjoyment of feudal Scotland that he had not then had that standard of comparison. The travellers
visited five castles, Denbigh, Rhuddlan, Beaumaris, Caernarvon, and Chirk, but the only significant record of Johnson's response is the scanty notes in his Diaries: at Denbigh, he writes of the 'extensive vaults' concealed under the ruins. After the single dungeons of the Scottish towers, the idea of subterranean labyrinths may have been intriguing. Rhuddlan was 'a very noble ruin,... flanked with six round towers' (Yale, I, 187). Since only one of the towers had a chimney, Johnson concludes that there was no 'commodity of living. It was only a place of strength'. (ibid., 188.).

Neither in Scotland, nor so far in Wales, had Johnson found a castle that could have accommodated the princely courts of romance; Beaumaris was another matter.

He describes its outer walls, with their '15 round towers, besides square towers at the angles,' its towered inner walls, and the chapel. Here, at last, Johnson has found all the necessary elements, and he continues:

This castle corresponds with all the representations of romancing narratives. Here is not wanting the private passage, the dark cavity, the deep dungeon or the lofty tower...This is [the] most complete view that I have yet had of an old castle. It had a moat. The towers. (ibid., 202).

Caernarvon was even more impressive:

An Edifice of stupendous magnitude and strength. It has in it all that we observed at Beaumaris, of much greater dimensions.

and Mrs. Thrale notes that they 'climbed to the top of the Eagle
Johnson ends his description, 'I did not think there had been such buildings. It surpassed my ideas' (Ibid, 203).

Johnson's imagination had been satisfied in the Highlands, and there he had been able to re-live the feudal life of romance, as he could not do with the Thrales. However, the Welsh castles also furnished him with extraordinary images to add to his feudal reconstruction. There is no 'romantic' rhapsodising in his diary, but here, as in Scotland, he is able to bring the fictions of romance closer to the stability of historical truth.

Libro segundo,

Parte segunda de la gran historia del muy animoso y esforzado príncipe Félix Marte de Yrcania. En la cual se trata sus grandes hazañas, y de otros valerosos príncipes y caballeros; y la estante aventura por donde se supo del excelente príncipe Martedino de Alemania, y del valeroso príncipe Florentino de miña su padre. Y cuenta la cruel guerra y peligroso cerco, que el emperador Fráculo de Alemania tuvo en Colonia. Y la estante manera por donde el príncipe Félix Marte fue conocido por nieto del emperador de Alemania.

Capítulo primero: de las estancias acentuadas á los ocho valerosos compañeros acaecieron; las cuales causaron que por diferentes partes fuesen benditos.

El famoso historiado. Filólogo comenzado a contar los grá de hechos de la segunda parte de la gran historia de inmuneable príncipe Félix Marte de Yrcania. Dice que como aquellos valerosos príncipes y doncellas fueran armados caballeros, otro día de gran mañana se salieron de la ciudad, y fueron por en gran camino sin determinación de ya a parte señalada, salvo de la ventura los guías. Y desde a poco espacio de impensado dios en ellos aql est remando, que ya se vos dijo que...

Title page of Félix Marte de Yrcania, Vol. II: "...one day early in the morning, they set out from the city, and went along a highway, without intending to go to any particular place, but wherever chance should guide them."
CHAPTER II ; THE ANATOMY OF ROMANCE

1. Pattern Romances

This chapter does not attempt to survey the historical development of romance, nor the significance of its archetypal motifs, nor, except in passing, does it explore the relationship of romance to other narrative. It aims to describe, and to offer patterns of, those aspects of romance which appear to have had a significant influence on Johnson; those which shaped his sense of his own existence, those which provided the material for a wide range of his imagery, and those which formed his responses to, and his requirement of, literature. In order to do this, I have selected passages from a number of the romances which Johnson can be shown to have read. These are almost exclusively post-medieval or renaissance romances, which are enriched by copious borrowings from classical narrative. It may be useful to describe the Italian romances, as Johnson does, as 'heroic', but when including Spenser, to describe these romances as 'renaissance', while Quixote's library will be distinguished as 'Peninsular' romance. Many of these romances have already been referred to in chapter I, and they range from the most naively sensational chapbooks to Spenser's Christian allegory. My definition of romance, then, cuts across major distinctions, but also leaves out large areas. Although Percy claimed that Johnson was familiar with 'all our English romances', I have not made much
use of Middle English works beyond a few references to Malory's
Morte Darthur because there is more evidence for the influence
on Johnson of 'the learned library of Don Quixote.'

These immensely popular Spanish and Portuguese romances prolif­erated at the end of the fifteenth century, although there are references to Amadis de Gaule in the fourteenth. The Amadis and Palmerin stories both developed into immense cycles during the sixteenth century. Palmerin of England was a Portuguese continuation of the Spanish Palmerin de Oliva. Don Belianis of Greece, written between 1547-1579 is also Spanish. Henry Thomas (op.cit.) estimates some fifty chivalric romances written in Spain between 1508 and 1602, of which these were the most popular. These romances make few claims for their moral intentions, and overall, their morality is at best ambivalent. There is no allegory, none of the personifications by which Spenser so often makes explicit his moral lessons; they deal far more in the magic and the sensational, especially Palmerin of England, and their plots are far more complicated than Spenser's, with numerous secondary characters engrossing the narrative. These Peninsular romances generally came to England by way of France, although the first significant work, The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood was directly translated from Spanish. I hope to demonstrate the particular character of these romances, as well as the elements they share

with such earlier English favourites as *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Southampton*, and those elements also found in Spenser and the Italians. I should, however, make clear that I have limited my examples to the first two books of each cycle in the case of *Amadis de Gaule* and *Palmerin of England*, although I have also consulted Des Essartes' French translation of *Amadis*. The popular seventeenth-century translations which Johnson read, and which I have used for several romances, are themselves abridged. Illustrations from *Felixmarie de Yrcania*, of which the only copy to be located is in Spanish black-letter, are also taken from the first two books, and, since most of Johnson's quotations from the *Faerie Queene* are also from the first two books, it is from these that I have taken most of my illustrations. I have not dealt with the sentimental French romances of the seventeenth-century, because, although Johnson had certainly 'looked into' them, I do not believe they formed an influential part of his lifelong reading. This chapter does not, then, attempt to offer anything like an exhaustive account of any of these romances, but only to provide patterns of the elements in them that influenced Johnson.

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2. 'Adventures, Giants, Dragons and Enchantments:

This dismissive list from the Preface to Shakespeare (Yale, VII, 82) may serve to introduce The Seven Champions of Christendom. If this was indeed one of the earliest influences on Johnson's imagination, it is worth some attention.

The three stanzas which introduce the work, under the grandly classical title of 'the Author's Muse; upon the History,' illustrate the way in which the diverse stories of the Seven Saints have been forced into a common, and far from Christian, romance mould, and list a number of motifs basic to chivalric, rather than to hagiographic or classical narrative:

The famous Acts of Christendom's brave Knights,
Their Warlike Acts are here in Field displayed,
Their killing Giants, their most dreadful Fights,
And to distressed Ladies giving Aid:
Who are in Fame's Eternall Book enroll'd,
And shall in Chronicles for Aye be told.

Their Courage stout. Enchantments could not daunt
But succour lent to each distressed Wight;
Their helping hand the Needy ne'er did want,
But each of them like a Couragious Knight,
Did venture to engage our dearest Blood,
To right the Wrong, and do the Helpless good.

Thus Vertue Stirring up their Noble Minds,
Which for to purchase Honour still were bent;
In each place where they came their Valour finds
Occasion by Tilt, Tourney, Tournament;
Killing of Giants, Dragons, Monsters Fell,
All which this Book doth to the Reader tell.(Sig. A1v).

Although it is 'Virtue' which is said to stir up the 'Noble Minds' of these 'Knights', it is 'to purchase Honour' that they are bent, rather than any spiritual end, and it is rather 'virtus' than
Christian virtue which motivates them to the traditional duties of the knight errant. *The Seven Champions*, unlike, for instance, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, is essentially a chivalric romance rather than an epic, in that it is concerned with stories of individual protagonists, which are only tenuously interconnected, rather than with the fortunes of armies and nations. In these stanzas, the knights' humane duty to succour the weak and needy, (most often, in practice, distressed ladies) and their sensational encounters with the supernatural, and with mythical monsters, dragons and giants, clearly establish the nature of the work, as does the vocabulary of chivalric games, the 'tilt', 'tourney' and 'tournament'.

The story of St. George of England, with which *The Seven Champions* opens, introduces the hero by way of a portentous dream, an enchantress who prophesies his future greatness in excruciating verse, and a remarkable collection of birthmarks: the infant has a dragon on his breast, a golden garter round his leg, and a red cross on his right hand. He is stolen, and brought up by the enchantress who, when he is grown up, falls in love with him, and reveals his lineage, then gives him a silver wand which opens a magic cave. The portentous birth, the stolen or hidden baby, brought up by characters who are in some way not integrated into the courtly society to which the hero is linked by birth, is one of the archetypal motifs of myth. It is a commonplace of the romance of chivalry and also indeed, of later romantic fictions of all kinds. The enchanter or enchantress, who may be good or evil, is generally
the principal helper or antagonist, but here, with the comic speed-up which makes this edition of *The Seven Champions* a silent-film version of more weighty romances, the enchantress is shut up in the cave and disposed of, and at the same time the six other champions, the three other patron saints of Britain, with St. Denis of France, St. James of Spain, and St. Antony of Italy, are released from a long captivity in the same cave. This is another familiar romance pattern: the hero goes into some unknown, usually frightening or dangerous place, often down into darkness, and rescues prisoners, most often from a strange castle, and the rescue very often involves combat with a variety of assailants. The cave itself is an extremely common element of romance landscape, often inhabited by such 'unintegrated' characters as savage men, hermits, or enchanters, any of whom may be good or bad. Here St. George, by releasing his prisoners, establishes his superiority over them, since it is nearly always the principal protagonist who frees lesser characters. The knights then set out to seek adventures. This is also a common fairy-tale device: a set of protagonists set off from one place and then diverge, putting themselves in the hands of chance, and the pattern allows the stories to be told separately, so that the reader's sympathies can be engaged exclusively with one hero at a time. In this version of the St. George legend (which is clearly borrowed from that of Perseus by way of Ariosto, and forms a staple element of romance and fairy-tale), a dragon is wasting the land unless appeased by the sacrifice of a virgin, and, the supply having
run out, the last victim is to be the king's daughter. Here, the land is Egypt, and the princess is called Sabra. In the fight, the hard-pressed St. George finds himself under a magic orange-tree, 'of such Vertue that no venomous thing dare approach unto it' (Sig. A2, recto and verso). He eats an orange, which restores his strength and allows him to kill the dragon. Percy pointed out in a letter to Farmer that 'the principal features of St. George's story, are from the Old Romance in rhyme of Bevis of Southampton.' If Johnson learned to read from The Seven Champions, he would then have recognised the pattern later in Bevis, and again in Book I of The Faerie Queene.

A very tenuous Christian element is introduced when St. George converts the princess from Islam. His rival is Almidor, king of Morocco, twelve of whose knights George takes on and kills: 'In little space he made their lives pay for their treachery' (Sig. A.v). This is a modest example of the odds against which the hero always fights and wins, and, as is usual in romance, there is no question as to the morality of the multiple killings and mutilations. St. George is himself later overcome by superior numbers and imprisoned in a deep dungeon, perhaps Johnson's introduction to an idea which was to become a significant element in his imagery. This dungeon is in Persia, where George has been sent with his own death-warrant, and where he overturns images of Mohame' and Apollo. The vague-ness of mediaeval European ideas about Islam persists into later

romance. The 'geographical' journey is characteristic of these later romances, where the hero moves from Scotland to Constantinople or North Africa, from Norway to Tartary. Also characteristic is the proliferation of kings and queens, interspersed with sultans and emperors, who rule these countries, and who are often brought together in great numbers.

The lesser adventures of the other saints introduce further common motifs. St. Dennis is travelling 'in the Desert Country of Thessaly, inhabited only by wild beasts' (Sig.A4), where he eats from a magic mulberry tree and is transformed into a hart. The tree turns out to be an enchanted lady, with whom he falls in love. Later romance contains many Ovidian metamorphoses; Richard Johnson may have had in mind a similar episode in Godfrey of Bulloigne, Bk.13. Each saint acquires his own lady by rescuing her from danger. St. James takes up a challenge from the king of Jerusalem, and kills a wild boar in 'a spacious forest'. He is drawn to this exploit by 'Thirst of honour and hope of gain, the two spurs to prick men forward to worthy enterprises' (Sig. A4.v.). The second motive is not characteristic of romance; although knights are generally rewarded for their victories, honour and the approval of their ladies are normally the only proper incentives, and offers of lands may be refused.¹

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¹. Cf. Faerie Queene, II, vii, 10. 'Regard of worldly mucke doth fowllly blend/And lowe abase the high heroicke Spright', quoted for 'blend' in the Dictionary, and cf. a similar passage from Fairfax quoted for 'nought'. 
St. Antony travels 'over many hills and dales, woods and forests', and comes to Thrace, where upon the top of a high mountain, stood an impregnable castle, where lived a terrible Gyant! (Sig. Bi.). This is characteristic of the variety of romance landscape. Fights with giants often have comic overtones (sometimes intended) born of the ludicrous disparity between the size and dexterity of the combatants. One of the most attractive examples of this is when Johnson himself envisages a giant-fight in which he will, improbably, be the nimble attacker. (see below, chapter 6, section IIIv). Here, the giant rushes out of his castle brandishing an oak-tree, 'but the nimble saint so avoided his strokes by skipping continually out of his reach, that the Gyant in a short space grew weary of brandishing so unwieldy a weapon.' St. Antony takes advantage of this to get under his guard 'and with one blow brought the Gyant upon his knees' (Sig.Bi, recto and verso). He then saves the seven daughters of the king of Thrace whom the giant has kept prisoner, and who have been turned into silver swans to save them from violation. The restored ladies are later travelling across 'an uninhabited wilderness, save only with beasts and savage monsters' (sig. Bi^-), where they are seized by 'thirty bloody Satyrs,' (sig. B.2), who drag them off by their hair to ravish them. Violation is the commonest danger to ladies in romance, and it may be significant that for 'lustful', defined as 'libidinous; having irregular desires,' Johnson quotes another description of a would-be ravisher, Sansloy, who attempts Una's virtue:
Turning wrathful fire to lustful heat,
With beastly sin thought her to have defiled.

[Faerie Queene, I,vi,3]

Fortunately, St. Patrick, 'the magnanimous Irish champion, after many heroic actions by him performed was at the same instant also in the desart place' (Sig.B.2) and he rescues them. Nick-of-time rescues are part of the pattern of incredible coincidences that we expect from romance. Richard Johnson introduces satyrs instead of the traditional savage men of earlier romances, and there are many classical references throughout.

Johnson also aspires to some grandeur of style, which can be reminiscent of Shakespeare's Pyramus and Thisby: faced with a magic sword in a stone, St. David

Courageously assailed [sic] to pull it forth,
but, no sooner was his hand on the hilt, but
his senses were assailed with a Somniferous Sleep.

(Sig. B.2_y)

He is in a garden enchanted by a necromancer who has bewitched him: enchanted sleep is common to romance and fairy tale.

After seven years' imprisonment, St. George digs himself out of 'the nasty prison' with an iron bar, and 'with a nymble pace never rested until he came within the confines of Greece.' (Sig. B.2_y). Unusually for romance, he suffers hunger, and finding a castle, asks for hospitality from a lady, but is dismissed 'with a curst frown' (Sig.b.3_y). The knight's approach to, and reception at, the castle he comes to along his undirected way, is a most important event in romance reading. Unless he is addressing himself to a known castle, there is always suspense for the reader until we know whether he is to be attacked, or welcomed, and, if welcomed, whether this kindness will be deceit or enchantment.

St. George now defeats the giant who owns the castle, and 'having
now finished his work, he goes into the Castle to receive his wages; *viz., his Dinner* (Sig. B3). He then travels on and ends at the Enchanted Garden. The dance-like patterning of coincidence is repeated again and again, with variations, as the various protagonists of romance meet and part: monsters and enchantments, giants and castles, damsels, dwarfs, and dragons appear and reappear in a changing landscape of forest, desert, savage rocky valley, pleasant flowery meadow, mountain precipice, and stormy sea. Moving through these varied scenes, the individuals' seemingly undirected paths cross where the plot demands.

St. George, arriving at the Enchanted Garden, draws the sword from the stone

When immediately the Heavens were overcast with a thick Darkness, and the earth shook and lumbered with mighty Peals of Thunder, the Winds blew so impetuously that Strong Oaks were rent in pieces by the same, and incontinently the Enchanted Garden vanished away.

(Sig.B.3)

The disappearance of places created by enchantment is, as we shall see, one of the most impressive dramatic events in romance, and one which clearly-seized Johnson's imagination. These effects are normally accompanied by terrifying noises and extreme weather, and by the baffling mists or darkness which enchanters frequently conjure up.

Here, St. Denis is freed from the spell, the enchanter tells the story of his life and expires, and St. Denis is sent with the
head and the magic sword, to report to the Court of Thrace. This is another essential of romance plot. Although the knight is errant, he is normally attached to a court which provides a focus for his actions. It is only from the court that he can gain the honour and fame which are his objects, whether for their own sake, or to make him worthy of his lady's love. The lady frequently lives at the focal court, and thither are sent all the defeated enemies who survive, or the tokens of their defeat.

St. George goes to seek his lady in Egypt, disguised as a palmer; in a scene taken from the traditional English romance, *Guy of Warwick*, he joins a number of pilgrims being fed by his lady in his memory. Unlike Guy, he makes himself known, and the princess runs away with him. She has, meanwhile, been forced into marriage with another knight, but has preserved her chastity. This is proved in an episode where her accompanying eunuch is killed by two savage lions, who then fawn on her, and go to sleep in her lap; St. George, returned from hunting, notes this with approval, and then kills the lions. Tests for virginity are common in romance, and Percy discusses several in the notes on 'The Boy and the Mantle' in the *Reliques.* They are often made by means of magic objects, girdles, cloaks, cups, which behave untowardly to unchaste ladies, but proofs given by lions, or unicorns, which can only be tamed by virgins, are not uncommon.

The Seven Champions reassemble at a tournament open to all comers, given in honour of the Emperor of Greece's nuptials. From this develops a war declared on Christendom by the followers of 'Mohamet, Termagant and Apollo,' and the seven champions return to raise armies in their own countries. Here, the story comes closest to Godfrey of Bulloigne, where the actions of individuals are woven into the public context of the siege of Jerusalem, and subordinate to that general object.

In the course of the war, St. George challenges the black King of Morocco to single combat, and when the defeated Moor refuses to be converted, he is boiled to death in a brazen cauldron. This cruelty is not unusual in romance. The Christian duty of the knight to care for the weak and oppressed is combined with a non-Christian value for honour and reputation, and often with great magnanimity to fallen victims. But this is not by any means invariable, and the most exemplary knights can demonstrate horrible cruelty without comment from the narrator. Here, the death of the King of Morocco has the effect of converting all his compatriots, who present St. George with Barbary, and accept good and wholesome laws in place of tyrannical government.

In spite of this apparently satisfactory outcome, the heroic champions are not content to 'spend their time in an Idle Bower of Peace, and to let their armour hang rusting on the wall, when so much action was to be done in the world' (Sig. C3r). This, too, is very characteristic. A knight must go on to seek new
adventures, sometimes against the wish of the lady for whose sake he is to acquire honour, and not even marriage always terminates the story. A variety of other adventures, including a rescue of the Princess Sabra from the stake, does, in fact, lead to St. George's marriage to his beloved, 'with whom he afterwards spent his life with much joy and felicity' (Sig. C4'). Many popular romances end in this perfunctory way. In the very long Peninsular cycles, like Amadis de Gaule or Palmerin of England, volume succeeds volume, and there is seldom a sense of achieved form, nor is there a final cataclysm like the last battle of the Morte Darthur.

In terms of both form and content, The Seven Champions would have introduced a child to a great number of perennial romance motifs, linked together in a typically arbitrary fashion. The vicissitudes of the quest journey, whether varieties of assailants, of lodgings, or of landscape, invariably lead to final victory or success for the invincible hero in each adventure. There is no moral judgement on the rightness of his actions, nor is there any significant attempt to explore character, or to differentiate heroes and their ladies, attendants, or opponents, except by their deeds. The only plot element which distinguishes the lives of these saints from other romances is the forcible conversion of the pagans. There is little of the social and historical detail which Johnson valued in more sophisticated romance, but there is certainly enough in it to 'stretch and stimulate...little minds'.
3. Mirrors of Knighthood

The authors of even the most vulgarised romances may make claims for their educative or exemplary purpose. John Shirley in the 'Epistle to the reader', preceding his abridged version of Guy, Earl of Warwick, speaks of the 'Imperfect Relation' which has sullied the Heroick Actions of so brave a Man.' He has, he says, 'taken pains in drawing out this History as near as possible, to the Life'.¹ The authenticity of the history is unquestioned in introductions to popular romance. Whether either writer or readers were often persuaded by these assertions, it is difficult to assess. Shirley makes no claims for the moral teaching of this story, but considers that

There is no greater Spur to prick forwards the minds of Men, to undertake great designs and valorous exploits, than by reading the worthy Deeds of such as have thereby attained to the heights of Glory.

Shirley also stresses the patriotic message of this native romance, which deals with

English men, who at this day are famous for Courage, and true Heroick valour through all the yet known World.

(Sig.A2)

¹ John Shirley (sometimes 'Shurley'), The Renowned History (or the Life and Death) of Guy, Earl of Warwick. (London, 1681) Sig.A.1.
A more realistic assessment of the reasons for reading romances prefaces his chapbook translation of *Palmerin of England*. He states that

> the subject is Arms and Love, to which are joined State-Policies, Stratagems and Machiavillian Machinations, things worthy to be observed by the wisest and worthiest of Mankind; yet was it not so much written for profitable practice as Pleasure and Recreation...

1. The author of *Felixmarte de Yrcania* claims a Greek original, with Plutarch and Petrarch as intermediate translators, and insists that his translation, unlike that of his predecessors, does not originate in 'imaginada invencion'. He discusses ancient Roman patriotism, and claims that this sentiment is not inspired in us by the natural instinct to love our own country, but that we owe a debt of gratitude to those excellent men who 'con exemplo y continuacion de virtud, dieron illustre renombre a su naturaleza'.

2. The desire to emulate heroic deeds is usually seen as an important element in the capacity of romance to influence the young. In many of his own narratives Johnson treats heroic emulation, even when it is misguided, with sympathy (see chapter 4, section 5).

His many Quixote narratives depend on the readiness of the young or otherwise vulnerable reader, to be kindled to misguided fervour.

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In Tasso's *post facto* moralisation of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, he divides the moral vehicle into imitation and allegory. He parallels these divisions respectively with 'the Actions of man subjected to the outward senses' and 'the passions, the opinions and customs, not only as they do appear, but principally in their being hidden and inward,' and, on a third level, compares the two modes to the active and contemplative lives. In a further division, he speaks of the public life, of which the *Iliad* is the best illustration, and the private, as illustrated by the *Odyssey*. Thus, the hero in his solitary role is paralleled with the religious contemplative: in Christian terms, this seems a violent yoking of the narrative to the allegorical meaning.

Every element of Tasso's plot is given moral significance, and the reader is warned that:

> The *Fier*, the *Whirlewinde*, the *Darkness*, the *Monsters*, and other faigned similitudes are the deceiving allurements which do honest showe vs travelues and honourable danger vnder the shape of Euil... The *Flowers*, the *Fountains*, the *Rivers*, the *Musicall instruments*, the *Nymphes*, are the deceitfull Inticements which do here set downe before vs the pleasures and delights of the sense, vnder the shew of Good,

*(Fairfax, p.90)*

With a consciousness that the whole romance represented this most explicit moral teaching, the reader could settle down to enjoy the 'pleasure and recreation' which its author promised.
Spenser is far less explicit in his 'Letter to Raleigh. His purpose is again educational, 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline', but he is realistic in his assessment of what the reader looks for in an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample. (Spenser, p. 407)

This variety is, I think, of great significance in Johnson's response to romance, especially as it affects his requirements for literature. Spenser adapts Tasso's distinction between public and private virtue, exemplified by Agamemnon as an example of the good governor, and Ulysses as the virtuous man.

It is not the knight as governor, a formed and responsible member of society, which seizes Johnson's imagination, but the individual knight errant, accompanied only by squire, dwarf, or guide, and whose deeds are only incidentally of interest to the society from which he has come. There is nowhere in Johnson's commentary on romance any suggestion that he regarded it as morally instructive, whatever social information might be gleaned from it, although as Rambler 4 makes clear, he undoubtedly demanded this mirror function from other literature, and was persuaded of its power.
4. Knights Errant, Youth and Temerity

The values of the romance are those of youth. The bildungsroman is an essential part of the pattern, the hero's birth and upbringing are included in the story, and we are often given details of his parents' love and marriage. Very often, as we have seen in The Seven Champions, mysterious circumstances prevent his being brought up by his parents, or recognised as of noble blood. Amadis's mother bears him secretly after a clandestine night with his father, and his birth, like St. George's, is heralded by a portentous dream and prophesy. When he is born, he is put into a chest and floated out to sea, from which he is rescued and brought up by a Scottish knight.

Later, after the marriage of Amadis's parents, a second son, Galaor, is kidnapped by a giant and brought up on an island, and we shall see Johnson in Scotland playing a game based on this kind of episode. Palmerin and his brother, whose mother is a princess, are born in a forest, and snatched away to feed lions, by a savage man who then takes pity on them, and hands them over to an old woman to be brought up. The two boys are later found by different nobles, who take them and provide them with appropriate courtly polish. Spenser's Armgall is a changeling, a mortal stolen by fairies, and brought up in fairyland; Arthur is delivered by Merlin to be brought up by Timon; Felixmarte is taken from his mother.

1. See below, p.478.
by a savage nurse. These displacements may allow the heroes to meet their respective ladies, to whom, in the case of Amadis and Palmerin, they are made pages. We are often given details of the children's precocity, and of their anxiety to undergo the rites of knighthood which give them passage to the world beyond the courtly household, and stress is often laid on this impetuous and even wayward insistence on early knighthood. Amadis's precocious courage in defending his foster-brother from a bigger boy brings him to the attention of the Queen, his real mother, and so to court, and he importunes the King for knighthood while still a boy, so that he may go in search of adventures. Don Belianis provides a delightful word to describe that hero's youthful courage. Meeting a savage lion as his first adversary in the forest, he is grievously wounded; but the Prince, not discouraged thereat, and with a gallant intrepitude, thrust his arm with great force directly down his throat to his heart, at which the Beast was so intimidated, that with great struggling he got loose and left him.

'Intrepitude' is not included in the Dictionary. One such episode which, as we have seen, particularly struck Johnson, was the Red Cross Knight's introduction to Gloriana's court. Although Una objects to his uncouth appearance, he is transformed by the armour she has brought with her, significantly 'the armour of a Christian

man specified by St. Paul, v. Ephs.' (Spenser, p. 408). Spenser, then, gives a particularly good example of the fantasy of transition from awkward adolescence to splendid young manhood, and the Red Cross Knight retains that temerity which is so essential an aspect of the knight's character. Coming to the cave of Error,

...The champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the dwarfe a-while his needlesse spear he gave.

(Johnson quotes this in the Dictionary for 'dwarf'). In spite of Una's warning, he insists on going into the 'darksome hole', and for 'hardiment', Johnson quotes the lines that follow:

But full of fire and greedy hardiment
The youthful knight could not for aught be staid.

Heat and youth are naturally linked; the conjunction appears frequently in romance, and is very significant in much of Johnson's writing.

Johnson uses The Faerie Queene again to illustrate 'youthly.'

Braggadoccio boasts to Britomart:

I true be thy words, and worthy of thy praise, 
That warlike feats dost highest glorify, 
Therein have I spent all my youthly days, 
And many battles fought and many frays. 

[II, iii, 38].
There is seldom a suggestion in romance that the knight is merely foolhardy: it is an unquestioned part of his code that, no matter how prejudicial it may be to any quest he has undertaken, he must be ready immediately to accept any challenge or any appeal for help, to challenge any knight who refuses to identify himself, and to face the most unbalanced odds. This alacrity can lead to unfortunate encounters, however, when the knight wounds a friend or relation who has been manoeuvred into challenging him. The anonymity of the vizored face is a fruitful source of mistakes in romance plot, sometimes compounded in the case of invincible female warriors like Tasso's Clorinda or Spenser's Britomart, whose victims are not only defeated but shamed. The 'unknown knight' often plays the role of challenger or champion at tournaments, as well as in casual combat, and is a source of great satisfaction to the reader, who is often party to his identity.

'Knight' is first defined in the Dictionary with historical seriousness, as 'a man advanced to a certain degree of military rank', and we are told that 'it was the custom to knight every man of rank and fortune, that he might be qualified to give challenges, to fight in the lists, and to perform feats of arms,' and that 'when the name was not known, it was usual to say "sir knight"'. The word 'military' often implies a chivalric or heroic context in Johnson's usage, as when, describing an old Highland alliance between clans, where 'the survivor always inherits the arms of the deceased', he comments that this is 'a natural memorial of military.
friendship' (Yale, IX, 60). For his third definition of 'knight' as 'a champion', Johnson gives a mock-heroic quotation from Nymphidia:

He [And] suddenly unties the poke,  
Which out of it sent such a smoke,  
As ready was them all to choke,  
So grievous was the pother;  
So that the knights each other lost,  
And stood as still as any post.


The definition of 'knight-errant' as 'a wandering knight; one who went about in quest of adventures,' is followed by a superb summarising passage, which Johnson misquotes, from Hudibras:

...the ancient errant knights,  
Won all their mistresses in fights;  
[Won all their ladies' hearts.] 1  
They [And] cut whole giants into fritters, [fitters],  
To put them into am'rous twitters.

[III, I, 84-6] 2.

The desire for fame, and the desire to make himself worthy of his lady, are the commonest motives for true knight-errantry, and the knight often leaves the focal court simply to look for whatever adventures may chance. This is the case with Amadis and Palmerin. On the other hand, the errancy may be accidental: the knight setting out on an adventure imposed on him by someone outside the court is most commonly diverted from it by a series of fortuitous challenges which he meets on his journey. This is the characteristic pattern of The Faerie Queene, which I shall be using extensively to illustrate aspects of romance, especially in cases where these episodes are quoted in the Dictionary.

5. Centres of Power

5.1 The focal court and the lady.

Because Book Twelve of the Faerie Queene was not written, we must look elsewhere for the kind of environment from which the knight is despatched to his quest. This is most commonly a royal court, and, because of the accidents that conceal the hero's birth, he is often there in a subordinate role, from which he will rise to his true rank after numbers of trials, with the help of mysterious prophecies and often of magic weapons given by supporting enchanters. Guy of Warwick is subordinate at the court of the Earl of Warwick because his father has lost his rightful estate in Northumberland and become a steward; Amadis and Palmerin, as we have seen, have been displaced from their proper rank. All three young men are in the role of household attendants on the ladies they serve, and in each case it is the lady who is responsible for sending the knights out on their adventures: Phaelice, daughter of the Earl of Warwick, demands deeds of renown before she will agree to hear Guy's addresses; Polinarda, to whom Palmerin is attached, helps to arm him for his knightly vigil, and encourages him to go and perform noble deeds; however, when he does set out, she grows unaccountably angry. In Amadis de Gaule, it is Oriana who begs the boon of knighthood from King Perion, who is, unknown to the characters, Amadis's father, and there is a detailed description of Amadis's vigil, in full armour except for head and hands, in the palace chapel.
Clearly the knight's relationship with his lady is an essential element of romance, and a certain part of the narrative is devoted to it, but by far the greater part of the romances with which I am concerned recount the deeds that he performs outside the home court.

Both at the home court, and at other castles and palaces which the knight visits, romance gives much detail of the courtly life and its setting. There are, of course, entertainments: hunting takes Amadis's grandfather out into a forest which is infested by bad barons whom he has been unable to subdue, and he first meets Amadis's father when he finds him in combat with them. Palmerin's father, Don Edoard of England, is hunting an enchanted boar, and is led by it to the magic castle where he is imprisoned. The first adventure of Don Belianis, (whose upbringing, unusually, is quite regular) begins with a hunt, in which a bear leads him to an enchanted cave. Although these hunts do not have the symbolic significance of those in, for instance, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, they are useful plot elements, which bring the protagonists into the essential desert or forest.

Tournaments and jousts are also a normal part of courtly life, and this allows for elaborate details of armour, heraldry, and all the language that describes the ceremonial. This is also an occasion when the knight can establish his value on home ground. Dancing, masquing and feasting are most important parts of the courtly life, and here the knight will have his main contact with
his lady. Pleasant little details throw light on the customs of the court; a princess going to wash her hands before dinner loses an important ring when she puts it in her bosom; the tables are dismantled in the Great Hall after the queen has withdrawn; rich scarlet mantles embroidered with gold, are brought for visiting knights; trumpeters blow fanfares to introduce meals, jousts or visitors. But the most elaborate descriptions of luxurious interiors, riotings, music and song tend to apply to enchantresses' palaces, where they may constitute part of the attempted deception or seduction of the knight. Here, there may be implied disapproval of luxury, but on the whole, magnificence is approved in renaissance romance.

Into the home court come all kinds of messengers; a damsel in armour on a white steed rides into the court to prophesy Palmerin's future prowess, and thus assure his proper upbringing, and proves to be the good enchantress. Later, another damsel rides in; she had been sent by another magician to bring a magic shield for Palmerin, but it has been stolen from her on the way. In Amadis, the good enchantress is Don Quixote's Urganda the Unknown, who comes to court as a fair damsel to prophesy Amadis's future prowess, but later turns into a very old woman. She appears again and gives Amadis a lance and a cryptic warning, leaving another damsel behind to explain who she is. It is an extraordinary feature of romance that though the entire landscape is full of knights and giants ready to imprison and ravish ladies, no one questions the use of damsels as messengers, and they ride, like Spenser's Una, from one country to another, accompanied only by a dwarf or page.
5.2 Tyrants, Giants and Dungeons

Once outside the focal court, the pattern of the quest becomes linear: it is both a literal and a metaphorical way or path, and it is continually intersected by lines coming in at angles; metaphorically, these are the petitions and assailants to which the knight is obliged to respond, and whose appearance seems entirely the work of chance. We can also envisage labyrinthine digressions from the line of the quest, into which the knight is lured by falsehood, seductive phantoms or misleading information, and here, not chance but malignancy directs the action. We can now develop these vicissitudes in the context of the notional feudal society in which the romance takes place. Along the line of the knight's way, lie castles, palaces, dens, caves, and strongholds of all kinds. It is essential that he find lodging at night (even if in between he appears to have travelled several hundred miles) and each of the dwellings he arrives at represents some kind of autonomous power. There is very little sense of any structured society outside these great households. Peasants make only the rarest appearances; there are no bourgeois, no artisans, traders, or lawyers. The nearest model for this kind of society for eighteenth-century England was the Scottish clan system, highlighted by the Stuart risings which led to its suppression. It is abundantly clear that Johnson made this connection on his Scottish journey: the 'peculiar form of life' which he and Boswell went to seek was that of the 'gothick romances.'
The power which each feudal centre represented might be evil or benign. Evil power could be simply the physical force of giants, who sometimes had dependent knights to fight for them; strength and skill at arms is everywhere of the greatest importance in romance, but evil power is often the magic power of male and female enchanters, and this can also create an endless variety of phantom assailants or seducers. The motive for aggression might be the power of beauty, as in the case where a chatelaine sets up a permanent claim to preeminence, enforced by devoted knights who would challenge all comers. Kind hosts welcome the knight, care for his comfort, disarm and clothe him, feed him and entertain him, and cure his wounds. But the same hospitality may mask evil intentions, either to seduce the knight or to betray him to an enemy.

There are three very different abusers of power in Book One of the Faerie Queene, Lucifera and Orgoglio, who, though they are personifications and thus peculiar to Spenserian romance, still function as evil chatelaine and conventional giant, and Archimago the enchanter. The Castle of Pride is described in some detail, with 'many loftie towres', 'goodly galleries', 'Full of faire windowes and delightfull bowres; /And on the top a diall told the timely howres' (I.iv.4, quoted in the Dictionary for 'gallery'). This is clearly a Tudor great house rather than a fortress. It is, symbolically, built on sand, ruinous behind, gilded over flimsy walls. There is the proper ceremonial of a welcoming porter, who
leads the travellers through a tapestried hall into the presence Chamber of Pride. The masque or triumph of the Seven Deadly Sins, and the journey against Sansloy are described in the same kind of detail, and, after the tournament, the Red Cross Knight is brought home and 'laid in sumptuous bed', where his wounds are washed in wine and oil, and salve applied. There is also a significant description in this canto of the bards, minstrels, and chroniclers of the feudal household: (I,v,3), which is used in the Dictionary to illustrate 'bard'. But, below these detailed scenes of feasting and show lies hidden, as so often in romance, the underground darkness

Where in a dungeon deepe huge numbers lay
Of Caytue wretched thrals, that wayled
night and day.

(I,v,45)

The passage continues as a 'mirror' of those whose pride has made them captive, and this is uncharacteristic of romance, but the detail here is also vivid. It is clear that the final fate of these victims had struck Johnson with some force, for he quotes from the passage for both 'stall' and 'spectacle':

All these together in one heap were thrown,
Like carcasses of beasts in butcher's stall
Forth riding underneath the castle wall,
A dunghill of dead carcasses he spy'd,
The dreadful spectacle of that sad house of pride.

[I,v,49 and 53]
After his defeat by the giant Orgoglio, the Red Cross Knight is thrown into a dungeon. This too must have struck Johnson, since for 'dungeon' which is 'generally spoken of [as] a prison, dark or subterraneous', he quotes I, vii, 15:

Then he took the slumbred senseless corse,
And e're he could out of his swoon awake,
Him to his castle brought with hasty force,
And in a dungeon deep him threw without remorse.

Darkness and stench increase the horror of the Red Cross Knight's imprisonment, and its effect is vividly described in I, vii, 41, which Johnson quotes to illustrate Spenser's odd coinage 'bowers':

His rawbone arms whose mighty brawned bowers
Were wont to rive steel plates and helmets hew,
Were clean consum'd and all his vital powers decay'd.

In Amadis de Gaule, a black hole of equal horror is described, lying below the palace of Arcelaus the evil enchanter:

A vault of an hundred toyes long,
yet no more than a foot and a half
in breadth, without air or light,
and which was worst of all, so full
of prisoners that they could scanty
stand one by another.

1. Prisoners are commonly chained, shackled or manacled in romance, and in the same castle, Amadis finds a lady 'tied by the neck with a great chaine, which had so wore and displayed her garments as the naked flesh appeared in many places' (ibid,127). Amadis is moved to tears by the lady's 'grevous mones' and calls for a mantle.

There is seldom any suggestion of sexual perversion in the romance accounts of imprisonment; most commonly, although the ladies are kidnapped for the tyrants' evil pleasure, it is the knights who are chained and tortured, sometimes in horrible, though perfunctory, detail. The evil tyrants who imprison or torment their victims may be Saracens or barons, enchanters or knights, as well as giants. There is no central authority, and no redress except the knight errant, or the armies for which these knights occasionally fight. Prince Arthur's battle with Orgoglio to rescue the Red Cross Knight follows a common romance pattern. He approaches the giant's castle 'builded strong and hie', though not described in detail. His Squire brings the magic horn, against which all enchantment is powerless, and

The same before the Geant's gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the ground,
And every dore of freewill open flew.
(I,viii,5)

This is quoted for 'door', and is one of several passages used by Johnson where this impressive phenomenon is described (cf. 'afford' and 'accord'). After Arthur has defeated Orgoglio, he finds the castle apparently deserted; this creates a tension of a kind which romance often exploits. Eventually, the aged porter appears. The contrast inside is between the richly arrayed walls and the floor defiled with the blood of murdered innocents. There is a sacrificial altar, 'carv'd with cunning imagery' whose description Johnson quotes under 'imagery' [I,viii,36]. Arthur has to hunt through many rooms before he reaches an iron door. Doors of brass
or iron play an important part in castle description. There is a grating in this one from which 'a hollow, dreary, murmering voice' cries out for death. Arthur, in the proper romance manner, breaks down the iron door, but finds no floor.

But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell,
That breathèd euer forthe a filthie banefull smell.

(I,viii,39)

Some subterraneous prisons only have access through the roof, and Bevis of Southampton escapes from his by luring his jailor to come down a rope, and then killing him. In Scotland, Johnson several times remarks on such places of captivity.

Tyrannic giants play a large part in Palmerin of England. In the early part of Book I, the enemy is the giant Dramusiand, who is in collusion with the enchantress Eutrope. She lures Palmerin's father, Don Edoard, to her castle, which is described in great detail: it has gold lamps, a gold fretted ceiling, a cedar floor, a bed of purple velvet embroidered with pearls and precious stones: again, a Tudor palace like Knole, rather than a mediaeval strong­hold like Caernarvon. The prince is entertained to a sumptuous meal by a beautiful hospitable lady, and soothed by music among the richly dressed company who suddenly appear, eat, dance, and disappear. He is escorted to his chamber by the 'fair enchantress' and sleeps, but when he wakes, he is confronted by the giant Dramusiand and imprisoned in irons. In the casual manner of romance, we are later told that 'Don Edoard, not being yet released from his confinement though twelve years had passed, great search was made after him' (p.10). Eventually, Dramusiand sets
Edoard himself to defend the drawbridge, wearing sable armour, his silver shield bearing a flaming heart. This romance provides much of the kind of detail which, no doubt, persuaded eighteenth-century mediaevalists that romance could give historical information. The final battle to defeat Dramusiand is cataclysmic, making the earth shake. The captive knights plead for the defeated giant's life, and 'Immediately, in a tempest, as loud as fighting, Winds, or rattling Thunders, the Inchantments vanished.' (p.50). To celebrate the return of the princes, a great feast is held, 'accommodated with oderiferous perfumes, and melodies of Musick and Masque-Dancing.' (p.51). Dramusiand is later reformed, and becomes a useful ally to Palmerin, and later marries a similarly reformed giantess.

The brutal exercise of arbitrary power, subterranean prisons and chained captives furnish a significant part of Johnson's metaphor. In romance, it is the hero's role to liberate others from these evils more often than to suffer them himself, so that the horrible descriptions are tempered by the reader's knowledge that the wrong has been righted.
5.3 'The Meanders of Enchantment'.

Although giants command some magic, the enchanters and enchantresses who control much of the action of romance have a very much wider range, and magic effects may be pleasant or terrifying. In Palmerin, the good Sage Almard conjures up a paradise of the senses to entertain the princes when they visit his mansion:

Where by his Art he showed them such rare Devices as highly pleased them; for at once he raised Fountains of Water and Stately Bowers, covered with clustering Vines, and accommodated with all Rich Banquets, the Trees distilling everywhere odoriferous Gums, and the Birds warbling their Sweet Notes, then divers airy Phantoms danced to an invisible Harmony.

(p.57)

The creation of illusory palaces is an impressive feat of magic (Milton's Pandemonium is a near relation),2 and Johnson illustrates 'necromancy' in the Dictionary by these lines from Drayton's Nimphidia:

This palace standeth in the air,
By necromancy placed there,
That it no tempests needs to fear.

[11.33-5]

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1. Collins 'delighted to wander in the meanders of enchantment' and 'to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces.' (Lives, III, 337).
2. Johnson uses Milton's words, Paradise Lost, I, 710-726, in Falkland's Islands, describing war profiteers, 'whose palaces rise like exhalations (Works, VI, 200), and in his Preface to Lauder's Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost, Johnson describes the work itself as a sublime castle: 'It is pleasing to take a view of the fabrick gradually rising, perhaps from small beginnings, till its foundation rests in the centre, and its turrets sparkle in the skies...' (Hazen, p.81). The Milton passage illustrates 'exhalation'
There are many descriptions of these Prospero-like entertainments conjured up by good or bad enchanters. Phantoms, however, are more likely to be created by malignant magicians, and to act as assailants rather than as masque performers.

The line of the quest may, as we have seen, be diverted by appeals from suppliants, by deluding seductresses, by disguised magicians, by tyrannic rulers or by challenges from knights encountered on the way, but on the enchanted ground of the Peninsular romances this diversity, sometimes so accelerated as to be almost comic, is often further enlivened by such phantom assailants.

Palmerin went to finish an adventure, and found himself in a spacious plain, where 'he beheld divers dark Clouds overspreading the midst thereof'. As he advanced through this darkness, he met diverse wild Beasts, which ran at him with great fury, against whom he prepared himself, but in his blows wounded nothing but air, for they were only Phantoms of terror formed by Magick, wherefore passing through the Skirts of thick darkness he found it like a small showre of rain, till at length he saw a glimmering of light, as it proceeded from flaming Torches, towards which he approached, still encountering with airy Spectrums, which in their career, (much like Blasts of wind) gave him such buffets, that he could scarcely sit his Horse; yet at length having pretty well passed the darkness, he beheld the Castle... walled and moated around, before which stood two Knights, to his seeming, well appointed, but as they came fiercely on they vanished.

(pp.87-83).

1. p.81, cf. the 'darksome' cloud with which Duessa conceals Sammy Loy (faerie Queene: I,v.13). Although concealing clouds are part of the Homeric machinery, I believe that when they occur in Johnson's metaphor, they can be demonstrated to be related to romance models, especially when they occur in conjunction with 'phantoms'.

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Palmerin then fought some giants who also disappeared, and crossed the drawbridge before it went up, when there was a mighty earthquake. He came to the iron gate of the castle, which was guarded by a monstrous serpent. Palmerin attacked it and it flew away, and the doors flew open of their own accord. He was then able to go through to the garden, where he found a captive princess whom he restored to her father. This end is unusual only in that the castle does not disappear.

A later adventure provides not only a castle disappearing by magic, but even its creation. Two knights have freed the Island Perilous from the enchantress Eutrope, and find themselves in a beautiful garden with 'a Crystal Fountain, embossed with silver sculpture of many stories and rare devices' (p.115). Artifacts in romance frequently bear inscriptions, prophecies, and stories: fountains, pillars, tapestries and swords warn or encourage the knight who is able to decipher their message. Palmerin continues and 'like an Exaltation up there sprang a stately Fabrick seeming to the eye of Lucent Stones, and Massy Gold, the Gates wide open, yet guarded by two monstrous forms.' 1 Palmerin takes the key from a golden image between these monsters, and they vanish. There are other wonders to explore, but in the middle 'instantly a clap of thunder breaking o're this airy mansion, it vanished in a flash of lightning' (p.116).

1. This passage, with its characteristic malapropism, is also closely related to Pandemonium.
The vanishing castle is the most impressive of magic stage effects, and it is appropriate that Johnson should illustrate 'magick' by a quotation from Granville's poem 'On Unnatural Flights in Poetry' which refers scornfully to the hyperboles of seventeenth-century love-poetry:

\[
\text{Like castles built by magick art in air,} \\
\text{That vanish at approach, such thoughts appear.}\]

Here, the magic event takes place in the mind, as in many of Johnson's own metaphors.

There are other impressive effects in the repertory of romance enchantment, like the flying chariot in which characters are whirled to safety or into imprisonment by good or bad enchanters. In Don Belianis, for instance, the hero's helpful enchantress Bellona has an elaborately described chariot drawn by griffons. When, towards the end, Don Belianis's wife produces twins, they are brought to a tournament in spite of a prophecy that they will be stolen; two fiery chariots appear from a cloud, one drawn by griffons, one by dragons. The dragon chariot is defeated, but the royal children are taken up in the other. Later, a letter from Sage Bellona drops from the 'cealing', to say that she has taken the children away to keep them safe and educate them, and they are eventually returned.

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For 'rap' in the Dictionary, defined as 'to snatch away' two chariot episodes are quoted. One is classical, a description of Phaeton from the Faerie Queene; the second, from Paradise Lost, ends

...Flew oe'er the Lake
Rap'd in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.

(III,518-23)

This comes from a particularly interesting passage. Satan approaches Heaven as a knight does a hostile castle; there is a great defended wall, giving the characteristic sense of formidable height, and, within it, a 'stately portal'. Jacob's ladder serves as a draw-bridge which is let down to 'dare' Satan to challenge entrance, and Heaven's 'moat' is a 'bright sea', over which other arrivals may be brought in flying chariots.

Describing the 'machines and expedients of the heroick romance', in Rambler 4, Johnson speaks of giants who 'snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites.' Targiana, Palmerin's newly-married wife, is snatched up in 'a Chariot descending like a flame of Brimstone' which 'wrapped her through the skies' among dark clouds, thunder and lightning (p.147). In the Faerie Queene, Amoret is also snatched from her bridal feast by the enchanter Busyrane (III,i,3).

The idea of an enchanted place, in which everything that the adventurer sees will prove illusory, is often alluded to in eighteenth-century literature.¹ In his 'Life of Dryden', Johnson refers to one great prototype: 'we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.' (Lives,I,179). Tasso's

¹. For some examples of 18th-century variations on the phrase 'enchanted ground,' see Arthur Johnston, pp.5-9.
enchanted wood is ringed by a wall of fire in the shape of a battlemented city surmounted by monstrous defenders. Its terror is increased by dreadful sounds. Many of Godfrey's warriors attempt it, one an Ajax, 'a man both void of wit and void of dread' (XIII, xxiv), but all are baffled. Tancred then passes, intrepid and therefore unscathed, through the fire, and it disappears, giving place to 'hideous stormes' and darkness, but when these have cleared, he finds 'a faire and spatiouse greene', 'like calmest waters, plaine, like veluet, soft.' (XIII, xxxvii, 36-7).

When he attempts to cut down a cypress, one of the devils who inhabit the wood prevents him, by pretending to be his dead love, and it is left to Rinaldo to conquer the enchantment. Although, clearly, these metamorphoses owe much to Ovid, and cyclopses and buskined nymphs appear as well as battlemented and turretted cities in the enchanted grove, the episodes illustrate the variety of impressive and sharply contrasted visual and auditory effects characteristic of romance enchantment. For 'passion', Johnson quotes from Dryden's Prologue to his heroic romance drama, Aurengzebe:

*Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound
And nature flies him like enchanted ground.*

[11.9-10]

Johnson uses this range of enchantments in very interesting ways in his metaphors, especially when he is applying them to the human condition, or, more particularly, to the condition of the writer as adventurer.
5.4 The Palace of the Enchantress: 'Pleasing Captivity'.

A different kind of magic is performed by the great enchantresses of 'heroick romance' who were initially modelled on Circe and Calypso: Boiardo's and Ariosto's Alcina, Tasso's Armida, and Spenser's own version, Acrasia. Although love and war are so closely linked in romance, and although knights are sent into combat to deserve their ladies' love, there is always a conflict between the bedroom and the battlefield, and the main objection to the Bowers of Bliss expressed in these renaissance romances is that their delights soften the warrior so that he is no longer mindful nor capable of his martial duty. In all the scenes of renaissance romance where the hero is found enslaved to an enchantress, effeminacy and idleness (the antithesis of the heroic quest) is a greater reproach than illicit love.

Book II of the Faerie Queene is concerned with Temperance, and Guyon not only destroys Acrasia's bower; he also rejects a lesser siren, Phaedria (or Immodest Mirth), one of her servants. I have found more quotations from this Canto in the Dictionary than from Canto XII which describes Acrasia's bower. Phaedria skims about the Idle Lake in a little boat, described in the Dictionary under

1. Lives, I,454, where Johnson refers to the attractions of 'works of imagination.'
2. Under 'indolent' in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes from Pope's Iliad: 'it ill befits a chief/to waste long nights in indolent repose.'
'gondola', and she is introduced in the lines immediately following these, which are quoted to illustrate 'solace':

Therein sat a lady fresh and fair,
Making sweet solace to herself alone;
Sometimes she sung as loud as lark in air,
Sometimes she laug'd that nigh her breath was gone.  [V,vi,31]

For 'way' Johnson uses another few lines from this stanza:

...Matter of mirth
She could devise, and thousand ways invent
To feed her foolish humour, and vain joliment.  [II,vi,3]

She lures the angry knight Cymochles to her island, where his senses are pleased in a beautiful garden, and she lays him down with his head on her lap singing him a lotus-eater's song, which lulls him to sleep. This voluptuous song is quoted for 'belamour':

Lo, lo, how brave she decks her bounteous bow'r
With silken curtains, and gold coverlets,
Therein to shroud her sumptuous belamour,
[II,vi,16]

a suggestive introduction to the very pictorial and sensual descriptions of Acrasia's surroundings. Phaedria next ferries Guyon over and does all she can to drown him

...in dissolute delights apart,
Where noyse of armes or vew of martiall guize
Might not revive desire of knightly exercise.
[II,vi,25]

The first introduction to Acrasia's Bower of Bliss is a brief view of Cymochles, as Atin comes upon him:

There he him found all carelessly displayed,
In secret shadow from the sunny ray
On a sweet bed of lilies softly layd.
[II,v,32]

These lines are quoted for 'shadow'. He is surrounded by ladies,

Every of which did loosely disaray
Her upper parts of meet habiliments,
And shew'd them naked, deckt with many ornaments.
[II,v,32]

But this is not quoted.
When Guyon himself goes, accompanied by his faithful guide, the Palmer, to overthrow Acrasia's rule, he has to overcome the usual terrors of enchantment as well as these more insidious delights. The guide is a figure of great importance in romance. He or she may be a messenger, sent to ask for help, like Una, or the many damsels and dwarfs who accompany the knight on his quest. The Palmer is, however, the voice of conscience and restraint, a moral as well as physical guide, and is one of the important fraternity of religious personages in romance. He appears in the Dictionary, gratuitously, under 'steer'.

A comely palmer, clad in black attire,
Of ripest years, and hairs all hoary gray,
That with a staff his feeble steps did steer,
Lest his long way his aged limbs should tire.

[II, i, 7]

Guyon and the Palmer sail through the dangers of the allegorical sea, past the Gulfe of Greedinesse, the Rocke of vile Reproch, the Quicksand of Unthriftyhed, and the Whirlepoole of decay. As I have noted, Johnson's allegory in Rambler 102 is closely modelled on this journey. The ordeals which travellers encounter on their way to the Bowers of Bliss in these renaissance romances constitute one of the most striking of the contrasts which are so characteristic of all romance. Here, the travellers meet sea-monsters to terrify and sirens to allure them, enchanted mists and darkness, full of sinister 'gothic' night-birds, owls, bats, ravens and harpies. As in the Palmerin episode, these seem intended only to frighten the travellers, and by persevering they come to land.
There, they are frightened by 'the hideous bellowing of many beasts' (II, xii, 39) which are quelled by the Palmer's magic staff. The Genius of the place, whom they encounter at the gate, can himself play the enchanter's role; he

\[
\text{Secretly doth us procure to fall,}
\]

\[
\text{Through guilefull semblants, which he makes us see.}
\]

(II, xii, 58)

as enchanters conjure up phantom assailants or seducers.\(^1\) The vegetation of the Bower is itself sensual; the vine has

\[
\ldots\text{boughes and braunches, which did broad dilate}
\]

\[
\text{Their clasping armes in wanton wreathings intricate.}
\]

(II, xii, 53)

Excess squeezes beautiful grapes into a gold cup (the lines are used to illustrate 'scruzed' in the Dictionary).

Guyon needs the Palmer's wise counsel to tear him away from the naked damsels wrestling in the fountain. Beautiful music and birdsong please the hearing, and someone sings a carpe diem song, borrowed directly from Tasso. Acrasia is also described in sensual detail and the whole Bower of Bliss passage closely follows Tasso's description of Armida and her garden (Bk.16), owing less to Ariosto's parallel passage. In both the Italian romances, the knight enslaved to the enchantress is an important protagonist, whereas in *The Faerie Queene* he is an allegory of youth called Verdant. Ariosto describes Alcina's charms as a net

---

1. For 'semblant' Johnson gives a description of Duessa, a seductive 'phantom' conjured up by an evil enchantress.
to catch men; Spenser transforms this into an actual net in which men are caught. In Tasso, the enchanter warns the deliverers that

the house is builded like a maze within,
With turning stairs, false doors and winding ways.

(XIV,76)

and so they find it:

A labyrinth they made that fortresse brave.

(XVI,1)

In another significant image, the enchanter warns that there is a garden within Armida's golden palace where

Many a gin
And net to catch fraile harts, false Cupid laies.

(XIV,76)

These images of nets, snares and labyrinths are very often used in the context of the enchantress, and we need to be aware of these implications when we meet them in Johnson's metaphors.

The besotted knights of Tasso and Ariosto are shamed into leaving their seductress, and Armida's palace vanishes; Armida flies off in a chariot drawn by two serpents. In The Faerie Queene, however, Guyon physically breaks down Acrasia's bower and everything belonging to it.

The seductress is used in rather a different way in the Peninsular romances. In Palmerin of England, for instance, a secondary character called Florian is summoned from the court by an aged man, and these travellers also have to traverse a fog, and climb a steep path to a castle on a rock. At the gates they are welcomed by beautiful damsels, one of whom guides Florian to his room and later
offers to 'yield her honour to be at his disposal so soon as con-
veniency would permit' (p.106). She slips a ring on his finger,
but this sends him to sleep, and he is only saved from being killed
by a vengeful giantess when the latter is checked by his beauty.
These seductresses are more often seen as a means to the knight’s
physical destruction or imprisonment than to his moral corruption.

5.5 The Cave

The cave is another centre from which power is exercised,
and another possible lodging for the knight errant. There is a
wide range of cave-dwellers in romance: enchanters, savage men,
hermits, and, in Spenser, many personifications, live in them in
greater or lesser degrees of comfort or horror. Under 'chamber'
in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes from Bentley: "A natural cave
in a rock may have something not much unlike to parlours or
chambers", and we shall find evidence of his interest in caves as
habitations in Scotland, as we have at Ilam and Hawkestone. The
cave in romance is also an important element in the frightening
or mysterious 'gothic' landscape.

The grandest living-cave is described by Tasso in Book 14. It
belongs to a baptized wizard, and it is more great house than den
'with goodly rooms, halles, chambers, galleries', where

An hundreth groomes, quicke, diligent and neat,
Attendance gave about these strangers bold.
Against the wall there stood a cupboard great
Of massi e plate, of silver, crystal, gold.
(Sts.48,50)
In Don Belianis, the sage Bellona also lives in a cave from which she dates her letters; another enchantress, Mellia, in Palmerin, leaves her cave to her son, the Savage Man who brings up Palmerin and his brother. The savage man is an important character in romance. He represents untutored man, opposed to the courtier, whether as nobly uncorrupted or as bestially evil. The native savage man of mediaeval romance was equated with the satyr in renaissance versions; so, in The Faerie Queene, I,vi,21, Satyrane is the son of a satyr and a gentle lady, and he, like the wholly savage man of I,iv, shows natural goodness and compassion for the distresses of 'civilized' characters. Savage men often foster abandoned or stolen children, as in Palmerin, and in another celebrated romance, Valentine and Orson. The pattern of this last, in which one child is brought up at court and one by a savage man, is a popular one: Shakespeare uses it in Cymbeline.

The cave of the savage man in Palmerin has 'many spatiouse rooms, hung round with the skins of beasts, so that entering they found it contrived labyrinth-wise, with many goodly lights descending through thickets of bushes' (p.55).

Very different from these commodious dwellings are the dreadful caves of personified passions in the Italian romances and The Faerie Queene, which owe much to the description of Avernus in the Aeneid, Bk.VI, and to the house of Envy in Bk.II of the Metamorphoses. The theme of descent into dark, dangerous and horrible subterranean places has already been illustrated, and it is important among the 'gothic' elements of romance, which would
include the charnel-house, dungeons, torments, death and the supernatural. These express the blacker passions of evil power oppressing the innocent. The settings are designed to produce horror; landscapes are savage, darkened by magic cloud, night or storms, and birds and beasts of ill omen haunt the scene.

Ruins are rather less common than they become in later exploitations of the gothic elements. The gothic exists as a dark sub-stratum, both psychological and literal, to the amorous and martial superstructure of romance. In *The Faerie Queene*, Duessa's descent into Hades is described with much gothic detail in Stanzas 30 and 31 of Bk. I,v, which are quoted at length in the Dictionary under 'dreary' and 'gulf', while for 'comfortless', Johnson quotes Stanza 36,

> Where was a cave, y' wrought with wond'rous art,  
> Deep, dark, uneasy, doleful, comfortless.

The descent to Mammon's cave in II, vii, also provides much of this kind of detail. Characteristic are passages quoted in the Dictionary to illustrate 'subtile' (St.28) and 'compass' (St.20).

For 'horror', Johnson quotes the lines:

> Over them sad horror, with grim hue,  
> Did always soar, beating his iron wings;  
> And after him, owls and night ravens flew,  
> The hateful messengers of heavy things.  
>  
> [St. 33]

In *Rambler* 44, personified Superstition, who is closely related to Despair, leads the narrator through 'a deep solitary valley' where 'dismal howlings resounded through the forest [and] from every baleful tree the night-raven uttered his dreadful note' (*Yale*, III, 238).
There are many possible permutations among these centres of power and their inhabitants. The power wielded in cave, palace or castle may vary from the physical force of the solitary savage man or armed knight, to the cataclysmic power of great enchanter. The great court can also mobilise armies and capture countries, as in the Italian epics, but, though warfare and siege play a significant part in some works, romance remains essentially the narrative of the individual in conflict with powers enormously greater than his own.
6. The Landscape of Romance

The landscape in which the romance is enacted is significant, not only on the simple level of providing scenery for the drama but also as embodying the vicissitudes of the hero's adventures in the quest. The correlation is never simple between the action and scene, between the locus amoenus and interludes of peaceful happiness, or between dark rocky valley and terror. The mazes of the universal forest may lead the errant knight to the dangerous lair of dragon or savage man, or to the pleasant castle of a complaisant chatelaine, standing in a flowery meadow. The landscape is itself, though, an image of the pains and ordeals, the pleasures and fulfilments of the quest, and may be read at a deeper level, as Johnson often uses it, as an image of the mind.

'Romantic' landscape had a clearly defined meaning in the increasingly specialised landscape vocabulary of the eighteenth-century, though the associative concept is already firmly established in Addison's Remarks on...Italy, published in 1703. The deserts, 'solitary rocks and mountains' near Cassis are 'so romantic a scene', he says, that they have probably always given

1. Richard Payne Knight, writing on The Pleasure of Romance, explains that scenery "of which every object is wild, abrupt, and fantastic", in which endless intricacies discover at every turn something new and unexpected, so that we are at once amused and surprised, and curiosity is constantly gratified, but never satiated. This kind of scenery we call romantic, not only because it is similar to that usually described in romances, but because it affords the same kind of pleasure." An Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste, 4th ed. (London, 1808), p.195. Here are perfectly registered the vicissitudes, the contrast, the continual stimulus, which Johnson found so attractive, not only in romance, but, for instance, in Shakespeare's plays.
rise to 'chimerical relations.' It is not at all remarkable
that Johnson's third definition of 'romantick' should be 'fanciful,
full of wild scenery,' illustrated by a quotation from Thomson's
'Spring':

The dun umbrage, o'er the falling stream.
Romantick hangs.

Spenser is probably the most important influence on the English
conception of romantic landscape, so I shall take my examples
mainly from The Faerie Queene, especially when they appear in the
Dictionary.

Implicit in all quests is a path or way, and this in itself
ensures that the knight errant passes through the landscape whose
variety gives the continual violent contrasts so characteristic
of romance.

1. Joseph Addison, Remarks on Several Parts of Italy... (London,
The first canto of *The Faerie Queene* opens with the 'gentle knight' 'pricking o'er the plaine' (quoted, not surprisingly, to illustrate the verb in the *Dictionary*). The action moves quickly to the forest, and Spenser has already added the allegorical dimension which is implicit in all romance forest: it is the 'wandering wood', the labyrinth, where the den of Error is found. These are the attributes of all romance journey; whatever the end to which the quest is directed, the knight errant must wander, err, deviate; the path metaphor is implicit in the language. Behind Spenser's image is also the pastoral Biblical metaphor, 'we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep'.

Johnson defines 'forest' as 'a wild, uncultivated tract of ground, with wood', and the adjective 'desert', as 'wild; waste; solitary; uninhabited; uncultivated; untilled.' The stress in both cases is on landscape untamed by civil man. The barren wilderness is a significant romance setting: romance is not concerned with cultivation, or any husbandry but the pastoral, and the polarisation is thus most powerful between the dark savage forest or desert outside, full of natural and supernatural perils, and the inside, the lighted palace or humbler shelter of caves and hermitages. This deeply structural opposition, which also corresponds to movement and stasis, increases the tension of arrival;

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the environs of cave and castle may prolong this tension by natural ordeals. As Guyon travels to Mammon's cave, he passes through some extreme examples of romance landscape, beginning with the wilderness:

Wide wastful ground
That nought but desert wildernesse show'd all around,

(II, vii, 2)

The stress is here on lack of cultivation, but Guyon then enters a

gloomy glade
cover'd with boughes and shrubs from heuen's light

where evil and darkness and the emotional force of 'gloomy' prepare us for Guyon's encounter with Mammon, who later leads him through the 'thick couert' and down

A darkesome way, which no man could descry,
That deepe descended through the hollow ground,
And waswith dread and horrour compassed around.

(II, vi, 20)

Johnson quotes this passage to illustrate 'compass'. A further contrast is dictated by classical precedent. Since the descensus Avernue is facilis, this dreadful 'way' comes out on

An ample plaine,
Through which a beaten broad high way did trace,
That streight did lead to Plutoe's griesly raine.

This whole passage, with other descents into infernal regions, owes much to the Aeneid, Book six. But this landscape is already available in Chaucer's Knight's Tale, and, more significantly, in early English romances like Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight, where
the fearful valley of the hero's ordeal is in the Wirral rather than at Cumae. Whatever the original provenance of these landscapes, there is no doubt that to the eighteenth century they were 'romantick' rather than 'classical', and, as I shall show, Johnson could rely on this association.

Another allegorical meeting in The Faerie Queene carries the horrors of Hades closer to the 'gothic'. Quoted to illustrate both 'craggy' and 'ypight' is this description of the Cave of Despair:

...that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in a hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy clift ypight
Darke, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave,
[That still for carrion carcasses doth crave.]  
[I,ix,33].

It is easy to see why Johnson, with his dread of death and corruption, should have remembered this landscape. The gothic horrors include 'the ghastly owle, shrieking his baleful note', and the terror is increased by 'wandering ghosts' who 'waile' and 'howle' around. Further picturesque touches are added in the next stanza:

And all about old stocks and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees.
[On which had many wretches hanged been.]

This is quoted for 'stub'.

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1. This is the kind of landscape usually associated with the paintings of Salvator Rosa. Thomas Warton, Essay on...Pope: 'The scenes of Thomson are frequently as wild and romantic as those of Salvator Rosa, pleasingly varied with precipices and torrents and "castled cliffs" and deep vallies, with piny mountains and the gloomiest caverns.'1,42-3. As usual, the reference is to romantic, rather than classical, landscape.
Epic similes allow Spenser licence to introduce the cataclysmic natural landscapes of Italy. For 'coal-black', Johnson quotes these lines describing the dragon in I, xi, 44:

```
As burning Ætna, from his boiling stew,
Doth belch out flames, and rocks in pieces broke
And ragged ribs of mountains molten new,
Enwrapt in coal-black clouds and filthy smoak.
```

and he gives a very similar passage from Fairfax for 'crag'.

Volcanoes are not common in romance, but earthquakes and every extreme of weather play an important part in conjuring up appropriate emotions. Enchanters produce storms and darkness, rain and hail, as well as deluding mists and clouds, and great claps of thunder and lightning shake the ground as an accompaniment to many magic performances. The auditory terrors of Tasso's enchanted wood include sounds of earthquakes, thunder, the 'rumbling' of the south-wind, 'sea waues against the craggie shore'; lions 'gromble', snakes hiss, wolves howl, bears roar, trumpets sound, all in one stanza (XIII, 21).

The sea provides a whole theatre of dramatic landscapes in romance, with sea-fights, pirates and shipwrecks diversifying the land battles. Guy of Warwick, for instance, experiences storms at sea, is attacked by Turks and Sarazins, is set upon by three pirate-ships, destroys two single-handed, and forces the other to fly. In Amadis de Gaule, a minor character, Agrais, on his way to Norway in search of his love, looked down from a mountain top and discerned the raging billows of the sea. [He saw]
an exceeding great tempest which with
mighty winds so troubled the water,
and the thunder rattled with so much
violence, as if heaven and the nether
region would have met together. At length
he espied a ship tossed in the tempest,
utterly destitute of any safety, and
(which was worse) subject to the mercy
of a dark comfortlesse night ensuing.

(I,108) 1.

He lights beacons on the shore, the ship reaches safety, and proves
to be carrying his lady. In The Faerie Queene another dreadful
coastal landscape is inhabited by Gelosie:

a rocky hill,
Our the sea, suspended dreadfully
That living creature it would terrify,
to look adowne or upward to the hight.

He too lives in a cave, but this is on the face of a 'craggy cliff', in danger of falling rocks (III, ix. 56-59).

But just as the most terrifying conditions are created by
magic, the most delightful gardens, the most flowery meadows,
the sweetest smelling groves, are often seductive settings for
enchantresses, and pleasant landscapes, even though not created
by magic, do not reliably indicate happy events.

On occasion, landscape is used predictably. So, in I,48 of
Amadis de Gaule, an April wood reminds Amadis of his Oriana, and
he faints with excess of emotion. Again, in I,120, the contrast
is emphasised, and the emotive effect of landscape underlined, as

1. This is the kind of scene Johnson may have had in mind when
wishing to witness a storm at sea from Slains Castle, towering
over the sea on its 'perpendicular rock'. (Yale, IX, 16).
Amadis

issuing forth of the Forest, entred
on a large and goodly plaine, bravely
beautified with violets, sweet herbs, and
all other detiles of nature's tapistrie,
which presently provoked the remembrance
of his Oriana.

But the clearing in the wood, with its soft grass, flowers, and
crystal stream, may lull the knight to a sense of false security.
The Red Cross Knight and Duessa rest in such a clearing, and he
drinks from a fountain which has the property of enfeebling those
who drink. The knight, disarmed and refreshing himself by a
stream in a pleasant clearing in the forest with his armour hung
on a tree, is a common image in romance. For 'unlaced' in the
Dictionary, Johnson quotes from II,i,24:

    a little river roll'd
    By which there sat a knight with helm unlac'd
    Himself refreshing with the liquid cold^Fairy Queen, b.i.

but confuses it with the passage in Book one; there, the charming
scene, where birds sing, green branches with trembling leaves make
a garland round the cristal spring, and the knight dallies with
Duessa, is rudely broken in on by the giant Orgoglio.

Similarly, the setting of the false hermit Archimago's cell
is deceptively pleasant. It was

    Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side...
    Thereby a Christall Streame did gently play,
    Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.
    (I,i,34)
Fountains may be holy wells, as here, or elaborate artifacts, engraved with mysterious messages and prophecies, and they may have healing properties, as in the dragon fight in Book I,xii. Here, the apparent peace and holiness of the retired cell mask Archimago's evil intentions. However, we shall see Johnson enjoying such a pleasant scene in Scotland with no unhappy reversal.

Landscape settings for the innumerable castles the knights must meet with on their journeys, give little guidance to the welcome to be expected, although, in the nature of adventures, more are likely to be hostile than not. The Castle of Bradoid, in Amadis, has a variety of realistic natural features which make it hard to assail. It is

Seated on toppe of a mountain, environed about with Fennes and Marshes, is also with a salt water, that ran before it wondrous swiftly, so that without a Barque it was impossible to get thither. [However, there was] a faire long Causey being so broad that two Chariots might well meet together on it: and at the entrance of the Causey was a drawbridge whereunder the water ran with such a violent fall as none was by any means able to pass it.

(I,66)

Castles may be defended in many ways, by rivers or moats, by being on islands in the sea, or on top of mountains. The drawbridge is a common challenge-point.

In a later episode, Amadis is surprised by night, travelling through the dark forest, and sees a more inviting castle, in powerful contrast to the lonely and dangerous darkness:
A faire fortresse, as he gathered by the lights he beheld through the glasse windows, and coming neere thereto, he heard the voices of men and women singing, tunable to sweet musicke that consorted with them.

( Ibid., p.81)

This seems to presage the harmony of the ideal Spenserian household, but Amadis's reception is unfriendly and he is refused hospitality with insult and mockery.

Palmerin meets with a great variety of castles; one, more gothic than most, is in the Tristful Valley. It belongs to the 'Knight of Death' and is covered with moss. This significant naming is rarer in Peninsular romance than in Spenser. He progresses to another castle through a tempest and fog, and finds it set on a high rock with a steep and narrow ascent which causes him to sit and rest several times, an unusual touch of realism for romance.

If we take the romance quest as an image of the journey of life, castles are images of ordeals, or occasionally rewards, depending on the chances of life. The landscapes which surround them may be images either of the seductive delusions of the world or, alternatively, of the obstacles to the goals of life, especially the tasks or hopes of the young. The knight remains ingenuous; indeed, as we have seen, it is impossible for him to learn from experience to read the landscape, to distinguish enchantments from reality, to equate flowery meads and golden palaces with joy, frowning crags and gloomy valleys with evil. Nor does he learn suspicion, but enters each new scene confident in his own right and valour, and is usually rewarded.
I have noted Johnson's definition of 'adventurer'. Similarly 'adventure' is 'an enterprise in which something must be left to hazard.' Chance, or apparent chance, is the essence of romance narrative and it is so important a theme for Johnson's metaphor and for his view of human life that it is worth separate consideration.

The Allegory of Book I of The Faerie Queene is specifically Protestant: the quest is The Red Cross Knight's pursuit of salvation, and liberation of Christianity from its oppression by Rome, and therefore it contains meanings which are not characteristic of romance. However, I am here primarily concerned with the narration at the level of romance plot, whose language encourages the reader to see every occurrence as 'hazard'.

The first accident to dictate the action is a rainstorm, which drives the Red Cross Knight and Una into the labyrinthine wood of Error, where they 'wander to and fro in ways unknown' entirely at the mercy of chance. Maze images are commonly used in romance for seduction, but can also be used for the errors of 'our present state.'

Red Cross and Una come upon the cave of the monster Error, which the Knight fights and vanquishes. Meanwhile, Una watches from afar 'all that chaunst' in the fight. Afterwards, instead of pressing on with the quest, the Knight puts himself in the hands of chance and 'new adventures sought' (I,i,28) and eventually 'They
chaunst to meet upon the way' the supposed hermit, who is actually Archimago. After Red Cross has been deceived by the false Una, he goes off and at last 'him chaunst to meet upon the way' Sansfoy, 'a faithless Sarazin all armed to point.' After this encounter, weather again plays the part of chance; hot sunshine drives the travellers to take shelter in a wood, where they come upon an enchanted knight, whose story further delays the quest. They then go on to the House of Pride where Sansjoy, the brother of the first Saracen, happens to arrive. After they have left the House of Pride, it is hot sun which drives Duessa and Red Cross for shelter into another wood where there happens to be a fountain which enfeebles those who drink it, and here Orgoglio appears, again by chance: there is no suggestion that he has come to find the Knight.

After the defeat of Red Cross, the narrative returns to Una, who happens to meet the dwarf from whom she learns of Red Cross's fate; she seeks help, and

She chaunced by good hap to meet
A goodly knight faire marching by the way
(Iv, 29)

and at this, the first appearance of Prince Arthur, she appeals to him, and he is, of course, obliged to leave his quest to come to her aid. Since Arthur is here an agent of Divine Grace, he calls into question the role of chance in directing him to that place. He questions whether it was Providence which sent him to
the aid of Red Cross, or whether it was 'the bleeding wound' of
his love for the Fairy Queen which had driven him onwards, still
at God's Will, 'With forced fury following his behest.' (I.ix.7).
This is uncharacteristic of secular romance, since fortune nor-
mally functions without divine guidance, unless the heavens are
protagonists in the drama, as in Godfrey of Bulloigne.

The arrival of Trevisan fleeing from Despair is the next
chance, but after this episode, Una becomes the Red Cross Knight's
guide, and chance plays no further part in events until the dragon-
fight, when 'it fortuned (as faire it then befell)' (I.xi.29),
that the sacred well was behind Red Cross at just the crucial
moment. At the deeper level of the allegory, the well represents
baptism. As Una watches the fight, she prays that God will take
away 'the feared chaunce' of the Knight's defeat. (I.xi.32).

After the killing of the dragon and the return to court, Red
Cross counters the messenger's false account with his own, ex-
plaining that

It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately travailed, that unawares I stray'd
Out of my way...  
(I.xii.31)

This gives a further 'chance' word, and re-asserts the significance
of the 'way', and the function of error. It is an interesting
peculiarity of this narrative that the strictly controlled inten-
tion at the allegorical level should be expressed by a romance plot
whose vocabulary so constantly signals the operation of chance.
8. 'Knighthood; A Military Dignity'.

Johnson's first definition of 'chivalry' reminds us that the major part of romance has to do with fighting; enemies are attacked on the slightest provocation, wounded, dismembered, and killed, sometimes in unimaginable numbers. Armies confront each other, and thousands die. Ships' crews are despatched single-handed and ships sunk. Cities are beset, battered, mined, burnt. The knight encounters and destroys giants, dragons, phantoms, wild beasts of every kind, even, very rarely, villeins; even women may be summarily beheaded, or burnt at the stake. It is an almost ridiculously violent world (in that this violence is scarcely remarked on or questioned) and its code demands constant bloodshed. Ascham's definition of romance as 'open manslaughter and bold baudrie' has much justification, and even Spenser does not escape either part of the charge.

In Tasso's and Ariosto's heroic romances, the *chanson de geste* combines with the *Iliad* to give a public context to the profusion of private quests. This is not so in the traditional English romances, nor in those imported from the Iberian Peninsula, though even here, episodes of siege and battle are added to the essentially private quests.

Single combat is the central chivalric image, whether in the exercise of the lists, or in fights to the death. The fight between the Red Cross Knight and Sans joy, for example, is conducted with proper chivalric ceremony; Red Cross pledges his
gauntlet, and the tournament forms part of the entertainment at Lucifera's court; the combatants swear to obey 'the sacred law of arms'. Chroniclers are there to record the event, which takes place on a 'paled green', while the Queen sits under 'a stately canapee'. Trumpets introduce the battle and sound for victory after Sansloy has been spirited away, and 'running heralds' make 'humble homage' to the victor (I,iv,43,I,v,3-15). This is the self-conscious mediaevalism of the Accession-Day Tilts, and furnished the eighteenth-century antiquary with pleasing information. These formal combats are less common in later romance than in; for example, the Morte d'Arthur: more often, the pattern is complicated by unevenly matched adversaries, the good knight taking on a number of opponents or a giant.

Typical of these unbalanced combats is one between Amadis and King Abies of Ireland, who is a huge man; it is a single combat held between the Irish and English forces. The fight is long and bloody, shields and armour are cut to pieces, blood gushes out at every stroke, Abies refuses a breathing-space until Amadis almost cuts off his leg; at which he surrenders and restores the lands he has usurped. The fates of nations often hang on such single combats by chosen champions; so, in a rather different way, Spenser's Prince Arthur defeats, singlehanded, the usurping forces of the giant Geroneo (who is Spain) and frees Belge (the Netherlands) from tyrannical oppression. (V,x and xi).
Another popular form of combat is the dragon-fight, undertaken by all heroes of chivalry. This allows for much dreadful detail, emphasising the disproportion of the adversaries. One of the most impressive of these is in *The Faerie Queene* (I, xi), where the vivid detail of the dragon furnishes Johnson with a number of quotations (see, eg. 'bought', 'flaggy', 'pen', 'speckled', and 'thrill'). But dragon-fights can also be comic, like giant-fights. Don Belianis meets a dragon whose eyes 'sparkled and flamed like two burning torches.' The hero had difficulties:

being over-reached, the cruel monster drew him to him, ... and pierced him through the armour and flesh almost to the bones with his deadly claws.

At last the knight found a weak place under the wing, and stabbed the dragon to death:

His bigness was almost beyond belief, being twenty-five feet long and as big as an ox. (p. 44)

The all-purpose woodcut in this edition shows a dragon as big as a pony, being killed with an axe.

Although, in most accounts of fights, the hero is said to be wounded, the worst that may happen is that he will have to go to a friendly castle or monastery to be healed, often by a fair maiden. After this particular fight, Don Belianis is tended by two maidens he has rescued from the dragon.
The giant-fight has its own rather comic logic, as we have seen in *The Seven Champions*. Giants are often encumbered by their own mighty weapons. Orgoglio's 'dreadful club', which is 'All armed with ragged snubbes and knottie graine,' buries itself so deep in the ground when Arthur dodges it, 'lightly leaping from so monstrous maine' (I,vii,7) that he cannot lift it again before Arthur has cut off his arm. That fight is complicated by the requirements of the allegory, since Duesra is seated on the seven-headed Beast of *Revelations*, which, at the romance level, is only defeated after chance has unveiled Arthur's invincible diamond shield. In *Amadis de Gaule*, Galaor has a particularly comic fight with a giant whose horse is as big as an elephant; Galaor wounds him in the stomach, and the giant, aiming a mighty blow with his mace which Galaor dodges, kills his own horse, then kills Galaor's; the latter, dodging more blows, slices off an arm, cuts a leg to the bone, cuts off a hand, then at last the head, and having freed the inevitable captives, sits down to a meal in the castle (I,15-16).¹

¹ Cross-references to classical narrative are common in renaissance romance. It is interesting, in view of Johnson's comment on finishing the *Dictionary*, that the narrator calls the giant 'the mighty Poliphemus' (I,76).
Most combats take place in the open, in plain or forest clearing, but some are complicated by place. Amadis is called in to deal with an evil knight who ravishes ladies and tortures knights. Amadis rashly rides into the base-court, an armed knight rides out from the donjon to meet him, and the portcullis is lowered. Amadis takes on a number of knights, and his horse is killed; he then fights and beheads the evil ravisher; "Libinius Ruffian! shalt thou pay for thy disloyal dealing" (I,41). Amadis has been badly wounded, but is brought to a fortress by a grateful knight, whose niece cures him. The episode provides interesting detail, including the vocabulary of the fortified manor house, which has here an anachronistic long gallery.

The many siege descriptions help to intensify the inside-outside structuring of romance, and makes the reader aware of the massively intimidating castle with its raised defenders. The besiegers, who take the active part, are more often the 'good' side, although siege-breaking also allows for heroic combat. The most comprehensively military sieges are those in the Italian epics, especially Tasso's siege of Jerusalem (Bk. XVIII), which has very detailed and technical descriptions of a siege tower, the defences of the town, the engines of defence and the fire-balls they throw, and the assault itself. The prowess of the champion now goes into scaling ladders, but the triumph is really due to technology and,
like the cannon which Ariosto so deplored, (I,xii,26) marks a newer, less chivalric form of war. Ariosto's siege of Paris is also technical, and has a kind of black gusto absent from Fairfax's translation of Tasso. In XV,3, for instance, the narrator remarks that, if the attackers hadn't been charred to ashes in a blazing ditch, the bodies would not all have fitted into it.

Amadis raises a siege when the king is beset in the tower of London; Guy of Warwick raises the siege of Byzantium and disposes single-handed of most of the pagan champions. In Palmerin of England, there is a long and detailed description of a siege in a war between the King of England and the Sultan of Babylon.

The besiegers of the House of Alma in The Faerie Queene (Bk.II, ix and xi) are allegorical and much less heroic. The assailants are a peasant's revolt, villeins and monsters who are frightened away, like gnats in the Bog of Allen, by Guyon, and again by Prince Arthur. There is little technical vocabulary here, and Arthur's siege-breaking turns into a rather ignominious combat with three personifications; two hags, and the Anteus-like and ghostly Maleger.

However all these kinds of slaughter may be allegorised, they are essential to romance narrative, and the reader is intended to identify himself with the virtuous slayer, and to rejoice in the fall of his enemies. There are exceptions, and we shall consider these in relation to an aspect of romance which may be of greater or less importance in the narrative, but which I believe to have strongly attracted Johnson: the mediaeval church.
9. The Age of Faith: the Morality of Romance

The justification for killing in the romance varies. In private combats, it is usually seen as justice meted out to evil tyrants and oppressors of the weak. In the heroic battles of the Italian epics, the wars are against enemies of the Church, or are crusades. Single combat may be undertaken for the honour of a mistress's beauty, or at her command, and this may provoke question, as we shall see. Fights against dragons or monsters are to relieve a fearful populace, or in self-defence.

There is hardly ever any questioning of the morality of bloodshed. I have noted Spenser's reference to the Pauline metaphor of the soldier of Christ (Ephesians 6:10-17) and it is spiritual warfare that is here expressed. Even so, within the allegory, the Red Cross Knight is greeted with surprise at the House of Holiness:

Strange thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place...so few there bee
That choose the narrow path or seek the right.

(I,x,10)

Sometimes Spenser's allegory can lead to apparently unchivalrous cruelty. Artegall, though he pities the fair Lady Munera, will not interfere with justice, and Talus, his iron man, chops off her suppliant hands and her feet, and nails them up, while he throws her bleeding body into the moat to drown in the mud. (V,ii,26-27). But this kind of cruelty is not exceptional in romance; even magnanimity to fallen enemies is not reliably practised, or advocated. In one episode, the courteous Amadis had defeated a
ravisher, and as his opponent lay 'trembling in a trance',
Amadis 'trampled on his belly with his horse's feet, saying Thus
shalt thou lose thy desire of forcing Lady. ' (I,135). On
another occasion, Galaor thrusts his sword through the visor into
an enemy's eyes. Later, when he is unhorsed by a mysterious
knight, he grows so angry that 'every knight he met with in com-
batt dearly felt it, because in combat many received their death.'
(I,236).

If we follow Tasso's analogy between the individual quest and
the contemplative life, in contrast to the public wars and the
active way, we may also remark that the Church in romance is not
the hierarchy of cardinals, bishops, and parish priests, but is
represented by solitary and retired individuals, palmer, friars,
hermits, monks and nuns. The religious life is the Catholicism
of the Middle Ages, lost in England at the Reformation (even though
Spenser converts it to Protestant purposes). But while I believe
that the retrospect to a lost ideal of ascetic sanctity and devo-
tion was as important for eighteenth-century readers as that to
the lost virtues of chivalry,¹ both ideals are sometimes treated
somewhat perfunctorily.

Spenser's House of Holiness (I,x) is entirely serious, however,
and it provides the model household (like Kalendar's house in Sidney's
Arcadia) against which the others will be found wanting. Here,
Red Cross is purged of his sins through a course of physical mor-
tification. Under 'pennance' in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes I,x,27.

¹. Hurd writes of 'that character of Religion which was so deeply
imprinted on the minds of all knights, and was essential to their
institution' (Letters on Chivalry and Romance, p.19).
And bitter penance, with an iron whip
Was wont him once to disciple each day,

while another quotation, for 'pincers' elaborates the Knight's torments. There are many quotations from this Canto in the Dictionary.

In Spenser's House of Holiness, the hermit is personified Contemplation, who 'pyn'd his flesh, to keepe his body low and chast' (I, x, 43). Johnson quotes the description of his hermitage to illustrate the word, along with Il Penseroso's fancied romantic retreat. Spenser's is (characteristically for romance) in a savage landscape, difficult of access.

...By that painfull way they pas
Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and hy,
(1, x, 46)

and find, not only the hermitage, but 'a sacred chapel' there beside it. The hermit here is part of the carefully argued allegorical structure of the book, which draws on the disciplines of Catholic asceticism.

A sense that this devotion belongs to the lost past appears, interestingly, in Samuel Rowlands' verse Guy of Warwick (1635) to which Johnson refers in his Shakespeare. In romance, the active life of war is often abandoned in age for religious retirement; the hermit with whom Lancelot takes refuge after the last battle in Malory's Morte d'Arthur, for instance, has been a valiant knight in youth. In Guy of Warwick, the hero rejects his previous life of slaughter. He vows (he tells his newly won wife), to
...spend the remnant of my days
  In contrite Penance for my former sin...
  Which flesh and blood, vainely deceived by,
  Unto the World, I will goe learne to dye.
  
Phelice, although she wrings her hands with sighs and tears,

  Yet wondrous meekely, nothing countermands,
  For the devotion of that age was such,
  To hold them blessed, could they themselves retire
  To solitude, and leave the world's desire.

The narrator, as so often in romance, is commenting on a lost
world of faith. Guy becomes first a pilgrim and later a hermit,
living incognito near his castle, where, in a truly gothic stanza
we are told that

  Sometime he would go search unto a grave,
  And there find out a rotten dead-man's skull
  And with the same a conference would have
  Examining each Vanity at full...

His wife, believing him dead, betakes herself to a life of chari-
table works. This was another aspect of pre-Reformation life
upon which nostalgia played. The works of mercy of the great
monastic houses provide these with an important function in
romance; errant knights may go to them for food, shelter and
healing, as well as spiritual guidance.¹

¹ In *Idler* 4, Johnson, after urging the necessity for consistency
in the provision of charitable aid to the poor, sick and dis-
abled, describes this mediaeval institution in very approving
terms: 'The equal distribution of wealth, which long commerce
has produced, does not enable any single hand to raise edifices
of piety like fortified cities, to appropriate manors to reli-
gious uses, or deal out such large and lasting beneficence
as was scattered over the land in antient times, by those who
possessed counties or provinces' (*Yale*, II, 14).
Solitary hermits provide the same shelter and guidance as these great monasteries and abbeys. Amadis takes refuge with a hermit whose cell is on a rock in the sea, seven leagues from land, and who lives on dry bread and sun-dried fish. He discourages Amadis from giving up the world, since, like Red Cross, he has a public duty to perform as a king's son (II, 30).

Hermits are not always admirable, however: Ariosto has a very unsaintly hermit who attempts unsuccessfully to ravish Angelica, and whose impotence is treated with Latin jollity (VIII, 49, 50). The first meeting with Archimago, the evil enchanter of The Faerie Queene, is in the disguise of the typical hermit of romance:

An aged Sire, in long black weeds yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
His eyes are humbly downcast, and he is
bidding his beads all day for his trespas
(I, i, 29, 30)

and he invites the travellers to rest in his cell. Here, too, there is 'a holy chappel edifyde' where the hermit prays morning and evening. The discourse is 'fair' though it is stressed that

He told of Saints and Popes, and euemore
He shewed an Ave-Mary after and before.

This anti-Catholic satire is absent from the description of the hermit Contemplation (as it is from Il Penseroso's hermit).

Hermits may play a public role. In Godfrey of Bulloigne, Peter the Hermit is Godfrey's permanent spiritual adviser; in the Crusade context of the Chanson de Geste, the Church fights alongside the martial state, as Archbishop Turpin does in the Chanson
de Roland. Private hermits also have a part in Tasso's romance, healing the wounded and raising a miraculous tomb over a fallen hero (VIII, 27-52). Neither here nor in the private context of the quest is the hermit found to question the bloodshed, even Spenser's holy hermit, although he advises the Red Cross Knight to hang up his shield 'for blood can naught but sin, and wars but sorrow yield' (I, x, 60). Since the fight with the dragon is a spiritual combat with Rome, he has to allow the Knight to win his 'famous victorie' against it.

Hermits are generally static, and their cells are valuable shelters or hospitals; the palmer or pilgrim is himself errant, and the pilgrimage may be an alternative retreat from the violence of chivalry. The uneasy fellowship of the Old Testament heroic tradition and the metaphor of the Church Militant, with the meekness enjoined by the Sermon on the Mount is, as we have noted, reflected even at the level of Guy of Warwick, who, in Rowlands's version, explains his changed moral position to Felice:

Thou didst procure, although I doe excuse it
My Pride, by Conquest to attaine my love.  
(Sig.L4)

In John Shirley's prose version, Guy's remorse is more rhetorical:

puffed up with fond imagination and the
love of thee, in a red Sea of blood have
I sailed about the World, and with this hand have laid thousands, silent and pale, in death's cold Tombs.  
(Sig.H1r)
In fact, he goes on to get involved in several other adventures, killing tyrannical giants, rescuing captives, and at last defeating the Danish giant Colbron, before settling down as a hermit at Warwick.

The question of the lady's responsibility is interesting, and is treated in the Johnsonian chapter of Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote. Since it is the lady who sends the knight to gain an honourable name before she will accept his love, she may be considered morally responsible for the violence that follows. The absolute fealty of the lover to his lady causes great moral problems, like Launcelot's betrayal of Arthur, to whom he owes absolute fealty under a different code; so, in Don Quixote, Vivaldo challenges the knightly custom of praying to the lady instead of to God before a battle (Jervas, I,58).

The code of courtly love creates curious anomalies in sexual morality. As early as Malory, the narrator, having condemned the love of his own day as 'sone hot; sone cold,' praises Guinevere 'that whyle she lived she was a true lover, and therefor she had a gode ende.' An episode in Amadis de Gaule illustrates another aspect of this ambivalent attitude. A subsidiary knight called Balays rescues a lady from ravishers, then proposes that she should sleep with him. Naturally she objects, pointing out that while she would have been blameless if ravished, it would be sin

1. See below, chapter 4, section 10.
if she complied; 'let mee entreat ye to accompany chivalrie, with continence and vertue, as by duty you are bound.' Balays apologises, but claims that 'it is no lesse seemely for knights to moove Ladies with love, than for them modestly to deny as you have done', although he goes on to explain that knights only admire ladies when they resist them, thus 'keeping the thing (without which) they are worthy no praise' (I, 177).

Amadis is at first a chaste and devoted soupirant, fainting at the thought of Oriana, even at the sight of her confidante, but this convention is later abandoned, and it is Oriana who 'plans to compass the means to bring them together' (I, 95). When they do achieve this end, the event is dealt with in considerable, though arch, detail, and quite without editorial disapproval. Interspersed with Amadis's adventures are those of Galaor his brother, who is frequently rewarded with the favours of the ladies he rescues. In one of his exploits, the lady cures his wounds, after he has rescued her, and 'the execution of this hote loue sone after followed', after which the lady asked Galaor to take her back to her mother in a monastery, and 'at the request of the faire sisters, he tarried there longer then he had before intended.' (I, 107).

Des Essartes describes another such encounter, concluding 'son amy Galaor, qui etait pour lors affamé de tel plaisir,... par ce moyen fit tel devoir qu'elle en ayma tout le temps de sa vie.' (I, fol.96v). Shirley translates 'affamé' as 'having a good stomach' to such dainty dyet (I, 167), and this is an indication of the way in which, alongside the exaggerated deference which a knight must pay his mistress, ladies may also be treated as commodities in the Peninsular romances. Palmerin, taking a company of
rescued ladies to the Spanish Court, is accosted by another lady, who says 'Sir, you are well stocked with ladies, and may well spare some of them to our knights' (p.110.) A later attempt to seize them provokes Palmerin to say 'you must first ask my leave ...ere any of these Ladys falls to your share. That needs not, said one of the knights, for we will be our own carvers.' (p.124).

This chapter provides the raw material of my argument. Clearly, it is a partial account of romance as a genre, and I have given equal weight to examples from works that are widely disparate in their literary value and interest. But this, I believe, is the way in which romance elements were seized by Johnson in writers as disparate as Shakespeare and John Shirley, and in experiences as disparate as adventuring in the Highlands or writing periodical articles.
CHAPTER 3: JOHNSON'S ROMANCE METAPHORS

1. The Landscape of the Mind

Let the knight-errant search the remotest corners of the world; enter the most intricate labyrinths; at every step assail impossibilities; in the wild uncultivated deserts brave the burning rays of the summer's sun, and the keen inclemency of the winter's frost: let not lions daunt him, spectres affright him or dragons terrify him: for in seeking these, encountering those, and conquering them all, consists his principal and true employment.

(Jervas, II, 85)

Parody or mock-romance, like Nymphidia, Hudibras, Adventurer I and Don Quixote itself, furnishes useful digests of romance motifs. This passage, which introduces Quixote's discussion of dangerous temerity, includes a number of words, situations, and landscapes which often appear in Johnson's metaphor. Since romance metaphors are noted throughout this study, in this chapter I am offering only a representative selection in order to show the contexts in which they appear, and to alert the reader to characteristic lexical and syntactic patterns.

His mind was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet.

Boswell qualifies this statement from his final epitome of Johnson, continuing:
it is remarkable, that, however rich
his prose is in this respect, his
poetical pieces, in general, have
not much of that splendour.

(Life, p. 1401)

Certainly, the periodical essays are exceptionally rich in metaphor,
which may also be expanded into allegory, or contracted to the re-
viving of meaning dormant in the roots of single Latin words.

Twentieth-century critics, while noting Johnson's uses of
imagery, and his revivifications of dead metaphor, seem unable to
share Boswell's perception of the richly poetic quality of his
prose. Although acknowledgement is made of the meanings expressed
by Johnson's latinate abstractions and generalisations, their in-
tensely lively content of meaning and implication is perceived only
theoretically.¹

I would contend that to Johnson, as to many of his contemporaries,
Latin is neither dead nor abstract: the vivid, physically concrete,
world of "implications", "impediments", "deviations", and "precipices",
which we, perhaps, must make a conscious effort to evoke, is inten-
tionally present in his most abstract-seeming language.

¹. Cf., as examples of representative major critics, W.K. Wimsatt,
who, in his influential The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (New
Haven, 1941) concluded that Johnson's terms were non-sensory, his
meaning generalised and abstract; F.R. Leavis, who saw that
'abstractness...didn't exclude concreteness', but did not de-
velop this; The Common Pursuit (London 1952, repr. 1976), p. 105;
Jackson Bate, who recognised that Johnson's abstract nouns were
far from static, and found them 'charged with latent metaphor';
Donald J. Greene notes Johnson's contemporary reputation for
richness of imagery in his very perceptive study "Pictures to the
Mind": Johnson and Imagery', in Johnson, Boswell, and Their Circle,
(Oxford, Clarendon Press 1965). He also notes Johnson's use of
romance images.
Johnson's sense of this vigour is illuminated by a characteristic metaphor from the Preface to the *Dictionary*:

He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations croud upon his memory,

(sig. C2v)

and his immersion in etymology for the *Dictionary* made him unusually vulnerable to this invasion. Occasionally, these crowding Latin metaphors rise and overwhelm the current English sense, as in *Rambler* 96, where 'every intellect was precluded by Prejudice, and every heart preoccupied by Passion', where the personifications take over the sense, so vividly realised in their work of fortification that the verbs have lost their contemporary meaning \(^2\) (*Yale*, IV, 151).

Wimsatt complained of Johnson's use of personifications and abstractions as

the conjuring into substantiality of qualities which in the physical world would have not this dignity. Many qualities quite relevantly named are nevertheless, like paint on a bench, the better for lying flat.

(op.cit.p.59)

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1. Cf. Motteux's translation of *Don Quixote*: 'A world of disorderly notions, picked out of his books, crouded into his imagination.' (p.4).

2. They are defined as follows in the *Dictionary*: 'Preoccupy: to prepossess, to occupy by anticipation or prejudices;' and 'Preclude: to shut out or hinder by some anticipation.' Johnson is using the primary non-metaphoric meaning, which both words have now lost, and which, although still in use, was not then common. The *O.E.D.* gives this passage as support for 18th-century usage.
While the first part of this splendid image is just, I would contend that Wimsatt and later critics fail to see the three-dimensionality of Johnson's imagery. Certainly Johnson is dealing in abstractions and generality, but his language has a vigorous and submerged life: if the reader's mind is already moving through a three-dimensional landscape of revived metaphors, then where these imply romance situations, personifications appear only as part of a rich *dramatis personae* of assailants, tyrants, enchanters, and seducers.

Two passages unconnected with romance demonstrate Johnson's unmistakable intention of reviving dead metaphors. They are weaving and folding images; the first, from *Rambler* 93, considers the prejudices of authors and concludes that 'perhaps some of them are so complicated with our natural affections, that they cannot easily be disintangled...' *(Yale IV.132).*

In the *Dictionary*, the first definition of 'complicate' is 'to entangle one with another; to join', while the second definition of 'duplicate' is 'to fold together', and we shall see how Johnson uses *plicare* cognates in a group of maze-perplexity-snare entanglements which complicate the knight errant's path.

The second example, from *Rambler* 122, is still more forceful: 'Collateral events are so artfully woven into the contexture of his principal story, that they cannot be disjoined, without leaving it lacerated and broken ' *(ibid., 290).*
Here, the image is explicitly elaborated, restoring 'contexture' to its Latin original, defined in the Dictionary by way of an obscure scientific word 'to contex', though there, weaving plays a minimal part in the definition, where a more general sense of 'composition' prevails. 'Lacerate' is defined as 'to tear; to rend; to separate by violence'. In the case of an image as fully developed as this, there can be little doubt of Johnson's intention, and I am confident that his awareness of Latin roots can be relied on in any analysis of his language in the periodical essays. The group of metaphors with which we are concerned is, of course, only a part of the rich imagery with which Johnson's mind was filled, many of whose characteristics have been noted by other critics.

The central image of the romance of chivalry is the journey. This it shares with a very wide range of literature, from Gilgamesh and the Odyssey, down through the Western development of the epic; it covers such diverse ground as Old Testament migrations, individual Anglo-Saxon and mediaeval quests and pilgrimages, and the 'way' of Oriental and Christian mysticism, and it is implicit in the construction of many languages.

Many other elements of romance imagery are shared with very different literary forms; sieges, armour, assailants, single combat, striking varieties of landscape are common to much classical, Judaic and Christian writing. I hope, however, to show that Johnson's combination of these images is consistently closer to their use in romance than in other forms.

There are two distinct viewpoints from which the landscape of Johnson's own mind is seen. In one, the mind itself is the landscape, seen from within; in the other, the mind or self is journeying through an external landscape. Two passages illustrate these images applied by Johnson to himself: the first is from his Latin poem, entitled significantly Γνωθι σεαυτον, 'know thyself', and subtitled Post Lexicon Anglicanum Auctum et Emendatum. This is as painfully autobiographical as the Diaries, Prayers and Annals, and betrays the same frigid sadness as the last lines of the Preface to the Dictionary: looking within the self, the heart (animus) sees neither material gains nor gratifying honours,

sed sua regna videns, loca nocte silentia late
Horret, ubi vanae species, umbraeque fugaces,
Et rerum volitant rarae per inane figurae.

[But seeing its own kingdom, it shudders at the wide regions silent in night, where empty appearances and fleeting shadows and thin shapes of things flit through the void.]

This dark and silent desert is the 'gloom of solitude' at the close of the Preface (sig.C2v), but haunted by terrifying phantoms. It is directly borrowed from Aeneid VI,264-9, describing Aeneis' descent into Hades, but this is very different from Aeneis' purposeful quest: this desert is not a scene passed through, but the

soul's own kingdom, to which it is condemned. It has a peculiar horror for Johnson: even the 'dusty deserts of barren philology' the metaphorical landscape in which he had been labouring for so long, had been interspersed with 'verdure and flowers' (sig.B2^) but this desert has no path, offers no quest, but only emptiness and fear. We are reminded of the landscape outside the Happy Valley where Nekayah and Pekuah, 'seeing nothing to bound their prospects, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity' (Rasselas, p.39); the horror of vacuity is one of the most insistent of Johnson's images. This then, is one mental landscape we can confidently identify with Johnson himself. Here, the landscape is within the soul; the two other examples show the soul looking out on the landscape it is travelling through.

In a letter to Thomas Warton, written in 1754, two years after Tetty's death, Johnson uses the second metaphor for the self as a solitary traveller. Writing about the recent death of Dodsley's wife, he says:

I hope he will not suffer so much as I yet suffer for the loss of mine...
I have ever since seemed to myself broken off from mankind, a kind of solitary wanderer in the wild of life, without any certain direction, or fixed point of view. A gloomy gazer on a World to which I have little relation.

(Letters, I,59).

Five years later, in Idler, 41, we meet the image again, this time generally applied:

The loss of a friend upon whom the heart was fixed...is a state of dreary desolation in which the mind looks abroad impatient of itself, and finds nothing but emptiness and horror.

(Yale II,129).
What is particularly horrible about this desert is its lack of a path. However fearful and forbidding the landscape of, for instance, the opening of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, any path is preferable to the directionless waste. The hunger of the predatory imagination, which may impel men to build pyramids, is, for Johnson, the dread of this void (*Rasselas*, p.78). The quest imposes a form on vacuity, whether it is to make the right choice of life, or to complete a *Dictionary*, and a large proportion of Johnson's romance metaphors imply this essential road, path or way.
2. The Vanity of Human Wishes: the way, the maze, mists and snares.

The opening of the poem provides a particularly striking and characteristic 'way' metaphor:

Then say how Hope and Fear, Desire and Hate,
O'erspread with Snares the clouded Maze of Fate,
Where wav'ring Man, betray'd by Vent'rous Pride,
To tread the dreary Paths without a Guide;
As treach'rous Phantoms in the Mist delude,
Shuns fancied Ills, and chases airy Good. 1.

This passage has many plot elements which are common to all romance narrative, but which are particularly noticeable in the English translations of Peninsular romances.

Errant 'wavering' man, a solitary questing figure, is surrounded by shadowy assailants. These may attack him directly or they may set snares for him, and these snares, in their romance context, may be metaphorical seductions practised by false appearances. The knight characteristically has a guide on his quests, but guides are often not what they seem; illusion, 'empty appearance', is one of Johnson's recurring images. Enchanters frequently conjure up such phantoms, whether to allure or terrify, and these play a particularly important part in the Peninsular romance. Here too, is the mist or cloud so often used to baffle or mislead the knight.

In this passage, the personifications play the part of assailants. An illustration of 'waver' in the Dictionary, which brings that word together with a 'maze' cognate, gives a strikingly similar...
scene. Here, too, a knight errant is being misled by personifications, in the frightening 'gothic' landscape of the Cave of Despair:

In which amazement, when the miscreant
Perceived him to waver, weak and frail,
Whilst trembling horror did his conscience daunt,
And hellish anguish did his soul assail.
[I.ix.49]

The combat here is also moral and internal, as Despair tries to persuade the Red Cross Knight to suicide. While 'horror' and 'anguish' are only covertly personified, 'daunt' and 'assail' make clear their role. Johnson's definitions of 'amazement' and its cognates make clear the connection with 'maze', and stress 'extreme fear' and 'horror'. I have already noted how much use Johnson makes of this Spenser passage in the Dictionary and that it is closely paralleled by the final episode of The Vision of Theodore.

In The Vanity of Human Wishes, the assailants are characteristically varied. The parallelism of Johnson's verse gives a quartet, rather than the triad of assailants so common in his prose, and these assailants represent a mixture of attraction and menace. Clearly, the use of personifications owes much to Virgil, especially Aeneid VI; however, the scene that they here enact is essentially romantic and, arguably, mediated through Spenser.

A careful attention to romance implications in Johnson's language alerts us to a number of words in this passage from The Vanity of Human Wishes, which, though at first sight quite unrelated to romance, are interconnected by their Dictionary definitions, and are illustrated by a disproportionate number of quotations from romance or from works that Johnson associates with romance.
The quotations used to illustrate 'maze' make clear this association. For his first definition, 'a labyrinth; a place of perplexity and winding passages,' he quotes Thomson on Spenser:

He, like a copious river, pour'd his song
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground.

[The Seasons, 'Summer', L.1574-5]

In using the Dictionary as evidence, I have assumed that Johnson does not quote passages with which he disagrees: 'Every quotation should be useful to some other end than the illustration of a word'. (Preface, sig.B2^v). This passage, then, perhaps offers Thomson as support for Johnson's own view of Spenser; it also places the maze securely in a romance context.

The second definition 'confusion of thought; perplexity', is illustrated from Arcadia: 'he left in himself nothing but a maze of longing, and a dungeon of sorrow'. Here, the landscape is internal, and is a result of the enchantment of languishing love in Arcadia, 'the charmed circle where all his spirits for ever should be enchanted' (as the passage continues).

The verb 'to maze' is defined as 'to bewilder, to confuse', and illustrated by a quotation from Spenser:

Much was I maz'd to see this monster kind
In hundred forms to change his fearful hue,

2. The Visions of Bellay, Spenser, p.524.
which again links the state of amazement with magic transformations. Although the archaic verb may require a sixteenth-century text, these accumulated examples of romance associations seem conclusive.1

The word 'dreary' has particularly dreadful connotations for Johnson. His first definition, 'sorrowful, distressful' is illustrated by the misquoted gothic quotation from The Faerie Queene which follows the stanza describing the 'charmed cloud' hiding Sansloy:

The messenger of death, the ghastly owl,
With dreary shrieks did also yell;[her bewraiè]
And hungry wolves continually did howl
At her abhorred face, so horrid and so foul. [I.v.30]

'She' is death. A quotation from Dryden's Aeneid connects 'dreary shades' with 'the vast dominions of the dead', and one from Prior with the epic simile of the flood, where

Towns, forests, herds and men promiscuous drown'd
With one great death deform the dreary ground

'Dreiment', illustrated by two Spenser quotations, is defined as 'horror; dread; terror.' It is clear, given Johnson's own horror at the idea of death, that the word 'dreary' had a more sensational, and thus a more romantic, connotation for him than today's usage would suggest.

1. For the connotations of nets, snares, and mazes, see above, pp. 130-1
A passage from *Palmerin of England* contains so many of the key words in Johnson's passage that one may reasonably suspect direct borrowing; whether this is conscious or not, is impossible to say. A tyrannical king builds a tower to protect his grand-daughter, and,

least in her Infancy she should be conveyed thence, or in riper years betrayed into the snares of an unlawful Love, he by enchantment so surrounded the castle wherein she resided with Mists and deluding Phantomes that when anyone approaches, it seems to vanish.  

(p.84. My italics).

2.1 The Maze and the Wilderness.

Johnson uses a similar conjunction in *Rambler* 122, in which an unskilful narrator finds himself inadvertently playing the enchanter's role:

We hourly find such as endeavour to entertain or instruct us by recitals, clouding the facts which they intend to illustrate, and losing themselves and the auditors in wilds and mazes, in digression and confusion.  

(Yale, IV, 287.)

This passage will serve to introduce a range of the romance images which are so frequently buried in Johnson's vocabulary, and which only become clear when the ramifications of meaning are traced through definition and illustration. In this case, the unskilful story-teller, a kind of sorcerer's apprentice, produces clouds, which admirably revive the metaphorical light of 'illustrate'. He
is also a bad guide: the wild or desert is as important a landscape component as the maze, and both are connected with a series of words whose dormant metaphorical meanings imply the loss of a path, either because the uninhabited desert has none, or because the straight way has been obstructed by obstacle, maze, or snare.

An interesting group of quotations to illustrate 'wild' includes one from Dryden's Fables:

\[\text{this gentle knight}\]
\[\text{Forsook his easy couch at early day,}\]
\[\text{And to the wood and wilds pursu'd his way.}\]

Another quotation from the Fables makes plain the landscape implications:

\[\text{We parted thus; I homeward sped my way,}\]
\[\text{Bewilder'd in the wood till dawn of day.}\]

'Bewildered' has always this connotation for Johnson, and his only definition of it joins together many 'way' metaphors: 'To lose in pathless places; to confound for want of a plain road; to perplex; to entangle; to puzzle.' If we now explore this set of meanings for 'bewilder', we find that the second definition of 'perplex' is 'to make intricate; to involve; to complicate', and it is illustrated by a quotation from Comus.

\[\text{Their way}\]
\[\text{Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood.}\]

1. 'Palamon and Arcite', II, 224-6.
2. 'The Flower and the Leaf' 11.611.
3. Comus, 1.31.
Another line from Comus, quoted to illustrate 'blind', connects the maze and the forest: '...in the blind mazes of this tangled wood.'

It is hardly necessary to point out the romance elements in Comus.

There is, then, a complex network of meanings joining these words through their submerged metaphors: the foldings of the group connected with plicare, and the rollings of 'involve', perhaps even the deeply buried mischief of 'intricate', connect with the mazes and snares of the enchantress, and with the evil enchanter's power to change the straight way, or, when the enchanted castle disappears, to leave the knight in a desert.

'Embarrass', 'obstruct' and 'impediment' all carry the etymological idea of obstacles, and therefore a progress, or way. 'Embarrass' has a bar behind it, 'obstruction' is a building in the way, 'impediment', more clearly still, an obstruction to the feet. If we return to 'entangle', from the first definition of 'bewilder', we find it is first defined as 'to inwrap or ensnare with something not easily extricable, as a net; or something adhesive, as briars', second, as 'to lose in multiplied involutions, as in a labyrinth', and fourth, as 'to involve in difficulties; to embarrass; to perplex.' 'Tangle' is also defined as 'to ensnare; to entrap,' and has a number of quotations suggesting seduction, while the noun has 'the tangles of Neaera's hair'.

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1. Ibid, 1.180.
2. O.E.D. 'Intricar: to entangle, perplex, embarrass, from in and trica, trifles, toys, quirks, perplexities; tricari, to raise difficulties, to play tricks.'
3. Lycidas, L.68. An example of this vocabulary from Don Quixote describes the process of falling in love; 'by an unaccountable charm they shall both find themselves caught and entangled in the inextricable net of love, and wondrously perplexed for want of an opportunity to discover their amorous anguish to each other.' Jervas, 1.136.
'Digression', whose first definition is 'to turn out of the road', is an obvious 'way' metaphor, and even 'confuse' is, in definition three, 'to perplex', as is 'to confound' in definition two.

Johnson states in the Preface that he always defines the primary, non-metaphorical, meaning first, even in cases where this significance is entirely lost (sig.b4), but, I believe that the examples above demonstrate how much more closely his definitions and examples cling to those primary meanings than modern, or even general eighteenth-century, usage would lead us to expect. I believe that Johnson is constantly aware of the buried etymological metaphors in these words; his definitions alert us to a network of connections between them which continually lead us to romance plot and landscape.
3, Romance Landscape and Johnson's Imagery

Johnson's response to romantic landscape has, I believe, been underestimated. We have noted his impressive comparison of Ilam and Hawkstone, and his accounts of the Scottish and Welsh journeys amply demonstrate his capacity to be excited by castles, torrents, precipices and storms, and that he associated these very closely with romance. Two periodical essays offer us Quixotes of travel, who are 'led off by the pursuit of honour from their attendance upon truth' (Adventurer 50, Yale, II, 365), and dignify their own journeys with exaggerated romance landscapes. Johnson's metaphor itself expresses a romance situation: the knight 'attending' his sovereign or his lady at the court is led off, metaphorically, in pursuit of honour, literally in pursuit of a ravaging dragon, or a ravishing knight. In Idler 49, Will Marvel describes a journey to Devonshire, and

In a road through which the heaviest carriages pass without difficulty, and the post-boy every day and night goes and returns, he meets with hardships like those which are endured in Siberian deserts, and misses nothing of romantic danger but a giant and a dragon.

(ibid. 155)

The essay details these hazards:

The rest of his journey was nothing but danger. He climbed and descended precipices on which vulgar mortals tremble to look; he passed marshes like the "Serbonian bog, where armies whole have sunk"; he forded rivers where the currents roared like the ege of the Severn; or ventured
himself on bridges that trembled under
him, from which he looked down on foaming whirlpools, or dreadful abysses;
he wandered over houseless heaths,
amidst all the rage of the elements,
with the snow driving in his face, and
the tempest howling in his ears.

(ibid.)

Although this catalogue of imaginary romantic landscape omits the
variety of flowery meadows and smiling groves, and the all-important
forest, it establishes that Johnson himself associates its landscape
elements with romance, rather than with classical narrative, and
this in spite of Milton's Serbonian bog. *Adventurer* 50, on liars,
supplies two missing elements, asking how many men never 'take a
journey into the country without more adventures than befel the
knight-errants of antient times, in pathless forests or enchanted
castles.' (ibid 364).

This, then, is the sublime landscape which informs Johnson's 'way'
metaphors, many of which are quoted below in relation to other
themes in the periodical essays.

Each metaphor may appear in a wide range of development:
*Rambler* 38, for example, gives only a commonplace version of the
way as *via media*: 'The middle path is the road of security, on
either side of which are not only the pitfalls of vice, but the
precipices of ruin'. (*Yale*, III, 206), where the 'precipice'
revives the 'fall' of *ruere*, while, in *Rambler* 49, the path is
combined with combat and defence. 'Fame may be of use to smooth
the paths of life, to terrify opposition, and fortify tranquillity.'
(ibid., 265). In *Rambler* 2, the traveller is an author: 'We may

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1. It is noteworthy that this spelling of 'ancient' does not appear in
the Dictionary. J.D. Fleeman has suggested (*Poems*, p.14) that spelling
like 'Iyon', 'gyants', 'Iye' may be echoes of Johnson's romance reading.
I would add his predilection for double vowels, as in 'smoak', 'cloathes'
'horrour', 'crourd', all current in 17th-century romance.
believe authors...more inclined to pursue a track so smooth and so flowery, than attentively to consider whether it leads to truth. (ibid., 11).

A number of such romance metaphors associating the writer with the knight errant, reinforce the claim for Johnson's image of himself as a 'northern adventurer,' or a 'champion of literature'. As we have seen, flowery meadows and brooks invite the weary traveller to rest on his journey: they are not necessarily connected with the corrupting seductions of a Bower of Bliss, and may be desirable, as in the Preface to the Dictionary, to allure readers into the right way. In Rambler 3, in a metaphor of the travelling intellect, this use is elaborated: 'the task of an author is...to spread such flowers over the regions through which the intellect has already made its progress, as may tempt it to return, and take a second view of things hastily passed over.' (ibid., 15). Johnson regarded imagery as one among many such rhetorical ornaments. Here the author has become the indispensable good guide.

Because Johnson's landscape imagery is so pervasive, we can detect the path even behind a triplet of revived metaphors like this one from Rambler 122: 'Experience soon shows us the tortuosities of imaginary rectitude, the complications of simplicity and the asperities of smoothness.' (Yale, IV, 287). Talking

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1. This spelling of 'pursue' does not appear in the Dictionary though it is common in the Rambler. It undoubtedly expresses more clearly the idea of 'following through'.

ostensibly of any undertaking, this set of words alerts us to the 'way', and this is immediately reinforced by another set of images which belong closely with it, those of multiple assailants: 'sudden difficulties often start up from the ambushes of art, stop the career of activity, repress the gaiety of confidence, and when we imagine ourselves almost at the end of our labours, drive us back to new plans and different measures.' It is hardly necessary to revive 'career' as 'a course; a race', or the tyrannical implications of 'repress' (to crush; to put down; to subdue.), to see this as a vigorously romantic scene.

I have already pointed out a number of examples of one of Johnson's most powerfully used metaphors, the errant imagination. It may be seen as heroic or as reprehensibly licentious. So, in Rambler 5, 'Every man will suffer his imagination to range more or less in quest of future happiness', or, as in the fully developed metaphor of heroic conquest in Rambler 154 (Yale, V, 58),

He that wishes to be counted among the benefactors of posterity, must add by his own toil to the acquisitions of his ancestors...This can only be effected by looking out upon the wastes of the intellectual world, and extending the power of learning over regions yet undisciplined and barbarous; or by surveying more exactly her antient dominions, and driving ignorance from the fortresses and retreats where she skulks undetected and undisturbed.

1. The final illustration of 'career' in the Dictionary is from Dryden's Fables, 'The Flower and the Leaf', 11.511-3. Knights in knightly deeds should persevere/And still continue what at first they were;/ Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career.
This moves from the Alexandrian military conqueror, to a more explicitly romance image, where ignorance is the enchantress or monster who occupies the castle or lurks in the caves along the way. / 

Another splendid metaphor for the author as adventurer is one of a number of richly, romantic passages in Rambler 131:

> It is the proper ambition of the heroes in literature to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by discovering and conquering new regions of the intellectual world...doubt and irresolution may be forgiven in him that ventures into the unexplored abysses of truth, and attempts to find his way through the fluctuations of uncertainty, and the conflicts of contradiction.

(Yale, IV,362)

All Johnson's definitions of 'fluctuate' stay very close to the sea, so that this constitutes a romantically sublime landscape, in a context where Johnson is discussing the daring sallies of innovative genius, and especially contrasting these with the plodding of duller writers in the 'beaten track'. 'Conflict', defined as 'a combat; a fight between two...' is illustrated by lines describing the Red Cross Knight's defeat by Orgoglio:

> The luckless conflict with the giant stout,
> Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood in doubt.
> Fairy Queen, b.i can.7 stanz.26,

(an unusually precise reference).

Johnson associates some of his most spectacular landscapes with death: he quotes Facilis descensus Averno more than once in the essays, and the 'gulphs' which occur so often and so terribly
in his metaphors are clearly connected with Hades as well as with the Pit of Christian eschatology. Interestingly, Avernus is brought together with romance in the Dictionary in a quotation from Spenser to illustrate 'gulf', defined as 'an abyss; an unmeasurable depth.' This follows the cloud-hidden corpse and the gothic stanza illustrating 'dreary', already quoted:

Thence turning back, in silence soft they stole,
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulf of deep Avernus' hole;
By that same hole, an entrance dark and base,
With smoak and sulphur hiding all the place,
Descends to hell. [I, v. 31]

The Dictionary frequently provides evidence that images common to classical and romance narrative are associated in Johnson's memory with the latter.

Johnson's definition of 'precipice' reminds us of the terror which the etymology implies, and turns the picturesque spectator into a participant: it is 'a headlong steep, a fall perpendicular without gradual declivity.' In his most powerful and explicit development of the gulf metaphor, in Rambler 110, there is another Spenserian echo. Johnson speaks of old age and the need for re-collection, and goes on

If he who considers himself as suspended over the abyss of eternal perdition only by the thread of life, which must soon part by its own weakness, and which the wing of every minute may divide, can cast his eyes round him without shuddering with horror, or panting for security; what can he judge of himself but that he is not yet awaked to sufficient conviction.

(Yale, IV, 224)
This image is reminiscent of an episode in *The Faerie Queene*, IV, ii, stanzas 47-50, where a fairy mother descended into the house of the Fates to discover her sons' destiny, and

Farre vnderground from tract of liuing went,  
Downe in the bottome of the deepe Abysse,  
Where Demogorgon in dull darkness pent,  
Farre from the view of God's and heauens blis,  
The hideous Chaos keepes...

The fairy begs the Fates to let her see the threads of her sons' lives. When her request is granted, she is horrified by the fragility of life

...when she saw, it did her much amate,  
To see their thrids so thin, as spiders frame,  
And eke so short, that seem'd their ends  
out shortly came.

The gulf, the abyss, and the precipice are, as we have seen, an essential part of the spectacular landscape of romance, and in the Essays, they are frequently used in association with old age and death, as here, to create images of terror. In *Rambler* 110, Johnson develops the theme:

abstinence, if nothing more, is, at least,  
a cautious retreat from the utmost verge  
of permission, and confers that security  
which cannot be reasonably hoped by him  
that dares always to hover over the pre­  
cipice of destruction...

(Yale, IV, 225)

Johnson's intense response to the sublime power of the precipice is illustrated in his criticism of the Dover Cliff scene in *King Lear*. He deplores the crows and samphire-gatherers, because particularity of detail detracts from 'the horrible idea of immense height', and 'the crows impede your fall.'

1. Life, p. 413. Cf. a midlander's autobiographical note in *Rambler* 159, on the futility of advising 'an inhabitant of Brasil or Sumatra, not to shiver at an English winter, or him who has always lived upon a plain to look from a precipice without emotion.' Yale, V, 83. For other extreme landscapes, see, eg. Idler 1, Idler 19, Idler 89, Adventurer 39.
These terrible dangers may be met at any time of life, as in Rambler 38 (Yale, III, 208), where flood is added to abyss:

An eagerness for increase of possessions deluges the soul, and we sink into the gulphs of insatiability,

while, in Rambler 53 (ibid., 285-6), it is the spendthrift who meets 'the precipices of destruction', and the 'gulphs of usury and extortion'. However, in this conception of life, shaped by images of the journey and of Hell, it is not so much death itself, but a sense of dreadful inexorability, which the headlong steep is used to illustrate. In Rambler 69, the gulf image is most powerfully used for cumulative despair and self-hatred:

He that grows old without religious hopes, as he declines into imbecility, and feels pains and sorrows incessantly crowding upon him, falls into a gulph of bottomless misery, in which every reflexion must plunge him deeper, and where he finds only new gradations of anguish and precipices of horrour.

( ibid., 367).

In this landscape, the implicit slope behind 'declines', the steps behind 'gradations', and the overt 'gulph' and 'precipice' are combined with assailants, the 'pains', 'sorrow' and 'reflexion' who crowd and push down the old man. In Rambler 54, reflections on a death-bed, the 'precipice' and 'gulf of eternity' are more conventionally applied to death itself, and have very much less power than the vertiginous steeps of the mind.
3. The Tyrant and his Dungeons

I have described a number of forms of cruel and arbitrary rule in romance, and its common conjunction with imprisonment, and have illustrated Johnson's extensive use of this material from Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. His second definition of 'tyrant' describes this figure: 'A cruel, despotic and severe master; an oppressor', and he gives illustrations from *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, and *Arcadia*. From Milton comes 'the house of woe and dungeon of our tyrant', and from Thomson, 'when tyrant custom had not shackl'd man...'. Johnson's application of tyrant and dungeon metaphors ranges from close analogy, as in writing of debtors, to a wide variety of moral and mental enchainments.

Two moving essays translate the reality of debtors' prisons into romance terms. In *Idler* 38 (*Yale*, II,115-9) Johnson argues against the inhuman futility of imprisonment for debt:

> ...another follows him, and is lost alike in the caverns of oblivion... each man [is] thus chained down in involuntary idleness... in noisome dungeons.

*Adventurer* 34 describes the Fleet Prison as 'the dreary mansions of wretchedness and despair, of which the gates are so wonderfully constructed, as to fly open for the reception of strangers, though they are impervious as a rock of adamant to such as are within them.' (*Yale*,II 339-40). Johnson also uses this romance language in his passionate opposition to actual slavery.

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1. In his *Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain*, he refers to Jamaica as 'a place of great wealth and dreadful wickedness, a den of tyrants and a dungeon of slaves' (*Works*, VI, 130). Cf. also *Yale*, V, 40, ibid., 107, ibid., 203.
The correspondent goes on to quote the four lines beginning *Facilis Descensus Averno.* To the easy descent to Hades, Johnson has added the magic gates of romance, which open automatically to allow the intrepid, and foolhardy, knight to enter the castle: another conjunction of Avernus and romance.

*Rambler* 131 has an 'external' journey, with the aspiring student as knight errant:

> To expect that the intricacies of science will be pierced by a careless glance, or the eminences of fame ascended without labour... to suppose that the maze is inscrutable to diligence, or the heights inaccessible to perseverance, is to submit tamely to the tyranny of fancy and enchain the mind in voluntary shackles.

(Yale, IV, 362)

The climbing of mountains is often part of quest metaphors applied to heroic scholars or writers; here, the tyrant may be an enchantress, since the imprisonment is willingly undergone.

In a powerful metaphor in *Rambler* 126, (Yale, III, 307) Fear is the enchanter who should not be 'suffered to tyrannize in the imagination, to raise phantoms of horror, or to beset life with supernumerary distresses.' He not only conjures up phantoms, but also mounts sieges. *Rambler* 19 shows us another scholar-hero, Polyphilus, whose philosophy 'chained his mind to its object, and rather loaded him with shackles than furnished him with arms.'

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Seductive literature frequently imprisons the mind; in *Rambler* 60 (ibid. 319) it is biography who is the seductress:

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no species of writing...
can more certainly enchain
the heart by irresistible
interest
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while Milton also commands 'that harmony that...shackles attention and governs passion' (*Rambler* 88, Yale, IV 99). Metaphors of man's enslavement to sensuality and vice are commonplace, and Johnson makes great use of enchainment in this context.

In *The Vision of Theodore*, a number of romance metaphors are expanded into a full allegory. The visionary is a hermit whose cell is at the foot of Teneriffe's spectacular mountain. He is lured from his cell by a romantic desire to ascend to the summit; on the way, he has a dream vision. This mediaeval narrative device was often used for homiletic ends, but Johnson connects dream rather with the errant imagination seeking heroic action, or fancying itself heroic, and this is interestingly illustrated in the *Dictionary*. The first definition of a dream connects it with the creation of enchanters, since it is 'a phantasm of sleep'; 'terrible dreams' from *Macbeth*, followed by 'fearful precipices' and a shipwreck from Dryden, underline the 'gothic' and sensational nature of these phantoms.
The verb provides more heroic images. One, from Coriolanus, is Aufidius' chivalrous tribute to an admired adversary:

> I have nightly since
> Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me:
> We have been down together in my sleep,
> Unbuckling helms, fistling each other's throat
> And waked half dead with nothing.

[IV, v, 123]

A similar chivalric dream is from Dryden's translation of 'The Knight's Tale,' where Palamon and Arcite dream of their coming combat:

> At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
> and dreamt the future fight, and early rose.

[III, 434-5]

A quotation from Cymbeline reminds us of that play's romance plot:

> These boys know little they are sons to th'king
> Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.

[III, iv, 80]

A quotation from Addison suggests the magic conveyances, the chariots, flying horses, or clouds of the enchanters: 'I dreamed that I was conveyed into a wide and boundless plain.'

The second definition of 'dreamer,' which also connects dreaming with enchantment, is 'An idle, fanciful man; a visionary' to illustrate which 'dreamer Merlin and his prophecies' is quoted from Henry IV, i. A 'visionary' can, indeed, be someone suffering from Quixotic delusions; defining the word as 'one whose imagination is disturbed', Johnson quotes from The Female Quixote: 'The lovely visionary gave him perpetual uneasiness.'

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1. Charlotte Ramsay Lennox The Female Quixote, ed. Margaret Dalziel (London, 1970), p.120.
The third and fourth definitions again underline Johnson's semantic equation of dreams and the delinquent imagination with idleness. A dreamer is 'a man lost in wild imagination; a reveur', and also 'A sluggard; an idler,' which effectively provides an autobiographical link with Johnson. Together, this group of definitions and illustrations indicate a suggestive connection between dreaming and the heroic or otherwise romantic fantasies to which the Quixotic imagination is liable when unchained from reality.

In Theodore's dream vision, the knowable landscape of Teneriffe expands to the romantic excess of Burke's sublime, so that Theodore sees a mountain 'to the Summit of which the Human Eye could never reach', while the abyss appears at its most awful: 'I turned my Eyes towards its Foot, which I could easily discover, but was amazed to find it without Foundation, and placed inconceivably in Emptiness and Darkness. Thus I stood terrified and confused; above were Tracts inscrutable, and below was total Vacuity.' (ibid. p.149). The hermit's dream guide was an angel who explained that this was the mountain of existence, and at a closer view, the hermit could see the proper romance variety in the landscape: 'a gentle Rise,...overspread with Flowers' is youth, while middle life becomes 'more steep, embarrassed with Craggs, and interrupted by Precipices, over which hung Branches loaded with Fruits, and among

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2. Another revival of a Latin metaphor in place of the expected 'broken'.
which were scattered Palaces and Bowers.' (ibid). This landscape is peopled with personifications, rather than with truly allegorical figures: the traveller is guided, first by _Education_, then by _Reason_ and _Religion_. The enemies along the way are _Appetites_, _Passions_, and _Habits_. The first of these are described as seducers, while the habits have the magic ability to change their size from dwarfs to giants who load the traveller with increasingly weighty chains.

The allegory is very closely related to _Faerie Queene_, II, iv, 34, where the affections have the same capacity to grow:

> In their beginning they are weake and wan,
> But some through suff'rance grew to feareful end;
> Whiles they are weake betimes with them contend:
> For when they once to perfect strength do grow
> Strong warres they make, and cruel battry bend
> Gainst Fort of Reason, it to overthrow.

The last two lines are quoted for 'battery' in the _Dictionary_.

The only mist in this landscape was that which veiled the truths of religion from human eye. When _Pride_ attempted to show these to _Reason_, she could only show me, below the Mist, the Bowers of Content; even they vanished as I fix'd my Eyes upon them; and those whom she persuaded to travel towards them were inchained by Habits, and ingulfed by _Despair_, a cruel _Tyrant_ whose Caverns are beyond the Darkness on the right Side and on the left, from whose Prisons none can escape, and whom I cannot teach you to avoid.

(Ibid, p.153)

Many seductions, tyrannies, shacklings, and false guides are described: the final deviant from the straight way retreats

not to the Bowers of Intemperance but to the Maze of _Indolence_...

Subtle habits 'hung imperceptible shackles' on the indolent: they
'wandered on from one Double of the Labyrinth to another with the Chains of Habit hanging secretly upon them, till as they advanced, the Flowers grew paler, and the scents fainter.' (ibid, p.157).

The victims of Indolence, unlike those of other vices, took no pleasure in their captivity:

> they crawled on reluctant and gloomy, till they arrived at the Depth of the Recess, varied only with Poppies and Nightshade, where the Dominium of Indolence terminates, and the hopeless Wanderer is delivered up to Melancholy: the Chains of Habit are rivetted for ever, and Melancholy having tortured her Prisoner for a Time, consigns him at last to the Cruelty of Despair. (ibid, p.157-8)

This culminating image, from which the hermit awakens to sunlight and birdsong, is inescapably autobiographical, and provides another example of Johnson's use of romance landscape to express his own state of mind. There are many Spenserian echoes in this final passage, especially of the black garden of Proserpine, with its poppies, in Book II, canto VII. It is significant that Johnson should have told Percy that The Vision of Theodore was 'the best thing he ever wrote.' (Life, 137).

The periodical essays provide many examples of the metaphorical 'shackles of habitual vice'. More movingly allied to the debtors' prison essays, however, are Rambler 47 (Yale, III,255), where sadness, rather than vice, is the tyrant by whom 'the faculties are chained to a single object', and Rambler 52 (ibid, 231) where Johnson asks: 'How can it avail the man who languishes in the gloom of sorrow, without prospect of emerging into the sunshine of cheerfulness, to hear that others are sunk yet deeper in the dungeon

of misery, shackled with heavier chains, and surrounded with
darker desperation'. He goes on to describe the assailants who
vanquish and imprison us, as phantoms, the 'terrribiles visu formae'
who in Virgil (Aeneid, VI, 277) are only inert personifications,
but here, as the various shapes of misery are attackers who

make havock of terrestrial
happiness, range all corners
almost without restraint,
trample down our hopes at
the hour of harvest, and,
when we have built our
schemes to the top, ruin
their foundations.

It is clear that, for Johnson, these dark subterranean regions are
closely connected with Hades, and there are many models outside
romance for journeys into the underworld, and for tormented cap­
tives. However, the conjunction of these with tyrants, dungeons,
chains and shackles, establishes, I believe, a romance provenance
for these images.¹

¹. For other tyrant metaphors, cf: Rambler, 39, Yale IV, 107;
Rambler, 135, ibid. 350; Idler, 14, Yale, II, 47-8.
4. Enchantments and the Bower of Bliss

Closely related to the imprisoning tyrant, as we have seen, is the seductress. In the Peninsular romances, the enchantress often poses as a distressed damsel or chatelaine, whose hospitable bounty leads to seduction (generally resisted by the hero, but often succumbed to by lesser knights). In the heroic romances, the enchanted knight is characteristically unaware of his degradation until his rescuers teach him to see himself.

Although I wish to explore the seductive power of literature in greater detail in relation to Johnson's literary criticism, the metaphor is also applied to a range of other more or less reprehensible agents.

Idler 52 develops the theme of enslavement to habit so as to make clear an association with Circean seduction:

the state of those whom sensuality has enslaved, is known to be in the highest degree despicable and wretched;

Johnson then introduces a more general 'assailants' image:

the dread of such shameful captivity may justly raise alarms, and wisdom will endeavour to keep danger at a distance. By timely caution and suspicions vigour, those desires may be repressed to which indulgence would soon give absolute dominion; those enemies may be overcome, which when they have been awhile accustomed to victory, can no longer be resisted.... Some may safely venture further than others into the regions of delight, lay themselves more open to the golden shafts of pleasure and advance nearer to the residence of the Sirens; but he that is best armed with constancy and
reason is yet vulnerable in one part
or other, and to every man there is
a point fixed, beyond which if he
passes he will not easily return...
every step of advance will more and
more entice him to go forward, till
he shall at last enter the recesses
of voluptuousness, and sloth and
despondency close the passage behind
him. (Yale,II,162-3)

In spite of the reference to the Sirens, this is much closer
to Alcina's Castle, and other episodes of 'pleasing captivity',
than to Homer.¹

Rambler 89 is entirely concerned with the seductions of the
dreaming imagination. This very important essay relates to
Quixotic fantasy, and I will only quote one paragraph here to
illustrate the combination of seduction (the word itself is a 'way'
metaphor) and magic:

These ideal seducers are always near,
and neither any particularity of time
nor place is necessary to their in­
fluence; they invade the soul without
warning, and have often charmed down
resistance before their approach is
perceived or suspected. (Yale,IV, 107)

The enchanter's arts allow him to change shape at will; he is
crafty and deceitful, while the naive knight errant relies on
virtue, strength and courage. An enchanter figure appears in

Idler 92:

The man of cunning...always keeps him­
self enveloped in a mist, impenetrable,
as he hopes. to the eye of rivalry or
curiosity....Men thus narrow by nature,
and mean by art, are sometimes able to
rise by the miscarriages of bravery and
the openness of integrity... (Yale,II,285-7)

¹. Cf. Orlando Furioso,VI. 59-75; VII, 54-65
We shall see this conflict between cold craft and magnanimous temerity recurring in many forms in the essays.

As we have seen, the dream world of romance continually confronts the adventurer with appearances, whether of assailants or of castles, that vanish when attacked with courage, or when the enchanter's power is broken in some way. Even giants vanish, and in Adventurer 45, the 'gigantic phantom of collective power vanishes at once into air and emptiness at the first attempt to put it into action.' (Yale, II, 358).
5. Assailants, Siege and Warfare.

The heroic action of romance may take the form of single combat, or may engage the knight against vastly disproportionate numbers; it may entail the taking of a castle, often single-handed, or occasionally its defence. Frequently, as we have seen, Johnson's images combine a number of these kinds of action, but I begin with a sample dealing mainly with the assailants which chance or machination will throw in the knight errant's way.

Rambler 14 brings together a number of the verbs I have noted as having connections with the 'way', and a variety of assailants.

The man involved in life has his own passions, and those of others, to encounter, and is embarrassed with a thousand inconveniences, which confound him with variety of impulse, and either perplex or obstruct his way...[he acts] amid tumult, and snares, and danger. (Yale, III, 75-6).

The whole passage can be read neutrally; the metaphors are so commonplace as to pass unnoticed, but if we look more closely at the buried meanings, we see the man as a traveller engaged in 'a duel; single fight; conflict' (Johnson's first definition of 'encounter') with personified passions; single-handed, he has to meet with a thousand inconveniences (a ratio only probably in romance) who combine to entangle his way, as we have seen, sending in 'a variety of impulses'. These suggest the succession of diverse assailants who may be conjured up to attack or test a knight.

Seducers are implicit, as we have seen, in 'snares.'
A sentence from *Rambler* 60 repeats the picture: 'We are all obstructed by danger, entangled by desire, and seduced by pleasure'. (ibid. 320). Variety of assailants is essential to all kinds of romance narrative. *Rambler* 144 uses elaborately developed romance imagery to illustrate the dangers encountered by a young man seeking eminence; as 'a new name makes its way into the world' it is attacked by the same disproportionate number of assailants:

> the first appearance of excellence unites multitudes against it; unexpected opposition rises up on every side; the celebrated and the obscure join in the confederacy; subtilty furnishes arms to impudence, and invention leads on credulity. (Yale, V, 3).

Here, personifications are joined to categories of men, without discrimination, corresponding to the romance mixture of real and imaginary assailants. 'Subtilty', the enchanter figure, arms the enemy with magic weapons. Later in the number 'the armies of malignity' attack the newcomer. Giants or knights may attack to preserve their sovereignty, to defend their mistress's title to beauty, or to avenge a death, but malignity and a love of evil are often the only motives of enchanters.

*Rambler* 150 contrasts heroic combat with the Bower of Bliss, in an interesting paragraph where Johnson has Seneca speak of the man who 'traverses the lists without an adversary', while on the other hand,

> he whose courage has made way amidst the turbulence of opposition, and whose vigour has broken through the snares of distress, has many advantages over those that have slept in the shades of indolence. (Yale, V, 36).
Idler 32, in a lighter vein, describes man's need for sleep 'the gentle tyrant', as being among 'the innumerable mortifications that waylay human arrogance on every side' (Yale, II, 99, 92). To 'waylay' is 'to watch insidiously in the way; to beset by ambush'. The unknown terrain of romance, the pathless forest, ravine and cave, lend themselves to the unexpected attacks that continually interrupt the quest and constitute a major part of romance narrative.

The aim of the quest, and of each day's journeying, and the background to many assaults and challenges, is the castle: it may offer hospitality or treachery, but if it resists the forces of good it must be besieged, as in Rambler 3, where literary success and its difficulties are again the matter of the quest:

> there is a certain race of men who stand ... as centinels in the avenues of fame, and value themselves upon giving Ignorance and Envy the first notice of a prey.

Here, critics are the minions of tyrannical personifications, who, if they regard the knight as 'prey', suggest ogres. 'Avenue' is first defined as 'a way by which any place may be entered', and Johnson illustrates this by a siege metaphor from South's Sermons:

> 'Truth is a strong-hold, and diligence is laying siege to it: so that it must observe all the avenues and passes to it.' The siege

1. This spelling of 'centinel', which does not appear in the Dictionary, is illustrated in the O.E.D. with quotations from Spenser, Henry V and Montemayor's Diana.

2. Robert South, Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions (Oxford, 1679), p.285. South makes considerable use of romance metaphor, and Johnson often quotes him, not always in military contexts. This same quotation is used for 'pass' defined as 'a narrow entrance; an avenue'. Cf. South, p.295: 'all their Gyartlike objections against the Christian religion shall presently vanish and quit the field', quoted for 'giartlike.'
metaphor is used in a similar context in the Preface to the *Dictionary*; academies are fruitlessly established 'to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and to repulse intruders' (sig.C.2).

The metaphor of moral warfare against 'the assaults of the enemy' is, of course, a commonplace of Christian imagery, and Johnson often uses it in this context. In *Rambler* 70 he points out the fallacy of supposing that

the same arguments by which the mind is fortified against one crime are of equal force against all,...mortal virtue ...sometimes/fortifying only a few avenues to the heart, while all the rest is left open to the incursions of appetite, or given up to the dominion of wickedness. *(Yale, IV,5)*

The mind may be fortified against good as well as evil, and *Rambler* 165 extends the siege metaphor into an allegory, in which 'the passes of the intellect are barred against [truth] by prejudice and passion.' *(Yale, V, III).*

In *Rambler* 15, rational and sober middle age rejects the 'improbable adventures, impracticable virtues, and inimitable characters' of romance, which delighted youth, and exhausts itself in a romance landscape:

The painted vales of imagination are deserted, and our intellectual activity is exercised in winding through the labyrinths of fallacy, and toiling with firm and cautious steps up the narrow tracks of demonstration...at length weariness succeeds to labour, and the mind lies at ease in the contemplation of her own attainments, without any desire of new conquests or excursions...the avenues of apprehension are shut against any new intelligence.

It is attractive that this rejection should be expressed in such an extended romance metaphor.
The female personification is a little odd in this military context, as the ageing adventurer lies exhausted in the castle. This number ends with an 'assailants' image, significant as a general view of the human condition:

...human desires will be always ranging; but these motions, though very powerful, are not resistless; nature may be regulated, and the desires governed; and to contend with the predominance of successive passions, to be endangered first by one affection, and then by another, is the condition upon which we are to pass our time...

(Yale, V, 39-42)

In Rambler 123, Quixotic delusions besiege the heart:

Though I have so long found myself deluded by projects of honour and distinction, that I often resolve to admit them no more to my heart; yet how determinately soever excluded, they always recover their dominion by force or stratagem; and whenever, after the slightest relaxation of vigilence, reason and caution return to their charge, they find hope again in possession, with all her train of pleasures dancing about her.

(Yale, IV, 291).

As we have seen, the luxury and riot of the Bower of Bliss pleases all the senses, and dance is part of the courtly ritual, whether the chatelaine is good or evil. It is also one of the pleasures of the masques often conjured up by enchanters.

The irregular warfare of brigandage, conquest, or piracy furnished Johnson with a group of metaphors often closely connected with siege. In Rambler 19, Polyphilus, whose natural ability continually attracts him to new choices of life, is described as a raider:
He makes sudden irruptions into the regions of knowledge, and sees all obstacles give way before him; but he never stays long enough to complete his conquest, to establish laws, or bring away the spoils. (Yale, III, 108)

Criticism, on the other hand, does complete the conquest in Rambler 92, for it 'reduces those regions of literature under the dominion of science, which have hitherto known only the anarchy of ignorance, the caprices of fancy, and the tyranny of prescription (Yale, IV, 122).

These kinds of rule correspond to the varieties of romance lordship: the wild is anarchic, populated by savage men and wild beasts. Evil feudal rulers, accountable to no king, are tyrannical and capricious and this essential character of feudal (and romance) society is clearly stated by Johnson in the Journey to the Western Isles: the vassals of Highland lords 'had no shelter from outrage and oppressions; but were condemned to endure, without resistance, the caprices of wantonness and the rage of cruelty.' (Yale, IX, 46).

So the role of criticism is here that of the knight errant, who kills the giant, destroys the power of the enchantress, frees the captives, and restores good government to the kingdom.

Two Idlers use violent images of rapine: no. 14, for the external pressure of time-wasters:

Life is continually ravaged by invaders; one conceals the robbery by hurrying us into business, another by lulling us with amusement; the deprecation is continued through a thousand vicissitudes of tumult and tranquillity, till, having lost all, we can lose no more. (Yale, II, 46)
In *Idler* 72, the intruders are internal:

The incursions of troublesome thoughts are often violent and importunate; and it is not easy to a mind accustomed to their inroads to expel them immediately by putting better images into motion; but this enemy of quiet is above all others weakened by every defeat; the reflection which has once been overpowered and ejected, seldom returns with any formidable vehemence.

(ibid, 226)

Both moral and physical warfare are suggested by 'incursion' in the *Dictionary*. The first definition, illustrated by a quotation from South's *Sermons*, is 'attack; mischievous occurrence,' and the second is 'invasion without conquest; inroad; ravage,' one illustration, from 'Arbuthnot on Coins,' gives an appropriate northern context: 'The incursions of the Goths disordered the affairs of the Roman Empire.' The mind is, then, a field for border raids, the wild and lawless country of Chevy Chase, or the wider theatre of Europe descending into the Dark Ages.

In this section, I have made considerable claims for Johnson's intentional revival of buried metaphor: this may be challenged, for it is hardly possible to determine the degree of any writer's intention to reestablish meanings in individual instances. However, I am confident that taking Johnson's romance imagery as a whole, together with the evidence of the *Dictionary*, it is impossible to escape the significance of this submerged landscape.
The periodical essays are very much richer in this kind of metaphor than any other body of Johnson's work. Discursive and generalised moral reflection lends itself more readily to metaphorical and allegorical thinking than either biography or criticism, but it is significant that the essays were written at a time when Johnson's mind was continually exercised, not only on the Latin derivations of English words, but also on the great body of romantic literature with which he illustrated them.

Further examples both of metaphor and of the revival of significant etymological meaning, will be offered in the remaining chapters.
Above: 'Rudibras's First Adventure'. Hogarth 1726.

CHAPTER 4: JOHNSON AND DON QUIXOTE.

1. Quixote as Romance

Don Quixote offers many of the pleasures of romance. There is a great variety of action, fortuitous adventures, changes of scene, assailants, landscapes and lodgings; there are controlling figures who play the part of enchanters; there are digressions into purely romantic and pastoral narratives; there is the comedy of contrast, between the values of knight and squire, and between expectation and fulfilment.

An interesting comment reported by Mrs. Piozzi brings together four works, at first sight disparate, but which in fact share a number of romance elements:

Alas, Madam! (continued he) how few books are there of which one can ever possibly arrive at the last page! Was there ever anything yet written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress? After Homer's Iliad, Mr. Johnson confessed that the work of Cervantes was the greatest in the world, speaking of it I mean as a mere book of entertainment.

1. Fielding makes this point in his very sympathetic review of The Female Quixote: the adventures are 'much less extravagant and incredible in the English than in the Spanish performance. The latter, in many instances, approaches very near to the Performances, which he ridicules. Such are the stories of Cardenio and Dorothea, Ferdinand and Lucinda, etc.' Covent Garden Journal (1915, repr. New York 1964) ed. G.E.Jenson, I,194,no.10. A chapbook version of Don Quixote, published in London in 1686, attests to its popularity in the romance market.

2. Anecdotes, p.152 - This very broad claim for Don Quixote may owe something to Locke's praise in 'Some Thoughts Concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman', 1703, in which he says: 'of all the
Mrs. Piozzi's hasty reservation is characteristic of the ambivalent attitude of those who both enjoyed and professed to despise romantic fiction. Although we cannot always rely on her accuracy, her account of Johnson's response to *Quixote* is amply borne out by his own statements.

Don Quixote, like *Pilgrim's Progress*, brings together many of the pleasures of romance without incurring the moral and critical disapproval attached to it. Mayans y Siscar, in his *Life of Cervantes*, confirms its status as romance. He tells us that Cervantes, to combat the excesses of Spanish chivalry, considered that 'the best remedy to this evil would be a book of the like invention.' (Jervas, I, 15). *Pilgrim's Progress*, written for a very much less sophisticated readership than Don Quixote, shares its romance form: a quest, divagations, encounters with subtle or dangerous adversaries, varieties of lodging and landscape, lead to a 'romantic' ending, in the success of the quest. Here, romance is made respectable as Christian allegory, as it is in *The Faerie Queene*. Don Quixote lacks this justification, but is, nevertheless, deeply serious, and Quixote's final 'redemption' from his delusions, and his return to spiritual values, can be seen as corresponding to those of Christian and The Red Cross Knight. In romance terms, however, *Quixote* lacks the optimistic ending of success in the

quest, and its amorous and martial rewards. The 'happy' ending is achieved outside the 'romance' narrative, and the unfinished pattern of the latter brings the work closer to the essentially unstructured world on which fiction imposes its patterns, which Johnson calls 'this chaos of mingled purposes and causalities' (*Yale VII, 66*).

The two other works that Mrs. Piozzi refers to have rather different connections with romance. Clearly, as Johnson recognised, renaissance romance owes a great deal to Greek and Roman epic, as it does to Ovid, but the tradition of romance versions of the 'Matter of Troy' is much older, and I have noted Johnson's value for *The Recueil of Troy*.

*Robinson Crusoe*, like *Pilgrim's Progress*, combines spiritual progress with the romantic theme of the solitary traveller confronted with the hazards of an unfamiliar environment, and has also the exotic interest of the travel literature which was for Johnson the contemporary equivalent of romance.¹

A comment on *Hudibras* makes clear the over-riding importance of variety of action in *Don Quixote*: Butler's poem, since it is modelled on Cervantes' mock-romance, necessarily lacks classic form, and, like *The Faerie Queene*, it is unfinished, and therefore 'must have had the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenser: the

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¹ In his study of chapbook versions of *Robinson Crusoe*, Pat Rogers shows how essential to the popular reception of the story is the initial (romantic) shipwreck, and the iconography of Crusoe as solitary and heavily armed, 'a man alone among the elements, threatened by unseen terrors'. 'Chapbooks and Classics', pp. 31-9.
action could not have been one'; but sustained action is of
greater importance to Johnson than classical form, as his
Shakespeare criticism makes clear, and he continues 'The dis­
continuity of the action might, however, have been easily forgiven, if
there had been action enough; but...in the poem of Hudibras, there is /...
more said than done '(Lives, I, 211).

However, it is with Don Quixote as mock-romance that any
discussion of Johnson's own fiction must be concerned, and the
bathetic pattern may take a number of forms: the emphasis may
be on the process by which imagination, or fantasy, invades and
enchains reason, or it may be on a partial view of life brought
about by isolation of some kind.

Some narratives emphasise the generous delusions of the
young, who bring chivalrous idealism to an indifferent or mali­
gnant adult world, and this category connects Don Quixote very
closely with romance, since the values of romance are the values
of youth, to which cold prudence and circumspection are naturally
alien. A large part of the ridiculous in Don Quixote depends
on the discrepancy between the aged knight and the unageing hero
of romance. Finally, there are many instances of idées fixes
which are merely foolish, some of them caused by unwise reading.
2. The Periodical Essays

2.1 'The Dance of Airy Images'.

Rambler 89, the fullest exploration of the growth of deluding fantasy is, significantly, applied to scholars, although the introduction makes clear that the danger is general. The thinker engaged on any abstruse question...will find his faculties continually stealing away to more pleasing entertainments. He often perceives himself transported, he knows not how, to distant tracts of thought, and returns to his first object as from a dream, without knowing when he forsook it, or how long he has been abstracted from it.

(Yale, IV, 105).

Not only are the faculties errant, but the mind undergoes the mysterious journey of romance. Don Quixote explains this to Sancho Panza:

There are sages who will take you up a knight errant sleeping in his bed, and without his knowing how or in what manner, he awakes the next day above a thousand leagues from the place where he fell asleep.

(Jervas, I, 198)

Like Don Quixote, solitary readers give themselves up to the luxury of fancy, please their minds with regulating the past, or planning out the future; place themselves at will in varied situations of happiness, and slumber away their days in voluntary visions.

(Yale, IV, 105-6)

1. Yale, II, 101
2. The sense of 'drawn away' in 'Abstract' (O.E.D.) is plainly revived here, although it does not appear in Johnson's definitions.
This is very close to Quixote's fantasy and to *Rambler* 2, but the greatest danger of these 'airy gratifications' is their secrecy, the dreamer's detachment from society:

...this invisible riot of the mind, this secret prodigality of being, is secure from detection, and fearless of reproach. The dreamer retires to his apartments, shuts out the cares and interruptions of mankind, and abandons himself to his own fancy; new worlds rise up before him, one image is followed by another, and a long succession of delights dances round him. (ibid, 106)

The solitary becomes an enchanter, conjuring up sensual dancing phantoms. The primary definition of 'riot' in the *Dictionary* is 'to revel; to be dissipated in luxurious enjoyments', while 'airy' as I have noted, is often connected with phantoms or ghosts in Johnson's usage: the enchanter's creations are often invisible.

In a later paragraph, the airy creations become 'ideal seducers', who 'invade the soul without warning, and have often charmed down resistance before their approach is perceived or suspected.'

*Idler* 32 gives a very similar account of the 'riot of the mind' and describes the Quixotic matter of the dreams. I have already noted the 'tyrants', 'chains' and 'assailants' metaphors which follow. The meditation on sleep which follows then returns to the reprehensible 'art' of the magician.

Such is our desire of abstraction from ourselves, that very few are satisfied with the quantity of stupefaction which the needs of the body force upon the mind...almost every man has some art, by which he steals his thoughts away from his present state. (Yale, II, 103-1)
The image of the magician, Aliart-like, conjuring up phantoms, is developed:

We suffer phantoms to rise up before us, and amuse ourselves with the dance of airy images, which after a time we dismiss for ever, and know not how we have been busied.  

(ibid, 101)

If we compare this with the passage from Palmerin quoted on p. 121, we find a striking similarity of vocabulary and content: 'airy phantoms' created by mysterious 'art' dance, the senses are gratified by luxurious sights, sounds and scents, the spectators are diverted and the whole show then disappears.

The fantasies created may relate very closely to those of Quixote and even of Sancho Panza:

Many have no happier moments than those that they pass in solitude, abandoned to their own imagination, which sometimes puts sceptres in their hands, or mitres on their heads, shifts the scene of pleasure with endless variety, bids all the forms of beauty sparkle before them, and gluts them with every change of visionary luxury.  

(ibid)

Johnson goes on to develop these kinds of fantasy to cosmic dimensions, and at last describes them as 'a voluntary dream, a temporary recession from the realities of life to airy fictions; an habitual subjection of reason to fancy' (ibid).

Although Cervantes diagnoses Don Quixote's disease in more physical terms, solitude and detachment from the structure of society play their part in his case as well:
he so bewildered himself in this kind of study, that he pass'd the nights in reading from sun-set to sun-rise, and the days from sun-rise to sun-set; and thus, what with little sleep and much reading, his brain was dried up in such a manner that he came at last to lose his wits.

(Jervas, I, 3).

Like that of Johnson's solitary, Quixote's imagination is filled with romantic images. In Motteux's translation, 'a world of disorderly notions, picked out of his books, crouded into his imagination.' The Spanish simply gives 'llenoselo la fantasia de todo aquello que leia en los libros,' which Jervas translates closely, and adds 'of enchantments, contests, battles, challenges, wounds, courtship, amours, tortures, and impossible absurdities.'

The tone in which Rambler 89 concludes this description leaves no doubt as to Johnson's seriousness: these Quixotic delusions are 'a formidable and obstinate disease of the intellect, [whose] remedy is one of the hardest tasks of reason and of virtue' (Yale, IV, 107).

The invasion of the mind by tyrants or seducers is a metaphor that Johnson often uses to describe the power of both good and bad literature.

Rambler 85 is directly linked to Don Quixote; it deals with the dangers of idleness, largely in relation to physical health, and advocates physical exercise or 'manufactures'. The final

1. Motteux, I, 4. See above, p. 166, for a possible echo of this in the Preface to the Dictionary.
section congratulates women on their harmless and salutary occupation; whenever the Rambler sees, he says,

a knot of misses busy at their
needles, I consider myself as
in the school of virtue; and...
look upon their operations...as
providing a security against the
most dangerous ensnarers of the
soul, by enabling themselves to
exclude idleness from their soli-
tary moments, and with idleness
her attendant train of passions,
fancies, and chimeras, fear=,
sorrows, and desires. (Yale, IV, 86).

Again, we have the invading train, and, Johnson continues,
'Ovid and Cervantes will inform them that love has no power but
over those whom he catches unemployed'.

This refers to a song written by Don Quixote himself, which
(ironically) warns Altisidora that

Love with idleness its friend
O're a maiden gains its end
But let business or employment
Fill up every careful moment
These an antidote will prove
'Gainst the poisonous darts of love.
(Jervas, II, 238)

In neither Jervas's translation (above) nor in that of Motteaux
is there any reference to sewing, but the Spanish is specific:

Suele et coser y el labrar
Y el estar siempre ocupada
Ser antidoto al veneno
De las amorosas ansias.
(Don Quijote, p.545)

The Rambler passage is an indication that Johnson read Cervantes
in Spanish as well as in Jervas's translation, and knew the song,
at least well enough to take up the reference to sewing.
The essay also deals with the theme of love's dangers, referring gallantly to 'the confusion and slaughter that would be produced by so many piercing eyes and vivid understandings turned loose at once upon mankind.' However, the final paragraph returns to a tone of solemnity:

It is certain that any wild wish or vain imagination never takes such firm possession of the mind as when it is found empty and unoccupied.
2.2 Pastoral Quixotes

In *Don Quixote*, delusions of pastoral felicity, or retreat to a rural Arcadia, are an important parallel theme to that of the romance of chivalry. In the book-burning scene, Quixote's niece begs that the *Diana* of Montemayor (the first pastoral romance) be burned with the rest, for

\[
\text{should my uncle be cured of this distemper of chivalry, he may possibly, by reading these books, take it into his head to become a shepherd, and wander through the woods and fields, singing and playing on a pipe; and what would be still worse, turn poet, which, they say, is an incurable and contagious disease. (Jervas, I, 26).}
\]

and, indeed, this is exactly what he does decide to do in his year of enforced abstinence from chivalry. (ibid, II, 381).

The episode of Marcela, who 'appears a shepherdess', and the 'droves of suitors' (ibid, I, 54) who transform themselves into shepherds for her sake, provides an interesting parallel to the parody of knight errantry. Although the pastoral play-acting is carried to extravagant lengths, and Chrysostome does turn poet, and does die of love, there is no narrator's comment on the folly of this delusion, as there is on Quixote's delusions in many 'chivalric' episodes. Cervantes had himself written a pastoral romance, *Galatea*, referred to in the book-burning scene, and was to write another, *Persiles and Sigismunda*, after *Don Quixote*. 
Rambler 36 and 37 are Johnson's fullest treatment of pastoral in the periodical essays, and this is surprisingly positive. His comments on the genre in the *Lives* are less sympathetic, especially his notorious response to *Lycidas*, 'a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting' (*Lives*, I,163). He is kinder to Pope's pastorals, which 'not professing to imitate real life, required no experience.' (ibid., III,224). Pope had not transgressed by writing pastoral elegy on a real dead friend, nor in introducing religious polemic. As we have seen, in *Rambler* 36. Johnson accepts that pastoral is connected in our minds with a carefree rural childhood. In this account, it first pleases because it belongs to our days of carefree innocence, but that response is then overlaid with literary expectations of Arcadia, and it is these second-hand perceptions which Johnson ridicules in several essays.

In *Rambler* 42 we meet Euphelia who 'had suffered [her] head to be filled with expectations of some nameless pleasure in rural life', and was impatient to leave the 'perpetual tumult of pleasure' in London; 'to solace myself under the misery of delay', she writes, 'I sometimes heard a studious lady of my acquaintance read pastorals.' (*Yale*, III 228-9). We later learn that she has read

a large collection of tragedies and romances, where...I have found almost every page filled with the charms and happiness of a country life...that life to which every tragick heroine in some scene or other wishes to have been born,

---

1. Addison makes the same connection between the pleasing memory of childhood experience and romantic narrative in *Spectator* 419.
and which is represented as a certain refuge from folly, from anxiety, from passion, and from guilt. (ibid, 249).

Naturally, the country fails to meet her expectations: 'shades, and flowers, and lawns, and waters, had very soon exhausted all their power of pleasing, and...I had not in myself any fund of satisfaction with which I could supply the loss of my customary amusements.' (ibid 230). Euphelia is an empty-headed town miss, and we need not assume her to be Johnson's spokesman, but there is, nevertheless, a certain pathos in her account of 'plain work and purling brooks'.

More harshly treated is Dick Shifter, in Idler 71. He too has learned of the pleasures of country life from 'plays, poems, and romances.' (Yale,II, 220), though the 'state too high for contempt and too low for envy' of which he talks is rather Horatian than romantic. His Quixotic reversals are physical and economic: besides ennui, he suffers from thorns and brambles, is cheated and despised by the rustics, sold a blind horse, and falls into a ditch. Having failed to find 'shepherdesses dancing nor heard the swain piping to their flocks.... Shifter now began to be tired with rustic simplicity,...and bad farewell to the regions of calm content and placid meditation.' (ibid.,223-4). Shifter's painful humiliations are Quixotic, but there is no 'sense and virtue' to balance these humiliations.
The Italian epigraph of this essay is from Tasso's Aminta, a pastoral drama referred to by Don Quixote, and is perhaps one of those which had formed Dick Shifter's imagination. Johnson's attitude to pastoral romance is, I think, ambivalent. It clearly has for him much of the attraction of romance; for example, he knew Sidney's Arcadia well, and frequently quotes from it in the Dictionary, often without the justification of archaic language, but his disapproval of the mixed form of pastoral romance helps to illuminate his impatience with pastoral itself. In the Preface to Shakespeare, he describes Sidney as being, like Shakespeare, 'a violator of chronology who, in his Arcadia, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure'.

In Rambler 36 Johnson had discussed the historical accuracy of pastoral; here, he also implies the historical basis of romance. But Rambler 36 makes clear that 'turbulence, violence and adventure' are what attract the reader, and that the pastoral must necessarily lack these romance pleasures:

the state of a man confined to the employments and pleasures of the country, is so little diversified, and exposed to so few of those accidents which produce perplexities, terrors and surprises, that he can be shown but seldom in such circumstances as attract curiosity.

(Yale, III 198).

1. Jervas II, 355, where he also refers to Guarini's Pastor fido.
2. See below, p.322.
2.3 Heroic Warmth and 'Frigorifick' Wisdom.

The theme of Quixotic delusion pervades the periodical essays, whether in its literal form, that of the corruption of imagination by the reading of romances, or in other closely related forms of delusion or madness induced by solitary study or by indulgence of the imagination.

Closely connected with this theme is the recurring dialogue between prudence and temerity, age and youth, the 'frigorifick' and the ardent, in which the metaphors used constantly evoke romance. Quixote himself comments on these deviations from the Aristotelian mean: after his fight with the lion, he explains the exigencies and obligations of the knight errant's life, and that therefore

encountering the lions belonged to me ... directly, though I knew it to be a most extravagant rashness. I very well know, that fortitude is a virtue placed between the vitiuous extremes of cowardice and rashness; but it is better the valiant should rise to the high pitch of temerity, than sink to the low point of cowardice.

(Jervas, I, 86)

The first Rambler essay introduces this: the Rambler, trying to select the right balance of tone between humility and confidence, claims that 'there is something captivating in spirit and intrepidity, to which we often yield, as to a resistless power' (Yale III, 5). The knightly virtues and their concomitant vices are those of youth, and, as here, they are often themselves personified as romance protagonists, in conflict with prudence, avarice, or other
judicious virtues and vices of maturity, and they here enact the
familiar metaphor of captivity, perhaps enchantment, since the
power is resistless.

In *Rambler* 25, the consensus of humanity supports the 'calorific'
vices; rashness as against cowardice, profusion as opposed to
avarice:

> as I have found reason to pay great
regard to the voice of the people,
in cases where knowledge has been
forced upon them by experience,...
I am inclined to believe that this
distribution of respect, is not without
some agreement with the nature of things;
and that in the faults, which are thus
invested with extraordinary privileges,
there are generally some latent prin­
ciples of merit, some possibilities of
future virtue, which may, by degrees,
break from obstruction, and by time
and opportunity be brought into act.

(ibid., 136)

Johnson develops the contrasting effects of 'heady confidence' and
'heartless pusillanimity', concluding that 'men devoted to litera-
ture' have often 'a kind of intellectual cowardice', which attaches
'some chimerical' character of terror and inhibition' to every kind
of study (ibid., 137;?). On the other hand, too great encouragement
of students also has its dangers:

1. Jervas uses the word for Quixote's chivalric fancies: '...the
whole system of chimeras he read of was true'. (I,3.).
The student, inflamed by encouragement, sets forward in the new path, and proceeds a few steps with great alacrity, but he soon finds asperities and intricacies of which he has not been forewarned, and imagining that none ever were so entangled or fatigued before him, sinks suddenly into despair, and desists as from an expedition in which fate opposes him.

( Ibid., 140).

In this fairly commonplace 'way' metaphor, we see how concretely the Latin derivations of 'asperities' and 'intricacies' are reflected in 'fatigued' and 'entangled'. Sinking into despair has echoes of Pilgrim's Progress, but the marsh or quicksand is also a recurrent image in Johnson's metaphor for the traveller of the mind, and this is an expedition rather than a pilgrimage, but one in which the student 'is defeated without resistance because he had no expectation of an enemy.'

In Rambler 27, a poor young man is a victim of erratic youthful warmth. Rich young friends take him up, but

the same juvenile warmth which kindled their benevolence, gave force... to every other passion, and I was forgotten as soon as any new pleasure seized on their attention.

However, although youth is not always admirable, it is still to be preferred to the self-interested coolness of age:

I observed that what they gained in steadiness they lost in benevolence, and grew colder to my interest as they became more diligent to promote their own.

( Ibid., 147-9)
The desire for fame, especially for fame after death, provides the subject for an extended argument between the heroic and prudential views in *Rambler* 49, which, though resolved by compromise, again weights the balance, by tone and vocabulary, on the heroic side. The argument is a perennial one, but it is particularly relevant to romance, which constantly claims for itself the function of a mirror, where the fame of the valorous and the gallant will incite the young to similar virtue. The enemies of fame, Johnson tells us, regard this 'ardour' for fame as 'nothing better than splendid madness, as a flame kindled by pride, and fanned by folly'. In spite of such ambivalent phrases, most of the arguments which follow are reasonable and convincing.¹

However, the language of fame's supporters carries far more persuasive force, and the arguments correspond to Johnson's own opinion expressed elsewhere:

the advocates for the love of fame allege in its vindication, that it is a passion natural and universal,

the argument begins; again, the consensus is brought to bear, adding great weight to this side of the argument, which asserts that fame is

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¹ Ibid., 265, and cf. *Rambler* 113 where Johnson ironically describes Cicero's disparagement of 'those honours for which he appears to have panted with restless solicitude' (Yale IV, 265-6). Fame is Cicero's 'darling phantom.'
a flame lighted by Heaven, and always burning with greatest vigour in the most enlarged and elevated minds... and that the folly charged upon it, is only a noble and disinterested generosity, which is not felt, and therefore not understood by those who have been always accustomed to refer every thing to themselves, and whose selfishness has contracted their understandings.

(Yale, III, 266)

Who could wish to align himself with the mean, selfish, and pusillanimous? Moreover, the advocate claims that the soul of man, formed for eternal life naturally springs forward beyond the limits of corporeal existence, and rejoices to consider herself as cooperating with future ages, and as co-extended with endless duration.

(ibid.)

This consideration would chime with Johnson's passionate desire to believe in personal survival. As happens fairly often in the Rambler, Johnson now shifts his ground: the 'commercial' view is succeeded by the heroic, which gives place to the Christian position; this rather deflates the heroic tone. Men are urged to 'endeavour that they may be remembered chiefly for their virtues, since no other reputation will be able to transmit any pleasure beyond the grave.' But we are to be virtuous, he continues, not for the sake of fame, but to gain Heaven: Johnson's religion never tended to a Shaftesburian idea of innate benevolence; the righteousness he preaches is itself prudential and it offers no emotional challenge to the heroic fire of the positive argument, although

1. Cf. also Rambler 196, where desire for reputation is specifically linked with the virtues and vices of youth; it gives firmness
clearly offered by him as the required response for Christians.

This discussion is interestingly paralleled by a passage in Don Quixote. Quixote describes noble deeds and explains that

all these and other great and very different exploits are, and shall be, the works of fame, which mortals desire as the reward and earnest of that immortality their noble deeds deserve: though we Christian and Catholic knights ought to be more intent on the glory of the world to come, than upon the vanity of fame. (Jervás, II, 39)

A number of essays deal with the differences between youth and age, showing the same bias of tone. In Rambler 69, on the pains of growing old, the apparent balance is weighted by the vocabulary:

To a young man entering the world, with fulness of hope, and ardor of pursuit, nothing is so unpleasing as the cold caution, the faint expectation, the scrupulous diffidence which experience and disappointments certainly infuse; and the old man wonders in his turn that the world never can grow wiser, that nor precepts, nor testimonies, can cure boys of their credulity and sufficiency...

(Yale, III, 365).

This Quixote-like credulity of youth is seen, in No. 79, as unequivocally natural and desirable, and a suspicious young man as a wretch incapable of generosity or benevolence,...a villain early completed beyond the need of common opportunities and gradual temptations and constancy, fidelity and disinterestedness,' even though it also 'kindles resentment for slight injuries, and dictates all the principles of sanguinary honour.' (Yale V, 261.) The connection between ardent youth, hunger for fame, and readiness for combat or adventure is again stressed.
Although the 'gradual temptations' of life may explain the old man's coldness and obduracy, here, as elsewhere, Johnson's picture is entirely unsympathetic.

We find old age, upon which suspicion has been strongly impressed by long intercourse with the world, inflexible and severe, not easily softened by submission, melted by complaint, or subdued by supplication. (Yale, IV, 51, 54)

The old man has lost for ever 'that disposition to tenderness and sympathy, which is so powerful in our younger years.'

We may use this to reinforce what might be the biased view of Pekuah, which leaves nothing on the side of age:

The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candour: but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect and too often allured to practice it. (Rasselas, p. 62)

Quixote, as we have noted, remains perpetually credulous in face of the tricks played on him by the unromantic world; the heroes of romance continue to be deceived by phantoms. All give themselves up to 'magnanimity and chance.'

The same point is made in Rambler III, where youth's impetuosity is contrasted with the sluggishness of age:
Youth is the time of enterprise and hope,... the first repulses rather inflame vehemence than teach prudence; a brave and generous mind is long before it suspects its own weakness, or submits to sap the difficulties which it expected to subdue by storm. (Yale, IV, 226-7)

The military metaphor is further extended, and quite explicit in its application to the young man, while age is again characterised by cold and sluggishness.

We...suffer the last part of life to steal from us in languid preparations for future undertakings, or slow approaches to remote advantages; in weak hopes of some fortuitous occurrence, or drowsy equilibrations of undetermined counsel. (ibid.).

The image is a kind of slow-motion parody of chivalric life.

Johnson appears to feel little sympathy with old age; the old man in The Vanity of Human Wishes has almost the grotesqueness of Volpone; Swift becomes 'a driveller and a show', and 'the teare of dotage flow' from Marlborough's eyes. Later works are no more sympathetic. Far from Johnson is the lovable grandfather of sentimental fiction. His old men owe more to the Struldbrugs and although, in Rambler 70, he may argue that the young man is incapable of tolerance or understanding for the weaknesses of others, it is because he has filled his mind with the excellence of virtue, and having never tried his resolution in any encounters with hope or fear, believes it able to stand firm whatever shall oppose it. (ibid.5)
The young man, in this warfare, has the simple romantic vision, which has no place for 'mixed characters' but divides the world into good and evil, and regards 'any man that fails in any part of his duty' as 'an enemy whom all should join to drive out of society'.

Johnson's fullest general treatment of the conflict between temerity and prudence is in *Rambler* 129. Purveyors of the received wisdom, he says, continually censure 'the miscarriages of imprudent boldness', and he grants that

> their remarks are too just to be disputed, and too salutary to be rejected; but there is likewise some danger lest timorous prudence should be inculcated, till courage and enterprise are wholly repressed, and the mind congealed in perpetual inactivity by the fatal influence of frigorific wisdom. (ibid., 321-2)

The essay goes on to introduce and develop the idea of the *via media*, in a sustained 'path' metaphor, in which words like 'deviate', 'rectitude', 'inclination', 'decline' and 'obliquities' are given their full concrete value.

Temerity is commonly censured because few can be charged with it: 'It is the vice of noble and generous minds, the exuberance of magnanimity, and the ebullition of genius; and is therefore not regarded with much tenderness...' (ibid., 323). It is interesting to contrast this treatment of 'the voice of the people' with that of *Rambler* 25. Since it was there raised for romantic rashness, Johnson unhesitatingly used it to support his argument, while here, having reflected that most men rather need encouragement to action than restraint, he dismisses their cold prudence.
with contempt. We find 'when diffidence is absorbed in the sense of danger, or overwhelmed by some resistless passion...', that the obstacles with which our way seemed to be obstructed were only phantoms, which we believed real because we durst not advance to a close examination' (ibid. 324). Characteristically, it is action that causes phantoms to disappear; a courageous attack dispels the monsters; at the blowing of a horn, the castle vanishes.

Even in a comparison of 'two malignant and destructive powers', Interest and Envy, the more active and energetic Interest is to be preferred to

the cold malignity of envy [which] may be exerted in a torpid and quiescent state, amidst the gloom of stupidity, in the coverts of cowardice.

The metaphors in which Johnson develops this comparison are significant:

He that falls by the attacks of interest, is torn by hungry tigers; he may discover and resist his enemies.
He that perishes in the ambushes of envy, is destroyed by unknown and invisible assailants.

(Rambler 183, Yale, V, 197-8)

A further distinction between temerity and prudence concerns the operation of chance. The romance hero is, of course, governed by chance.

1. This is reminiscent of Spenser's Gelosie, who nurses his 'cold complexion' in a cave, 'a balefull mansion, in drery darkness and continuall feare' (III, X, 58-9). It may also owe something to Ovid, Metamorphoses, II, 760-782.
In *Rambler* 184, the essayist describes himself as being at the mercy of chance in his choice of subjects. His mind is errant:

'...the judgement is distracted with boundless multiplicity, the imagination ranges from one design to another'. (ibid., 202). The essay goes on to point out how accidental are 'all men's major decisions':

The busy, the ambitious, the inconstant, and the adventurous, may be said to throw themselves by design into the arms of fortune, and voluntarily to quit the power of governing themselves... nor is it any wonder that their time is passed between elation and despondency, hope and disappointment. (ibid., 203)

There is a certain heroic attraction in their gallant self-dedication, made clearer by a description of their antithesis, the prudent travellers:

Some there are who appear to walk the road of life with more circumspection, and make no step till they think themselves secure from the hazard of a precipice; when neither pleasure nor profit can tempt them from the beaten path; who refuse to climb lest they should fall,...and move slowly forward without any compliance with those passions by which the heady and vehement are seduced and betrayed. (ibid.)

Seduction and betrayal are often the lot of lesser knights, but even the dull travellers in this dangerous landscape, which revives even 'the beaten track', cannot escape from chance, who appears as a magician: 'Even the timorous prudence of this judicious class is far from exempting them from the dominion of chance, a subtle and insidious power, who will intrude upon privacy and embarrass caution' (ibid).
At the end of the essay, Johnson characteristically moves from the terrestrial-romance plane, 'where a thousand dangers hover about us, and none can tell whether the good that he pursues is not evil in disguise, or whether the next step will lead him to safety or destruction', to an assurance that, under omnipotent Goodness, 'what appears casual to us is directed for ends ultimately kind and merciful.' (ibid., 205).

In Rambler 43, the demesure of rashly heroic figures who are designed to 'soar' where the prudent only 'grovel' leads them to the 'danger of becoming useless by a daring negligence' since

they...look out for undertakings worthy of their abilities, and engage in them with very little precaution, for they imagine that without premeditated measures, they shall be able to find expedients in all difficulties.

An exact description of the chivalric hero, but here we are concerned with mere men, and 'the resolution of the combat is seldom equal to the vehemence of the charge.' The essay goes on to claim that chance, rather than reason, is responsible for 'all important events which have been suddenly brought to pass' and that to counter this, the true hero needs the qualities of a Ulysses rather than of an Ajax: 'Calm intrepidity,...courage which danger cannot turn aside... constancy which fatigues cannot weary, and contrivance which impediments cannot exhaust' (Yale,III,235).

1. For chance, cf. also Rambler nos. 141,172,178.
There seems to be a certain tension in many of these Rambler essays between an implicit vision of a romance world, 'a chaos of mingled purposes and causalities', governed by chance, where intrepidity, un-rational ardour and youth succeed against impossible odds, and the explicit 'real' world of old age, prudence and patience, where 'much is to be endured' without the possibility of action, and only faith in an ultimately guiding Providence offers distant comfort. This is Don Quixote's final discovery.
3. The Vanity of Human Wishes

The exempla in this poem more closely parallel Don Quixote than romance in their repeated pattern of delusive aspiration and bathetic fall. In contrast to Juvenal's mockery and obscenity, Johnson's treatment of heroic figures suggests a sympathetic response to the grandeur of their aims, even as he recognises what may be the destructive consequences to themselves and to others, and this is very characteristic of Johnson's compassionate reading of Don Quixote.

In lines 175-254, the 'Fame' which spurs is itself a 'Force resistless', an enchanter who 'supplies the universal Charm'. Although War is firmly condemned by Johnson, in the name of humanity and prudence, there is still some grandeur in the treatment of the three conquerors, firmly underlined by the rhetorical patterning of lines 179-181. So, Alexander's almost magic speed, which transports him over all Asia, the relentless force and the extent of the Romans' conquest, and the hyperbolic bloodshed of Marlborough's victories, create a heroic moment within the condemnation of war.

This is strongly reinforced by the portrait of Charles XII (11.191,222). He is described, not as a Quixote, but, unequivocally, as a romance hero, with 'a Frame of Adamant, a Soul of Fire', successful in love and war. He is not deluded when he believes that he can conquer nations, and scythes through 'rival Monarchs' like an Amadis or a Guy. But the Quixotic pattern of ludicrous reversal still leaves him as a literary exemplar; his fall disappoints
the heroic narrative he belonged in, and reduces him to 'point a Moral' in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, rather than to 'adorn a Tale' in the *Mirror of Knighthood*.

Xerxes is allowed far less romantic glory; although he travels

\begin{quote}
In gay Hostility and barbarous Pride,  
With half Mankind embattled at his Side
\end{quote}

it is a 'certain Prey' and not a gallant enemy which he is confronting. Charles Albert, although his attempt against 'the dread Summits of Caesarian Pow' r' has some grandeur, only conquers 'defenceless Realms', and our sympathy is instead asked for an unequivocally romantic figure when 'the Queen, the Beauty, sets the World in Arms.' We are not long allowed our romantic response to her deliverers, however, since plunder as well as fame motivate these gallant rescuers of beauty in distress.

Humiliation and mockery of fallen power and tyranny is more characteristic of heroic romance than of Cervantes. Spenser's Duessa and Geroneo are pitilessly exposed, but Johnson feels too much compassion for 'the horrour of derision', not to affect us as Charles of Bavaria 'steals to Death from Anguish and from Shame.'

The 'general challengers' of literature are treated with great sympathy. Laud is the victim of hated Rebellion, which is shown as a bird of prey, but he is also a martial hero, who 'meets the Shock', defined third in the *Dictionary* as 'the conflict of enemies'.

Among quotations illustrating the verb, Johnson quotes
Come the three corners of the world in Arms
And we will shock them.  

[King John V,vii]

Laud is not judged as the military heroes were: his learning is only 'fatal', his parts 'dangerous', because of others' envy for his 'glitt'ring Eminence', and Art and Genius are invited to weep for him.

Johnson's autobiographical study of the Scholar is described in unmistakable romance images. It brings together the figures of the champion of literature, 'calorific' youth, and Quixotic aspirations. Hercules, as we have seen, was firmly established in the hall of romance heroes by the Receuil of Troy. Here, Johnson romanticises the lethal effects of the Shirt of Nessus into the 'gen'rous Heat' of 'the Fever of Renown', and it initiates, instead of ending, the quest. The hope of filling 'Bodley's Dome' or toppling 'Bacon's Mansion' is Quixotic, yet the scholar is unequivocally urged to proceed, guarded by the armour of Virtue. Naturally, there will be a great many assailants on his road to the Throne of Truth, where he will have taken Science captive, and taken possession of her 'last Retreat'. A quotation from Locke illustrating 'retreat', defined (second) as 'a place of security', suggests 'dens of robbers', and 'the fortresses of fair warriors' as two possible meanings.

'Misty Doubt' suggests the opening landscape with its deluding mists, and here Doubt is one of a series of assailants. 'False Kindness' appears as an enchantress who may 'lure to loose Delight', Praise, Novelty and Beauty all belong to this category, although
Beauty is also armed with her 'fatal Dart', and disease may 'invade' the veins. 'Melancholy's Phantoms' are most clearly romantic and most clearly autobiographical, and the succession of metaphorical and actual 'ills' or dangers which 'assail' the scholar represent the proper variety of attacking or seductive romance assailants, crowding thickly upon the questing knights. The scholar's delusive dreams are hard to eradicate, and the story of Laud is offered to cure him. Like Rasselas and Rambler 49, The Vanity of Human Wishes moves between heroic delusion and anti-heroic fall and through to a religious dimension which is above romance.
4. Rasselas: Mock-Romance

The plots of Johnson's own fiction seem to owe little to romance. Though there are Spenserian and Bunyanesque echoes in many of his allegories, there are no tales of love and war, of a 'giant and a dragon'. Rasselas has, however, much affinity to Don Quixote, not only in the quest journey, or in the recurring pattern of idealistic ascent and bathetic drop, but in many details of plot and setting associated with romance, and including the conflict of values between generous youth and prudent age. The opening paragraph addresses those who 'listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth...' The reader, then, is suffering from Quixotic delusions, in common with most of the characters in the story.

The Happy Valley, cut off, like the landscapes of romance, from any geographical reality, appears both romantic and Arcadian. The cavern and the wood, the 'dark cleft of the mountain' where the stream falls, sublimely, 'with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it [is] heard no more' (p.2), suggest gothic adventures, while the smiling scene in the valley promises Arcadian happiness. This is the first illusion, and it becomes clear that Rasselas desires exactly the 'turbulence, violence and adventure' which pastoral cannot supply.

The palace, too, is a disappointment. Its labyrinthine intricacies 'built as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan', with secret and subterranean passages and 'unsuspected cavities' in its columns concealing hidden treasure (p.3), appear a perfect setting for romance, but no more is heard of them; this is, in itself, a frustration of the reader's Quixotic expectations.

Rasselas, by withdrawing from society, is fulfilling the first condition for Quixotic delusion. We are to approve of his dissatisfaction with life of effortless indulgence, and his soliloquies offer impeccable reflections on providence, but the pattern of ironic reversal or deflation is established when he is seen to

feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. (p.6)

Once Rasselas has found a quest, his romantic fantasies begin:

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness. (pp.9-10)

He dreams not only of the adventures, but of the duties of the knight errant and busies himself in 'visionary bustle'. His chivalric fantasies become so powerful that he imagines himself

1. The word 'visionary' is often used by Johnson in relation to Quixotic fantasies.
rescuing 'an orphan virgin'\(^1\) robbed and deserted by her lover,

and
crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and run forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real persuit. (p.10).

The narrator's voice almost coincides with that of Rasselas as he continues:

fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts,

and he runs on in fantastic chase until stopped by the mountain. Rasselas, unlike Quixote, is sane, and smiles at himself when he realises the extent of 'his own useless impetuosity.'

The mechanist is clearly a Quixote figure, the more so as he is 'eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers', and it is only his enthusiasm for projection which lays him open to the bathetic and humiliating failure of his wings.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Johnson uses the word 'virgin' in this romance context for 'maiden' in his Life of Butler, Lives, I.209.

\(^2\) Cf. Adventurer,qq : projectors 'fail by attempting things beyond their power...not by idleness or timidity, but by rash adventure and fruitless diligence,' and 'Many that presume to laugh at projectors, would consider a flight through the air in a winged chariot, and the movement of a mighty engine by the steam of water, as equally the dreams of mechanick lunacy.' (Yale, II,434). Heroic modern scientists spurred by the enthusiasm of projection, can achieve wonders to parallel those of romance.
Imlac's role is primarily that of mentor, played in romance by the sage or enchanter. While the magician must use (as well as counter) guile and enchantment, the youthful knight preserves his ingenuous belief in force, and the simplicity of good and evil. Imlac's own life has been a quest for adventure where, as an ingenuous young man, he has encountered the cynical greed of the older merchants, and Rasselas's indignant response to this story is 'the natural effect of virtue animated by youth.' (p.19).

Even Imlac, however, suffers a Quixotic reversal; his claims for poetry are so extravagant that they spur him to 'the enthusiastic fit' which Rasselas deflects, crying 'Enough! Thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet.' (p.28). A very similar passage occurs in Don Quixote, where Quixote makes the equally extravagant claim for knight errantry that 'tis a science that includes in itself all other sciences in the world, or at least the greatest part of them' and continues with a long list of necessary sciences and accomplishments. Quixote's auditor, Don Lorenzo, (who is a poet) deflects him in very much the same way as Rasselas deflects Imlac: 'I question whether there ever have been, or now are in being, any knights errant adorned with so many virtues.' (Jervas, II,90). Rasselas's self-congratulation was deflated by the narrator, Imlac by Rasselas, but the pattern is similar.

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1. As Quixote explains, there is a 'sage enchanter who has the superintendence of my affairs... (for such a one there is/or I should be no true knight errant) Jervas, I,198.
Imlac is firmly reinstated in his role when, in Chapter 12, he tells Rasselas the true state of the Happy Valley, and Rasselas invites him to be 'the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the choice of life.' (p.34).

The bathetic pattern is varied as Rasselas later addresses the young men of Cairo. His sentiments are irreproachable, but, oddly, they are those of prudent age, not of romantic youth, and such incongruity is also characteristic of the Quixote pattern. When Quixote discourses to the goatherds on the Golden Age, or frees the captives, his words and actions are admirable; only the context is inappropriate. Rasselas's admonition is specifically anti-romantic, looking forward to 'maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease and phantoms of delight dance no more about us' (p.45). His only reward is ridicule, exactly that of Quixote on so many occasions, and 'the consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision.' (p.46).

The reversal of the stoic philosopher is very much simpler, but interesting in contrast to Rasselas's encounter with the young men, where there was no question of his failing to fulfil his own admonitions. In the other case, there is a further permutation, for Rasselas is now the youthful idealist, while it is the sage who utters philosophical truisms, and these prove inappropriate, not to his auditors, but to himself. This Quixote pattern, often used by Fielding for Parson Adams, is further complicated by the sage's
venality. Although Johnson frequently warned against rejecting moral teaching because of failings in the teacher, the Sage is already undermined for us, though not for Rasselas, by his too eager acceptance of the purse, while Quixote's failures to practise what he preaches never really undermine our belief in the good faith of his idealism. A further reversal, however, lies at the end of chapter 18, when the Sage becomes genuinely pathetic as 'a lonely being disunited from society', and thus in the position of the Quixote in many of Johnson's fictions, while Rasselas, repeating stoic truisms in turn, becomes less attractive as he does 'insult misery with reproof' until his humanity checks him (p.48).

The hermit is a more complex case. Hermits are stock figures of romance, and Johnson's attitude both to them and to monastic retreat are ambivalent.1 The hermit in Rasselas enacts the attraction and repulsion which the idea had for Johnson. The hermit corresponds to those of romance in so far as he is a retired soldier, who has 'resolved to close [his] life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery.' (p.53). The motives are more mixed than those of Lancelot or Guy of Warwick, and it is not repentance and sanctity which have brought him here, but 'the preferment of a younger officer.' His cave is rather a place of Horatian retreat, comfortably provided and placed, not in a desert, but in earshot of a picturesque cataract.2 He is, however,

1. Johnson's passionate response to mediaeval sanctity and religious retirement is demonstrated in France and in Scotland: see below, p.397 ff.
2. Addison, in his Remarks on Several Parts of Italy..., which Johnson quotes in the Dictionary, describes a similar hermitage, which 'lies under the prettiest solitude imaginable among woods and rocks, which at first sight dispose a man to be serious.' (p.272), like the sound of the cataract which 'composed the mind to pensive meditation', Rasselas, p.52.
hospitable and ascetic, 'cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm' (pp.52-3). He too, suffers from the assaults of a disordered imagination, the penalty of detachment from society, and is 'disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion.' (p.54). In spite of his engaging absence of hypocrisy, he too is undermined for us by the presence of the treasure hidden in the rocks.

The attitudes of the learned men to the hermit mirror Johnson's own pronouncements on this question at different times, and the man who is most affected by the narrative repeats Johnson's commonest view on the unhappiness of the present state (p.55).

The journey to the hermit, like most quests, is fortuitously interrupted by other episodes, and here we are introduced to Nekayah's Quixotic delusion. The fantasies of Rasselas, Nekayah and Pekuah are parallel, but Nekayah's is most clearly related to Don Quixote. Like Euphelia, she is disappointed in her pastoral expectations, and more specifically, like Dick Shifter, she finds the shepherds stupid and malevolent; her delusion, however, is persistent enough to survive the encounter with reality and, like Quixote, she continues to believe in her ideal in face of harsh proofs of its invalidity.

She is very close to Marcela, who

On a certain day...appears a shepherdess, and...would needs go into the fields, with the other country-lasses, and tend her own flock. 

(Jervas, I, 54)
Marcela herself claims that

> the modest conversation of the
> shepherdesses of these villages,
> and the care of my goats, are my
> entertainment.

(ibid. 67)

Nakayah, too, hopes to share her idyll with

> a few virtuous and elegant comp-
> panions, [to] fondle the lambs of
> her own ewe, and listen, without
> care, among brooks and breezes,
> to one of her maidens reading in
> the shade.

(p. 50)

Both idylls envisage a female seclusion.

The story of Pekuah's abduction is the episode closest to romance action in Rasselas. Indeed, her refusal to enter the pyramid closely echoes a comic passage in Amadis de Gaule. Here, Amadis and his squire, with a dwarf, approach a deserted castle to which Amadis can find no entrance but 'a dark place' and certaine steps leading into the earth' under the castle. The dwarf is afraid to go down them and Amadis teases him:

> Fear not, tall fellow, but let Vs
> go down those staires, to see who
> is beneath. My Lord; quoth the
> Dwarf, for God's sake spare me,
> nothing in the world can make me
> go into such a fearfull place.

(I, 125)

When, after many adventures in the castle, Amadis returns, he finds the dwarf, not abducted, but cruelly hung up by one leg over a stinking fire, and his squire tied to a tree, and the adventure continues with stories of abductions and imprisonments. Even Nekayah's intended 'narrative of dark labyrinths and costly rooms' reached through a 'cavity', resembles this one.
Rasselas's reaction to Pekuah's abduction is, naturally, to prepare to 'persue the robbers with his sabre in his hand' (p.79). This heroic impulse is checked by Imlac, who points out that Rasselas has only a beast of burden. This reduces the adventure to a Quixote level, and no heroic measures can be taken to rescue Pekuah, the damsel in distress.

The Arab chief is the nearest to a romantic figure in the story. He has 'a castle or fortress', with towers and turrets (pp.37,94) and, like the Scottish Border chieftains, lives by plunder. He is careful to point out to Pekuah that he is not 'one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; [he knows] the rules of civil life' (p.91), and like the Borderers, he makes proud claims:

- the purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or more properly to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders, and low born tyrants.

(Here we have concrete embodiment of many of Johnson's metaphors of incursion and ravage, fortresses and deserts). The Arab is courteous and gallant, and proves that he does indeed know the rules of civil life when he delivers Pekuah back to the Monastery of St. Antony. Even the ransom is found in romantic chronicles like Froissart's.
6. The Astronomer and Madness

Setting aside the follies this honest gentleman utters in everything related to his madness, he can discourse very sensibly upon other points, and seems to have a clear and settled judgement in all things. 1.

The Astronomer is clearly the figure closest to Johnson's Don Quixote, who in the midst of his delusions, has 'so much of sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem'; the Astronomer is also a man of the greatest benevolence and learning, flawed only by his one obsession, worthy of pity rather than ridicule, and very close to the edited and sentimentalised Quixote persona of the later eighteenth century. He is introduced by Imlac as one of 'those who are grown old in the company of themselves.... His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expressions clear'. (98,99) and he is not only wise but good, for 'his integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning' (ibid.).

The form of the Astronomer's delusion has a closer parallel in Don Quixote than that of Quixote himself, the story of the graduate of Ossuna, told by the barber as a mirror of Don Quixote's madness. The graduate has been shut up as a madman, but writes to the Archbishop to say that he has recovered his wits. The Archbishop's chaplain visits him, is persuaded of his sanity, and agrees

1. Jervas, I,195. The Priest's explanation to Dorothea is only one of many such tributes.
to his release. As the graduate is about to leave, a fellow inmate threatens to withhold rain from the City of Seville for three years, which, as he is Jupiter, is in his power; upon this, the graduate kindly tells the chaplain not to be alarmed, since he is Neptune and master of the waters, and can send as much rain as he likes.

Johnson's lifelong fear of madness is attested by a conversation which Boswell reports in his *Tour to the Hebrides*:

"... I inherited a vile melancholy from my father [Johnson tells his hostess] which has made me mad all my life, at least not sober."- Lady M'Leod wondered he should tell this - "Madam, (said I) he knows that with that madness he is superior to other men." (p.302)

In the *Life*, Boswell describes the early onset of Johnson's "hypochondria", and his statement of his own case to Dr. Swinfen, and comments:

Johnson, who was blest with all the powers of genius and understanding in a degree far above the ordinary state of human nature, was at the same time visited with a disorder so afflictive, that they who know it by dire experience, will not envy his exalted endowments.

(pp.47-8)

It is to this melancholy that Boswell attributes 'that aversion to regular life' (ibid. p.47) that Johnson had told Percy was the result of reading too many romances. Boswell confirms the connection with the Astronomer:
I am aware that he himself was too ready to call such a complaint by the name of madness; in conformity with which notions he has traced its gradations with exquisite nicety in one of the chapters of his Rasselas. (ibid., p.49).

In the 'Life of Addison', Johnson discusses Addison's reason for killing off Sir Roger de Coverley:

The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, para mí solo nacío Don Quijote, y ya para él, made Addison declare with an undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger, being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong. (Lives, II,96.)

Addison, in Johnson's full account, seems himself obsessed with his own creation. But Johnson distinguishes between Sir Roger's eccentricities and the true Quixotic madness:

The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of habitual rusticity.... The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason, without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design. (ibid.,p97).

1. This should be 'sola', as Johnson wrote it, since it is the narrator's pen speaking. Boswell reports a very similar comment connecting Sir Roger and Don Quixote, made two years before the Lives were commissioned, indicating Johnson's lifelong interest in the question. (Life, p.631).
The Astronomer, like the two madmen, believes that he controls
the sun and rain, although he cannot restrain the winds. But the
difference which renders the Astronomer's delusion terrible, rather
than absurd, is the overwhelming burden of responsibility: while
the 'invisible riot of the mind' allows the fantasy to 'wanton'
in dreams of future felicity, the Astronomer, on the other hand,
shares with Quixote a sense of painful and unavoidable duty.

Imlac states this clearly:

No disease of the imagination...is so
difficult of cure, as that which is
complicated with the dread of guilt....
If fancy presents images not moral or
religious, the mind drives them away
when they give it pain, but when
melancholick notions take the form
of duty, they lay hold on the facul-
ties without opposition, because we
are afraid to exclude or banish them.
(p.114)

The Astronomer tells Imlac of his fears:

I sometimes suspected myself of madness,
and should not have dared to impart this
secret but to a man like you, capable of
distinguishing the wonderful from the
impossible, and the incredible from the
false.
(p.102) 1.

The distinctions are important; when, at the pyramid, Rasselas
bluntly assures Pekuah that 'there is no danger from the dead;
he that is once buried will be seen no more', Imlac disagrees:

1. In Samuel Johnson, pp.20-21, Jackson Bate has discussed Johnson
from the standpoint of Freudian psychology, and the phrase he
uses 'internalised-self-demand' (in spite of the apparent tautology)
seems to fit the Astronomer, and to a lesser degree, Quixote,
as well as Johnson.
That the dead are seen no more, said Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations.... This opinion, which, perhaps, prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth.

This is undoubtedly Johnson's own position; for him, a belief in the supernatural was very closely related to his Christian faith, and evidence of life after death assuaged the 'scruples' or doubts from which he suffered. In this passage, as so often, the popular voice is adduced on the side of mystery, of the imaginatively stimulating, as against cold, mechanistic rationality.

It is important to place this beside Imlac's warning against the dangers of imagination. Although this tyrannical faculty must be kept under subjection, we are not therefore confined to the imaginative limitations of the empirically verifiable.

The process which Imlac describes in chapter 44 is exactly that of *Rambler* 89:

> no man will be found over in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannise and force him to hope and fear beyond the limits of sober probability.

(*Rasselas*, p.104)

The romance metaphors of tyranny and of the magician illuminate the same process of retirement and divagation. The solitary man

1. It may be significant that for 'fabulous' in the Dictionary, Johnson quotes from *Spectator* 101: 'a person terrified with the imagination of spectres, is more reasonable than one who thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless.' (*The Spectator*, I, 455).
'expatiates in boundless futurity, ... amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion.' (p.105). This process continues with the dance and the riot, the enchanter's sensually pleasing masque and banquet:

The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.... The mind feasts on the luscious falsehood whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she first grows imperious and in time despotick. (ibid.)

The imagination has become a tyrannical mistress, a 'fatal Cleopatra'.

The progress described is from the seductive pleasures of daydreams to the painful necessities of obsession.

The responses of Imlac's hearers to the Astronomer's story are graded by sex and social class. Pekuah laughs, Nekayah smiles, while Rasselas remains grave; Imlac's reproof is significant: 'Ladies,... to mock the heaviest of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wise.' (p.104). The permissibility of ridicule

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1. Although 'amuse' is defined in the Dictionary to correspond with modern usage, Johnson often uses it in contexts related to romance, fantasy or enthusiasm. He illustrates it by a significant quotation from Richard Allestre's Decay of Piety: 'They think they see visions and are arrived at some extraordinary revelations; when, indeed, they do but dream dreams, and amuse themselves with the fantastick ideas of a busy imagination.'
or satire for a Christian was much discussed in the eighteenth century. Although Johnson told Boswell that 'the sense of ridicule is given us, and may be lawfully used' (Life, p.1015), Imlac's disapproval reflects Johnson's usual practice (in writing, at least) and helps to illuminate his pity for Don Quixote, and his unwillingness to inflict 'the horror of derision' on others.

The prompt confessions of the young people justify Imlac's formidable pronouncement that 'if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state' (p.104), and confirms the idea of Everyman as Quixote.

The dreams of Pekuah and Rasselas are only extensions or exaggerations of their present, or possible future, states. But Nekayah's pastoral fantasy is well advanced, and, unlike any other which Johnson describes, has reached the stage of enactment, where Nekayah dresses up as a shepherdess 'to help [her] imagination', and believes she hears 'the sheep bleat' and 'the wind whistle' (p.106). This acting-out, which we saw to a lesser degree in Rasselas's pursuit of the imaginary ravisher, is unusual in Johnson's many Quixote stories, and few of his characters put on actual 'armour'.

Johnson's remedy for diseases of the imagination is always reintegration into society, since it is solitude and self-absorption which let in the enemy without the gates.

In the recurring dispute between the advocates of country retirement and those of active commitment to (urban) society, Johnson generally advocates the social choice, but rather as it conduces to the individual's mental stability, than in pursuit of any system.
Clearly, for Johnson, the ideal of Horatian (or Shaftesburian) retirement can easily degenerate into pastoral delusion; it may be a reprehensible withdrawal from the duties of society, and, at the worst, can conduce to depravity or obsession. The Astronomer describes this last danger:

If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours... my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence, but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah.  

(p.114)

In this romance image, Pekuah clearly has magic power to dissolve the chains of enchantment. Interestingly, the Astronomer again introduces the idea of ghosts: 'I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harrassed him in the dark.' (ibid.).

At the end of the book, Rasselas, Nekayah, and Pekuah are all left with modified fantasies: Rasselas's dream of rule, although not quite impossible, is very similar to the Quixotic fantasy of kingdoms; the princess abandons her sheep for a praiseworthy, but equally Quixotic, intention to 'learn all sciences', and found a college to promote prudence and piety (p.123).

Nekayah exchanges secular for sacred rule. She has been 'charmed' by the convent of St. Antony. The retirement of the monks is very clearly distinguished from that of the hermit; their devotion is not questioned, and their occupations 'are incited by a reasonable motive'. They have all the benefits of useful labour
and of a communal life, and their time is structured 'so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice.' Moreover 'their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity' (p.116). There is no hint of condemnation of the monks for superstitious enthusiasm: although Imlac's conclusion is that 'he that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery,' it is still a remarkably positive picture of monastic life. In such an establishment, Nekayah wishes to rule, but 'of these wishes that they had formed, they well knew that none could be obtained'. (p.123). Their delusions are not, then, dangerously Quixotic, and do not dictate their determination to return to Abyssinia, but nor is there any suggestion that they will renounce further 'airy gratifications'. Imlac and the Astronomer, though their age and reason preclude this kind of juvenile fantasy, still conform to the romance pattern in placing themselves at the mercy of chance.

Rasselas resembles Don Quixote not only in the numerous delusions and self-flattering fantasies it satirises, but in its generosity to almost all those who suffer from them. The fact that these potentially ludicrous imaginings infect even Imlac, with his exorbitant claims for poetry, and, most importantly, the Astronomer, who is so closely identified with Johnson himself, makes clear that Johnson is speaking from within the condition of Quixote. There is no safe ground from which the satirist may look down, immune.
7. The Female Quixote.

Unlike *Rasselas*, Charlotte Lennox's novel, with whose production Johnson was closely concerned, does have a conventional romance ending. The heroine is cured of her Quixotic delusions through the arguments of a 'good Divine', known only as 'The Doctor', and she marries the hero.

Johnson's relationship with Charlotte Lennox is described in Miriam Small's biography.¹ She there quotes Richardson's statement that *The Female Quixote* is written by a woman, the favourite of the author of *The Rambler*,² and Boswell records Johnson's continuing admiration in 1784:

> I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found: I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all. *(Life, p. 1278)*

Hawkins describes a delightful all-night dinner which Johnson arranged in 1751 to celebrate the publication of *Harriot Stuart*, Charlotte Lennox's first novel.³ Johnson wrote the dedication for *The Female Quixote* and, with Richardson, advised and helped Mrs. Lennox in its writing and publication. A more difficult

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¹ Charlotte Ramsay Lennox (New Haven, 1935).
question concerns his authorship of the eleventh chapter. The claim was first made, on internal evidence, in 1834; Duncan Isles, in his Appendix to this edition of the novel, discusses Johnson's contribution, but concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support his authorship. He also points out that there is no contemporary reference to Johnson's having written a chapter, although he had acknowledged the dedication. Against this last objection may be placed Fanny Burney's comment on the attempt to catalogue Johnson's miscellaneous pieces:

> it will be very difficult, as I dare-say he hardly knows what he has written; / himself,
> for he has made numerous prefaces, dedications, odd chapters, and I know not what, for other authors, that he has never owned.

No other 'odd chapter' is acknowledged by Johnson, but his debtors were not always forward in proclaiming his contributions, and his gallantry might here have prevented him from doing so. There are two passages in the chapter which imply indebtedness, if not to Johnson's pen, then at least to his close collaboration. The chapter eleven heading describes it as 'Being in the Author's Opinion, the best Chapter in this History,' while on page 377, the Doctor is made to cite both Richardson and Johnson:

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An admirable Writer of our own Time, has found the way to convey the most solid Instructions, the noblest Sentiments, and the most exalted Piety, in the pleasing Dress of a Novel, and, to use the Words of the greatest Genius of the present Age, 'Has taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue.'

Charlotte Lennox annotates the author as Richardson, the genius as Johnson, so this is clearly not by Johnson. It is easy to see why Charlotte Lennox, if she wrote the chapter, should have chosen Johnson as her model for a weighty moralist. During the time when she was writing the novel, the Rambler was appearing, and Johnson's perfected style was available for imitation.

Duncan Isles concludes that 'linguistically, there appears to be nothing that a good writer, familiar with Johnson's style, could not have achieved.' (p.421). One may perhaps question whether Charlotte Lennox qualifies for this task: her own style is that of the popular novelist, and decidedly inferior to that of Fanny Burney.

Like Don Quixote's, Arabella's speech often attempts to reproduce the literary and archaic language of romances, and in this she is distinguished from other characters, but her weightier style is still very far from Johnson's. It may be interesting to consider a speech which is praised for its good sense by Arabella's friends, and whose sentiments are close to Johnson's:
There is nothing at so great a Distance from true and heroick Virtue, as that In-
difference which obliges some People to be pleas'd with all things or Nothing;
Hence it comes to pass that they neither entertain great Desires of Glory, nor Fear
of Infamy; that they neither love nor hate; that they are wholly influenc'd by
custom, and are sensible only of the Afflictions of the Body, their Minds being
in a Manner insensible.

(p.310)

This is not too far from Johnson's position on heroic ardour as opposed to cold prudence. However, a speech given to Arabella in Chapter 12 makes clear the difference in style:

He that writes without Intention to be credited, must write to little Purpose;
for what Pleasure or Advantage can arise from Facts that never happened?
What Examples can be afforded by the Patience of those who never suffered,
or the Chastity of those who were never solicited? The great End of History is to show how much Human Nature can endure or perform. When we hear a story in common life that raises our Wonder and Compassion, the first Confutation stills our Emotions, and however we were touched before, we then chase it from the Memory with Contempt as a Trifle, or with Indignation as an Imposture.

(PP.376-7)

This is one of the more convincingly Johnsonian passages in the chapter, and it demonstrates that the Johnsonian style in Chapter 12 is not confined to the Doctor. In Rasselas, there is a similar identity of style, and Nehayah's periods are no less weighty than Imlac's, but it is difficult to see why Charlotte Lennox should have gone to such pains to imitate a convincingly Johnsonian style for Arabella as well as for the Doctor.
Without further evidence, it is impossible to ascertain the way in which Johnson collaborated with Charlotte Lennox. We have a record of one such collaboration, on Hannah More's poem 'Sir Eldred of the Bower', an indifferent but romantic piece; Johnson read both poems through, suggested some little alterations in the first, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza. 1.

Johnson may have discussed chapter 12 of *The Female Quixote*, dictated parts of it (as we know he could do) or written part of it, to which Charlotte Lennox later added. We are, however, fairly safe in assuming that the chapter represents Johnson's own opinions of the romances which corrupt Arabella's mind.

In *The Female Quixote*, the Doctor attacks romance with far greater vehemence than Johnson ever does; however, it is important to note that the novels read by Arabella are not romances of chivalry, but the French sentimental romances. Although Johnson had certainly 'looked into' these, they had not the attraction which the Peninsular romances had for him. In the Preface to *Shakespeare*, he castigates the modern theatre where 'the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded.' (Yale, VII, 63), and this heroic drama is very closely related to the French romances. These the Doctor dismisses as 'these contemptible volumes with which children are sometimes injudiciously permitted to amuse their imagination.' They are 'not only...fictions, but...senseless fictions,'

However, having persuaded Arabella (perhaps too easily) that these 'histories' are both fictitious and absurd, the Doctor condemns them in graver terms: they

   give new Fire to the Passions of Revenge and Love; two passions which, even without such powerful Auxiliaries, it is one of the severest labours of Reason and Piety to suppress, and which yet must be suppressed if we hope to be approved in the Sight of the only Being where [sic] Approbation can make us Happy.

   (p.380).

This echoes very closely the passage on self-induced fantasy in *Rambler* 89 (p.8 above). We may even find this weight of condemnation disproportionate to the absurdity of the novel's own Quixotic fiction; but this incongruity is not in itself uncharacteristic of Johnson: many of the periodical essays similarly move from a comic or ludicrous tone to religious solemnity.

Although the romances 'soften the heart to love,' the Doctor does not accuse Arabella of licentiousness: the form of love they teach is rather dominance than compliance, and 'they teach women to exact Vengeance, and Men to execute it; teach Women to expect not only Worship, but the dreadful Worship of human Sacrifices.' (pp.380-1).

The Doctor touches on the sacrilegious adoration of the mistress which earlier critics of romance had condemned: 'such extravagances of praise as one human Being ought not to hear from another', and condemns
accounts of Battles in which thousands
are slaughtered for no other purpose.
than to gain a smile from the haughty
Beauty who sits a calm Spectatress of
the Ruin and Desolation, Bloodshed and
Misery, incited by herself.

( pp. 380-1 )

Arabella is convinced, and ashamed, and wonders how 'the Blaze of
enthusiastic Bravery could hinder me from remarking with Abhorence
the Crime of deliberate and unnecessary Bloodshed.' ( p. 381 ). 'The
Blaze of Enthusiastic Bravery' is a very Johnsonian phrase, in
both vocabulary and implication. The primary definition of
'bravery' in the Dictionary is 'courage, magnanimity; generosity;
gallantry'; this is very positive, and very close to Johnson's
ardent hero. 'Bravery' as 'bravado; boast' is only the fourth
meaning ( illustrated by a quotation from Arcadia ). The sense is
close to the 'splendid madness' of Rambler 49, or the 'illustrious
depravity' of the Conquest of Granada and suggests Johnson's
ambivalent attitude to the martial aspect of chivalry.

In the Preface to Shakespeare, Johnson makes clear the difference
between our reception of truth and fiction: 'the delight of tragedy
proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders
and treasons real, they would please no more.' Clearly, for the
adult reader of romance, there is no danger of taking these fic-
tions as a model of life, and the Doctor's weight of argument is
only needed to treat an advanced case of Quixotic delusion.
This chapter of The Female Quixote is of some interest in considering Johnson's various pronouncements on the dangers of fiction. If we return to the biographical evidence, his 'immoderate fondness' for romance had, he said, prevented him settling to a regular way of life. He had, then, trusted himself to the stream of chance, perhaps expecting adventures. The Doctor warns Arabella that 'it is a Fault of the best Fictions that they teach young Minds to expect strange Adventures and Sudden Vicissitudes, and therefore encourage them often to trust to chance', whereas life is generally uniform, and 'The Brave and the Coward, the Sprightly and the Dull, suffer themselves to be carried alike down the Stream of Custom.' (p.379).

Although Johnson denies in Rambler 4 that young readers would 'make any application to themselves' of romances of chivalry, the process of identification with, and imitation of, characters 'splendidly wicked', the mixed characters of modern fiction, is taught, as Arabella has been taught, by undiscriminating reading.

Charlotte Lennox's novel is, of course, based on the convention that an otherwise sensible and virtuous person could be misled, in this one respect only, by reading romances. Given that Johnson has simply accepted this convention in his collaboration with Mrs. Lennox, we have to note that the full stylistic weight of his moral judgement is, nevertheless, brought to bear on this fictional condition. This conflicts with his dismissal of romance in Rambler 4. One pronouncement of the Doctor's does seem to
bring together that dismissiveness with an acknowledgement of possible danger. Those romances are 'senseless fictions... which at once vitiate the Mind and pervert the Understanding; and which if they are at any time read with safety, owe their Innocence to their Absurdity' (p.314).

The absurdity is itself a significant part of the condemnation of romances. Nothing useful can be learned from them about human behaviour or about 'chronology', history or geography, and nothing is said here of the information about feudal society which many eighteenth-century readers did expect to find in earlier romances.

Clearly, Johnson does not see himself as suffering from the kind, or degree, of romantic delusion that Arabella and Don Quixote are governed by. But it is clear from the continual recurrence of Quixote themes in Johnson's own narrative, in poetry, allegory, novel, and moral essays, that the plot form of enthusiastic delusion, followed by bathetic collapse, whether treated with ridicule or with deep sympathy, was particularly significant for him.

Closely associated with the various forms of delusions, or false models of society from which his characters suffer, are the vitiating fantasies of the errant imagination, and this can range in gravity from folly to genuine obsession. Here, I believe, is the area of Johnson's deepest sympathy for Quixote: it springs from his self-identification with a mind shadowed by 'the flying vapours of incipient madness', to which the solitary scholar is particularly liable, and which corresponds to Johnson's own 'melancholick' affliction. More specifically, Quixotic delusion is associated with Johnson's own fondness for romance, and with attitudes to youth and its virtues and vices implanted by this reading.
These venerable antient Song-enditers
Soard many a pitch above our modern writers:
With rough majestic force they mov'd the heart,
And strength and nature made amends for Art.

The Frontispiece of Percy's Reliques, Vol. II.
Thesis
CHAPTER 5: BIOGRAPHY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

1. Works that 'enchain the heart': Johnson as critic

He was more strongly and more violently affected by the force of words representing ideas capable of affecting him at all, than any other man in the world I believe. (Anecdotes, p.127)

In Ramblers 92 and 93, Johnson challenges claims made for any inherent and objective onomatopoeic effect produced by metrical means. His argument from experience, seen as reductive common sense, is often presented as the chief characteristic of his literary criticism, whether the shibboleth he is attacking be erected by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as here, or by Pope, writing on poetry, by Aristotle or by Boileau on the drama. Certainly Johnson saw the need for criticism to analyse its own premises and proceedings; in Rambler 92 he argues for a kind of platonic progression of association as the process by which we agree to find things beautiful and, since 'much of the beauty of writing is of this kind', literary criticism has the task of distinguishing what is open to analysis and prescription, 'those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deduction', from those mysterious and seductive beauties which cannot be so classified. These he describes as

the nameless and inexplicable
elegancies which appeal wholly
to the fancy, from which we feel delight, but know not how they produce it, and which may well be termed the enchantresses of the soul. (Yale, IV, 122)
Johnson's critical approaches to aspects of literature which are open to rational analysis have been discussed at length by other critics. In the context of romance, it is Johnson's non-rational responses which are of particular interest: these intensely felt pleasures are often produced for him by identification with what is familiar and 'domestick' but they are also evoked by 'enchantresses', dangerous and seductive beauties which disarm critical judgement. This romance imagery persists throughout Johnson's criticism, from the periodical essays to the Lives of the Poets. I have noted many metaphors in which the scholar or writer is seen as a knight errant; the metaphor of conquest is applied in Rambler 92 to a claim made for the critic, which is not always supported by Johnson's own practice:

> Criticism reduces those regions of literature under the dominion of science, which have hitherto known only the anarchy of ignorance, the caprices of fancy, and the tyranny of prescription.

(ibid.)

These, we have noted, are the characteristic forms of misgovernment which the knight must overthrow, but it often happens that he is deluded by false appearance and that this enchantment must be broken before the task can be accomplished, and Johnson as critic is not seldom reduced to accept the irresistible charms of a wild heroic greatness whose attraction outweighs its 'depravity' or of sublime near-nonsense presented in 'glittering' language.
However he may respond to non-rational and romantic elements in literature, Johnson still demands from the writer the expression of genuinely felt emotions, so that the pleasure of romance is intensified by the reassurance of truth. Above all, in the treatment of love, he asks for the uncomplicated passion found, not in romance, but in Arcadia. The landscape of romance plays its part in literary criticism, both, as we have seen, in metaphor, but also in surprisingly many of the poetic passages which Johnson praises strongly, and which describe similar gothic scenes.

In Rambler 60, Johnson makes clear how essential sympathetic identification is to our moral and emotional responses both to experience and to literature:

All joy or sorrow for the happiness or calamities of others is produced by an act of the imagination, that realises the event however fictitious, or approximates it however remote, by placing us, for a time, in the condition of him whose fortune we contemplate; so that we feel, while the deception lasts, whatever emotions would be excited by the same good or evil happening to ourselves.

(Yale,III,318)

'Deception' is here most significant: when we read, we undertake a willing self-delusion in order to experience literature most intensely, and to become ourselves the characters, however 'remote' or 'fictitious', about whom we read. Clearly we are most likely to identify with characters whose lives and emotions most closely resemble our own, and 'the man whose faculties have been engrossed by business...wonders how the attention can be seized, or the affections agitated, by a tale of love' (ibid. 319).
In terms of the response expected, it is significant that Johnson chooses to oppose commerce rather than mature wisdom to love. The tendency to respond to literature is, then, a conditioned one: the merchant's heart has 'never fluttered but at the rise or fall of stocks' and is incapable of another (perhaps equally conditioned) response; it is open to speculation how much Johnson's own participation in the biography he reads is conditioned, not by his own immediate experience, but by the sense of himself as knight errant or adventurer.

Biography, which is defined (as romance could be) as 'narratives of the lives of particular persons', both instructs and delights, and no other kind of writing can so easily 'enchain the heart by irresistible interest.' The single hero is also a prerequisite for tragedy and, in Rambler 156, is seen as the essential for emotional involvement:

As the design of tragedy is to instruct by moving the passions, it must always have a hero, a personage apparently and incontestably superior to the rest, upon whom the attention may be fixed, and the anxiety suspended. (Yale V,70)
Before noting Johnson's response to some 'heroic' or 'romantic' individuals in literature, it may be useful to consider some of his own biographical subjects. His choice of the seventeenth-century Admiral, Robert Blake, and of Sir Francis Drake, had a clear political intent. In 1739, he had written *Marmor Norfolciensis*; in 1740, the 'Patriots' of the opposition succeeded in pushing Walpole into war with Spain, and it was to celebrate 'a time when the nation is engaged in a war with an enemy, whose insults, ravages, and barbarities have long called for vengeance'\(^2\) that Johnson offers his 'Life of Blake'. The exploits of Elizabeth's heroic adventurers, and the naval victories of Cromwell, were familiar material for opposition propaganda against Walpole's peace policy. However, granted this political purpose, Johnson's emphasis is rather on the individual temerity of the romantic hero than on specifically British patriotism.

The 'Life of Blake' published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1740, shows the hero undertaking deeds of Quixotic temerity, which are described with unmistakable delight. In one episode which Johnson discusses, Blake attacks and defeats a Dutch fleet which outnumbers his by three to one, and Johnson suggests that there has not been enough enquiry by historians into such wildly heroic action and its motives:

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1. *Dictionary*, sig.C.2. The phrase is casually introduced as an example of metaphors drawn from science.
2. *Works* VI,293.
There are, sometimes, observations and inquiries, which all historians seem to decline by agreement, of which this action may afford us an example: nothing appears, at the first view, more to demand our curiosity... than this wild encounter of twenty-two ships with a force... three times superior.

( Ibid. 301)

The question which the historians had neglected also relates intimately to the heroic in general, and, more intimately still, to the Quixotic. It places in opposition the admired and necessary judgement of the Odyssean hero, and the conversely (sometimes perversely) attractive temerity of the hero of chivalry. Here, having discussed the possibilities that Blake had either negligently failed to estimate the size of the enemy, or had succumbed to 'the ardour of his own sailors,' either of which would be inexcusable in a commander, Johnson concludes that

To mention the impetuosity of his own courage, is to make the blame of his temerity equal to the praise of his valour; which seems, indeed, to be the gentlest censure which the truth of history will allow. We must then admit, amidst our eulogies and applauses, that the great, the wise and valiant Blake, was once betrayed to an inconsiderate and desperate enterprise, by the resistless ardour of his own spirit, and a noble jealousy of the honour of his country.

( Ibid. 301-2)

The language sufficiently indicates Johnson's excitement, and his admiration for this extremely romantic episode. He supplies the motivation which the historians had neglected: it belongs, not to sober political or military history, but to the moral framework of romance.
Johnson describes a similar feat when Blake 'curled his whiskers, as was his custom when he was angry' (ibid. 305), and, sailing into Porto Ferino under the sixty cannon of the shore batteries and castles, reduced the town in two hours. Johnson quotes with scorn Rapin's comment that, while the Spaniards had sustained great damage, 'the English gained nothing but glory', exclaiming 'as if he that increases the military reputation of a people, did not increase their power, and he that weakens his enemy, in effect, strengthens himself' (ibid. p.307).

Johnson's enthusiastic and partisan response to Blake is paralleled in his 'Life of Drake,' also published in The Gentleman's Magazine in 1740. Drake's life needed little to transform it to that of a chivalric hero. Biography, as we have seen, has the advantage over history of concentrating the reader's attention on one man, and sinking the context to raise the hero, and this is even more appropriate to the life of an adventurer than to that of an admiral. It is easy to see parallels between Johnson's own early history and that of Drake when, having lost his fortune in Hawkins' failure, the latter

thus oppressed and impoverished,
retained, at least, his courage and
his industry, that ardent spirit
that prompted him to adventures,
and that indefatigable patience that
enabled him to surmount difficulties...

(ibid. 312)

This patience, it is clear, is not meekness but heroic endurance, and the action he undertakes is heroic enough for any Amadis or Guy of Warwick:
however incredible it may appear to
such as consider rather his force
than his fortitude, [it] was no less
than to make reprisals on the most
powerful nation in the world.

(ibid.)

This expedition was a matter of personal, rather than national,
honour: it was to show the Spaniards 'how imprudently they always
act, who injure and insult a brave man' (ibid.). In a succession
of actions which reinforce Drake's character for rash and disinter-
tested courage, the most extraordinary episode shows him leap-
ing ashore alone in defiance of the Spanish troops; Johnson again
considers the motive and use of such romantic actions:

To leap upon an enemy's coast
in sight of a superiour force, only to
show how little they were feared, was
an act that would, in these times,
meet with little applause.

(ibid. 322)

Since Johnson belongs to the unheroic present, he has to point out
the irresponsibility of this Quixotic action; as in the case of
Blake, however, there are rational arguments in its favour:

All that can be urged in his defence
is, that, perhaps, it might contribute
to heighten the esteem of his followers,
as few men, especially of that class,
are philosophical enough to state the
exact limits of prudence and bravery;
and not to be dazzled with an intrepidity,
how improperly soever exerted. It may be
added, that, perhaps, the Spaniards,
whose notions of courage are sufficiently
romantick, might look upon him as a more
formidable enemy, and yield more easily
to a hero of whose fortitude they had
so high an idea.

(ibid.)
It is particularly satisfactory to think of the as yet deluded compatriots of Cervantes welcoming an English embodiment of Amadis de Gaule as an example of romance. This passage suggests three conditions in which such 'romantic' actions would have been acceptable. In the Preface to Shakespeare, Johnson finds the sixteenth-century audience conditioned by its reading to welcome romantic or sensational action, and thus in the condition of children.¹ Drake's contemporaries, as witnesses of this event, or hearers of this narrative, would, by implication, have applauded his heroic action where Johnson's readers would not. But that historical judgement is undermined by the reflection that 'few men' are not 'dazzled' by 'intrepidity'. Although this generalisation is again qualified by 'especially of that class', which tends to equate the lack of education of the common seamen with the lack of sophistication of the sixteenth-century audience, the statement still stands as an appeal to general human nature.

Drake's contemporaries in general, his sailors in particular, and the Spaniards, thus all become in some measure Quixotes liable, unlike Johnson's more 'philosophical' contemporaries, to respond to 'romantic' actions. It is an interesting example of a conflict between Johnson's attempts to make a critical historical judgement on responses to experience or literature, and his necessarily opposed sense of a universal human consensus. We have noted how often the victory goes to the romantically ardent temerity rather than to philosophical prudence, when these are at issue.

¹. Yale, VII, 82 and ibid. 48-9.
In spite of Johnson's intended distancing of the writer and the 'modern' reader from this indefensible rashness, the terms in which Drake's action is discussed indicate clearly enough Johnson's sympathy. After the description of further Quixotically daring adventures, this partisanship is more explicitly stated in a reflection on 'the lazy, the envious, and the timorous,' who oppose heroic daring:

there are some men, of narrow views and grovelling conceptions, who,...
treat every new attempt, as wild.
and chimerical, and look/on every/up
endeavour to depart from the beaten track, as the rash effort of a warm imagination, or the glittering speculation of an exalted mind, that may please and dazzle for a time, but can produce no real or lasting advantage.

(Works, IV 338)

This corresponds to Johnson's reply to Rapin, and puts him clearly on the side of those who are dazzled. Both the language and the sentiment are very close to those of Rambler 129, and by putting these prudent judgements on heroic temerity into the mouths of narrow grovellers, Johnson is demonstrating with unmistakable force his own standpoint; this is particularly illuminating since Drake embodies the kind of heroic demesure which Johnson often admires, sometimes against his judgement, in literature.

In Johnson's essay 'The Bravery of the English Common Soldiers'¹ there is a similar romanticising of lawless courage, the more surprising in view of Johnson's unshaken and often stated belief in 'subordination':

Our nation may boast...a kind of epidemic bravery... a peasantry of heroes... plebeian magnanimity.

(Works IV, 149-10)

The reason for the courage of the common soldier is not superior drilling or fear of discipline, nor respect for officers; indeed, it is not that of a corporate army, but the fierce independence of the individual romantic hero:

Every man that crowds our streets
is a man of honour, disdainful of obligation, impatient of reproach,
and desirous of extending his reputation among those of his own rank.

(ibid. 151)

Johnson grants the danger of this insolence, but reminds us that what is 'insolence in peace is bravery in war.' This is a characteristic balancing of the prudent and the heroic in which the heroic unquestionably prevails.

Another illustration of the attraction which a life like Drake's might have for Johnson is given by his emotional response to a passage from Goldsmith's The Traveller; indeed, it may be that his 'English Common Soldier' owes something to Goldsmith. Johnson was praising the poem as he and Boswell prepared to leave the Highlands, and 'he repeated from it the character of the British nation... with such energy that the tears started into his eye.'¹ Here, Goldsmith paints the Englishman as even more licentiously heroic; he is a kind of wild northern or gothic barbarian, magnanimous,

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¹. Tour, p.392.
above control, in spite of the reason that is claimed to guide him:

Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state
With daring aims irregularly great,
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by,
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
True to imagin'd right, above control
While ev'n the peasant boasts these rights to scan
And learns to venerate himself as man.

The persona of the bold, free Briton, like the northern adventurer of the Harleian Introduction, is consistently attractive to Johnson, bringing together the romance hero with the anti-Whig propaganda of Johnson's own 'adventuring' young manhood.

3. Knights and Quixotes.

Among the heroes of literature, we should also expect to find Quixotes. Johnson's original purpose in writing the Lives of the Poets was to furnish biographies, and there are several examples of writers whose sense of their own lives or of their work was formed by the reading of romances or other (perhaps misleading) fictions.

The first is Cowley, and it is interesting that Johnson chooses to stress the aspect of chance in forming the writer. As a child, Cowley came upon Spenser's The Faerie Queene

in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents, which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind... which is commonly called Genius. (Lives, 1,2.)

Johnson goes on to describe the place of chance in developing a particular genius in 'a mind of large general powers,' not only refuting the determinism of the theory of the ruling passion, but also approaching the genius to the errant hero.

The influence of heroic romance on Waller was more specific. Johnson claims no influence of Spenser's matter or his style on Cowley, but Waller had formed his style, at least, on Fairfax's translation of Godfrey of Bulloigne to which 'he confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers.' More quixotically,
In reading Tasso he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity for the Turks, which never left him.

(Lives, I, 275)

I have pointed out that at the end of the Life of Waller, Johnson prints no less than eighteen stanzas of Fairfax's translation. This is consistent with his approval of Charlotte Lennox's enterprise in providing sources for Shakespeare, but we may wonder why, if the influence were primarily stylistic, he should have felt it necessary to give so long an extract. It is also surprising that he should have chosen this pastoral episode: like Marcela and Nekayah, the noble maid dresses as a shepherdess, leads her flocks to pasture, and milks her goats. There are no comparable passages in other Lives, and this one can only be compared with the lengthy romance story which Johnson prints as illustration to The Merchant of Venice.

John Philips is another poet influenced adversely by romance reading. In his poem Blenheim, his hero is said to 'mow his way through ranks of men made headless by his sword', and Johnson comments that he seems to have formed his ideas of the field of Blenheim from the battles of the heroick ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the composition of a modern hero.

(Lives, I, 317)
The most complete literary Quixote, however, is William Collins.

Like Johnson, 'he...came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket' (ibid, III, 335). Noting this, we may wonder how closely Johnson also identified with the following account of Collins as a Quixote:

He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy, and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

(Lives, III, 337)

We are, especially in the final triad, among the wonders of renaissance romance, while 'popular traditions' may refer to specifically English beliefs in fairies and witches, minor forms of the supernatural agents of romance. Collins' imaginative process is described in terms of romance journeys, both the 'flights of imagination' which remind us of Milton and Dryden, and also more pedestrian wanderings, where the mind is 'obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.' Collins' aims are not only

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1. In his edition of Collins' poems, Roger Lonsdale quotes a letter from John Gilbert Cooper to Dodsley, written in 1746, in which the former refers to Collins as 'that wandering Knight', Thomas Gray and William Collins (Oxford, 1977), p. 112.
to reproduce the matter of romantic fiction, but to achieve 'the grandeur of wildness and the novelty of extravagance', qualities which Johnson is ready to admire, sometimes against his better judgement. Although Collins may occasionally be 'harsh' and 'obscure', he achieves 'in happier moments sublimity and splendour.' Johnson added little to his 'character' of Collins in the *Lives*, and that little is, on the whole, negative. He condemns Collins' diction, his 'poetic' inversions, and his use of obsolete words when they are 'not worthy of revival' (ibid. 341).

Collins' melancholy and his eventual madness makes another biographical link between him and Johnson, and is expressed in another common romance metaphor:

> The latter part of his life cannot be remembered, but with pity and sadness.
> He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it.

(ibid. 338)

As we have seen, Johnson had equated Collins' melancholy to his own, and the parallel, not only with Johnson's own life, but with the Quixotic archetype, is inescapable.

The *Life of Savage* is in some ways comparable to that of Collins. Originally written in 1743, and included with few alterations in the *Lives of the Poets*, it was first proposed in very significant terms in a letter to Cave published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1743. Johnson was afraid that others, less well informed than himself, would 'publish only a novel, filled with
romantic adventures and imaginary amours.¹  Savage's early life was sufficiently romantic without additions, and it provided a parallel to Johnson's own poverty-hampered struggles as a young 'adventurer' in London. The reflections preceding Savage's life stress this sense of romance, and of the heroic writer:

The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered than for what they have achieved. (ibid. III.321)

Even allowing for Savage's own exaggerations and falsifications the romance elements of his early life are evident. His mother appears to have played the archetypal role of the wicked guardian, who rejects the child hero. To this, Savage added the motif of the 'mean nurse'. In this version, the child is either abandoned, and rescued by the humble, or savage, foster-parents, or intentionally placed with them by the guardian or parent, to be brought up in ignorance of his birth. An accident associated with the finding of hidden signs or objects brings the truth to light at maturity.

When Savage sent Mrs. Carter a copy of his Miscellany in 1739, he admitted that the 'mean nurse' was 'quite a fictitious character' (Lives II,328,n.1 ). It would then follow that the papers which he found after her death and which 'informed him of his birth' were also fictitious. Certainly, as Hill notes, they were never produced. It seems almost incredible that Mrs. Carter should not

have passed on this confession to Johnson in the forty years between
Savage's death and the publication of the *Lives*. It may have been
tenderness for Savage's character which decided Johnson to leave
this very romantic fiction unamended.

That the cruelty of Savage's mother was without motive brought
it still closer to the malignant archetype; Johnson several times
exclaims upon it with astonishment, one phrase perhaps implying
the non-human witch or enchantress: 'The Earl did not imagine that
there could exist in human form a mother that would ruin her son
without enriching herself... (p.327)'. In describing the literal
'adventures' of Savage's life, which included his mother's attempt
to sell him into slavery, Johnson adds figurative adventures:
Savage was 'disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity,
and launched upon the ocean of life only that he might be swallowed
by its quicksands or dashed upon its rocks' (ibid, 324).

Although Savage's irregular life and chronic poverty must, in
1739, have spoken to Johnson's condition, he does not allow indul-
gence for his friend to blind his judgement to Savage's faults,
and after the initial romantic circumstances of his birth, there
is only one occasion to record where Savage behaves with quixotic
generosity, and shares his last guinea with the prostitute who had
helped to convict him of murder. On this Johnson comments: 'This
is an action which in some ages would have made a saint, and per-
haps in others a hero' (ibid, 355). We are reminded of Drake's
rash temerity. But, in this unheroic age, it may be that the
aspect of Savage's life which is closest to the romance, and also to Johnson's early life, is the subjection to chance, and the detachment from any structure of domestic relationships or regular patterns of living, which characterise the life of knight errantry.

If Johnson's biographical writing gives a great variety of Quixotic patterns, his early biographies also show us a number of prodigious individuals, whose powers of mind and strength of resolution under difficulties seem fabulous.

The life of 'The Admirable Crichton' (Adventurer 81) is remarkable in showing a 'hero of literature' as a general challenger whose incredible powers in his own field equal those of Amadis or Guy in theirs. A knight errant of learning, he moves from university to university, challenging all comers in any of ten languages and 'all the faculties and sciences', against amazing odds. In Paris, he takes on and defeats four doctors of the Church and fifty Masters. There is the same almost ludicrous multiplication of feats of every kind as in romance, and Crichton adds sporting and martial prowess as well as 'eminent beauty' to the deeds of learning. Johnson, while warning that some of these details must be suppressed 'as passing credibility', nevertheless offers this story as a mirror, encouraging his readers to 'an honest emulation', and to the heartening belief that 'some of our species have signalised themselves by such achievements, as prove that there are few things above human hope' (Yale,II,402).
Slightly more realistic targets are set by such exemplary men as Boerhaave, Barretier, and Morin, and the many less impressively distinguished subjects of Johnson's early biographies, but it is significant that biography, the narrative form which Johnson finds most irresistibly 'enchains the heart' by a process of very clearly defined identification, should contain both such prodigious heroes and such Quixotes.
4. Literary Criticism

4.1 The Lives of the Poets: a) 'illustrious depravity'.

The mythical reductive Johnson of popular reference, with his 'well-known distrust of the imagination', is hard to sustain in face of his response to either Dryden, or Shakespeare. We have noted Johnson's heroic image of criticism as conqueror of barbarous regions in *Rambler* 92. *Rambler* 125 shows the heroic opponent of the systematic critic: 'imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint.' This errant assailant, who continually forces us to reconstruct our preconceptions of literature, 'has always endeavoured to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the enclosures of regularity', a familiar triad of strategies, though more often found in opposition to extravagant demesure. Here, the image introduces a discussion of Dryden's heroic plays.

Johnson points out the dangers of the ridiculous in heroic tragedy, quoting a scene from *Aureng-Zebe* whose unwitting comedy he finds 'Surely sufficient to awaken the most torpid risibility' (*Yale* IV, 305). Drama has improved, and now guards itself against the ridiculous, but its very regularity has deprived it of vitality, and 'it has faults of another kind, perhaps more destructive to delight.' The qualities which correct modern drama has lost are of the greatest importance in considering Johnson's criticism: 'that paucity of adventures which regularity admits, and the unvaried equality of flowing dialogue has, taken away from our present
writers almost all that dominion over the passions which was the boast of their predecessors' (ibid.). As we should expect, the balance of Johnson's sympathy is with heroic drama, and his final commendation of more classical works is perhaps ironic, certainly faint praise: 'if they cannot often move terror or pity, are always careful not to provoke laughter'; 'passions', 'terror', 'pity' and 'delight' are significant in Johnson's critical vocabulary. These are the qualities that the errant, vigorous, and unsystematic imagination opposes to 'regularity', and these are, of course, the passions roused by the 'turbulence, violence and adventure' of romance. By the 1770s, when Johnson was writing his Lives of the Poets, his sympathy for Dryden was very firmly established, and although the rational and moral objections remained, the attraction was still more frankly acknowledged.

The 'Life of Dryden' is of particular interest in a consideration of Johnson's response to the romance element in literature, and his commentary on The Conquest of Granada provides the most striking example of the emotional power the heroic image has over his judgement. Johnson's imaginative response to Dryden is, he admits, that of the enchanted knight errant captive to the seductress; more important, he affirms that this captivity is desirable for the reading of any fiction:

1. 'Preface to Shakespeare', Yale, VII, 72.
Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness.... By his proportion of this predomination. I will consent that Dryden should be tried: of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakespeare the sovereign of the drama. (Lives, I,454 )

Shakespeare shares with Ariosto and Tasso the failure to point a moral, and much of Johnson's Shakespeare criticism makes clear that it is the seduction of his immense and exuberant natural genius, manifested in romance variety and incident, which prevails over the cold judgement of prescription and even over morality.

Johnson's description of The Conquest of Granada in the Lives indicates how nearly the play is related to the romance of chivalry.

Dryden's intention seems to be

\[ \text{to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity}. \] (Lives, I,349)

The hero of the play is Almanzor, who, like Horace's gladiator, is 'sworn to no master's arbitrary sway', and who capriciously changes sides many times during the two parts of the play, carrying with him the fortunes of the war. He is for Johnson the quintessential romance hero, and the rational condemnation due to his lack of moral and prudential virtue is far outweighed by the attractions of his temerity and prowess:
All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints: he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity and majestick madness: such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

(ibid.)

Even Dryden deplored some of the hero's rhetorical excesses, and those, even more notorious, of Maximin in Tyrannic Love; but, even as Johnson acknowledges this, he allows his partiality to appear:

These bursts of extravagance Dryden called the 'Dalilahs of the Theatre', and owns that many noisy lines of Maximin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. (ibid. 462)

Dryden had also used the image of 'pleasing captivity', a mighty hero enslaved to a seductress to his undoing.

Johnson quotes with approval several passages from The Conquest of Granada which underline still further the sentiments which

1. Johnson defines 'generous' in the Dictionary as (2) 'Noble of mind, magnanimous; open of heart', and illustrates it by a quotation from The Indian Emperor.
attracted him. The following often-quoted triplet reinforces the idea of Almanzor's freedom and links him to Goldsmith's untutored Briton:  
I am as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.'

This passage 'may be allowed to be great' (ibid. 461), and the following passage, slightly misquoted by Johnson (indicating that he quoted from memory) is pronounced 'magnificent':

'Resign your Castle.'  
'Enter, brave Sir; for when you speak the word,  
The [These] gates shall [will] open of their own accord;  
The genius of the place its Lord shall [will] meet,  
And bow its towery forehead at[to] your feet.'

(ibid. 462)

This is not only romantically extravagant; even the detail of the gates, self-opening before the challenging knight, belongs to the repertoire of romance events. One indication of the attraction of Dryden's heroic plays is Johnson's extensive quotation from them in the Dictionary, often, as might be expected, illustrating romantic, or archaic words.¹

Johnson's judgement of Dryden's hero, Almanzor, should be compared with his comments on mixed characters in Rambler 4. In the intervening years, Johnson's purist demand for the unmixed characters of romance in modern fiction have been modified. Then, he

1. For some interesting Dryden quotations, see eg. 'boil', 'brave', 'malevolent', 'ardour', 'bewildered', 'tourney', 'precipice', 'passion', 'clan', 'adventure'.

had written:

There have been men splendidly wicked
whose endowments threw a brightness
on their crimes, and whom scarce any
villainy made perfectly detestable.

(Yale, III,23)

Almanzor is not precisely wicked, but rather stands outside the
normal rules of civility; he lacks the chivalric values of loyalty
to a ruler and a society, and disregards the fact that his love
is already married, but he also lacks guile and is apparently unaware
of the laws he is transgressing. In the Rambler, Johnson maintained
that these mixed characters 'have been in all ages the great cor-
rup ters of the world'. The link between these men and Almanzor
is the attraction of eminence, of heroic achievement and demesure
which overbalances reason even in the mature and reflecting mind.
Perhaps surprisingly, however, there is no suggestion that Johnson
felt any attraction to the 'bad eminence' of Milton's Satan.

The 'Life of Rowe' provides two more examples of 'illustrious
depavity', the irresistible attraction of romantic heroes; in

The Fair Penitent

Lothario, with gaiety which cannot
be hated, and bravery which cannot
be despised, retains too much of the
spectator's kindness.  

(Lives, II,67)

He is compared to Richardson's Lovelace; Richardson alone among
the creators of these heroes, can teach us at once esteem and de-
testation;

to make virtuous resentment overpower
all the benevolence which wit, elegance,
and courage naturally excite; and to
lose at last the hero in the villain.

(ibid.)
Johnson’s discussion of Rowe’s *The Royal Convert* introduces a very different requirement for fiction from that of domestic familiarity:

The fable is drawn from an obscure and barbarous age, to which fictions are most easily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly seen, they easily take forms from imagination. (ibid.68)

Clearly, this will be particularly true if the imagination is furnished with corresponding gothic images from chivalric romance.

Not identification, but a different mental process is working here: although in *Rambler* 60 the imagination was the agent of identification, and was required to 'approximate the distant'; here it is allowed freedom to expatiate in the uncertainty of this 'obscure and barbarous age', without the trammels of everyday reality.

The hero of *The Royal Convert*, Rhodogune, a savage Saxon, corresponds closely to Goldsmith’s Briton, embodying the northern wildness and freedom which the mediaevalists so frequently opposed to classical southern rationality and legalism. In one sense, then, the sense of the Preface to the *Dictionary*, the subject is 'domestic':

The scene lies among our ancestors, in our own country, and therefore very easily catches attention. Rhodogune is a personage truly tragic, of high spirit and violent passions, great with tempestuous dignity, and wicked with a soul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. (ibid.68)
It is noticeable that Johnson seldom refers to heroes who lack this deplorable grandeur. He finds little to move him in the stoic courage of Addison's Cato, for example, of which play he says in disparagement that

nothing here 'excites or assuages emotion'; here is 'no magical power of raising phantastick terror or wild anxiety.'

( ibid. 132 )

It is to this magical power of creating seductive phantoms that he so often compares the attractions to which the reader or spectator succumbs against his better judgement.

b) Love

Johnson's response to romance was almost exclusively to its martial, adventurous and magical, rather than to its amatory elements, and when he writes about love, it is seldom in ways which relate it to romance; however, there are some notable exceptions which cast interesting light on his literary judgements.

One of the strongest terms of approbation in The Lives of the Poets is that a work is 'pathetick', of which the definitions embrace 'passionate' as well as 'moving'. The emotions must be moved not only to tenderness, but to terror and anxiety. But it is not always enough for the reader to be moved: the writer, too, should always write from his own emotional experience; Imlac had described the general experience necessary to form a poet. To write love poetry, then, the poet should be in love: 'the basis of all excellence is truth: he that professes love ought to feel its power' ( ibid. I,6 ).
Johnson's main criticism of Cowley's love poetry is twofold: it is full of frigid conceits, and it is not generated by genuine emotion. As in his criticism of *Lycidas*, Johnson refuses the idea of convention; this is the more surprising, in that he does allow of pastorals that 'not professing to imitate real life,[they] require no experience' (Life of Pope, *Lives*, III 224). In attributing to Petrarch the origin of 'this obligation of amorous ditties' which poets still feel bound by, he claims that 'Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtless deserved his tenderness.' This insistence on Petrarch's unmediated experience is surprising: Warton, in his *History*, although he grants Petrarch's love for Laura, also stresses his heavy indebtedness to earlier Provençal writers.¹

Having told us that Cowley 'was in love but once and then never had resolution to tell his passion', Johnson makes a significant connection between the writers of love-poems and jousting knights:

> The desire of pleasing has in different men produced actions of heroism and effusions of wit; but it seems as reasonable to appear the champion as the poet of an 'airy nothing,' and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his master Pindar to call "the dream of a shadow".  
> (ibid. 7)

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¹ *History*, I, 463: 'Petrarch's refined ideas of love are chiefly drawn from those amorous reveries of the Provençials... heightened, perhaps, by the Platonic system.'
If the 'airy nothing' is Shakespeare's, this is a further link with the Platonic conventions of Petrarch, surely as far as possible from the simple expression of earthly tenderness which Johnson requires. There seems to be a willed blindness here similar to that with which Johnson responds to *Eloisa to Abelard*: Petrarch, like that couple, belongs to a romantic Middle Ages, which, for Johnson, seems to subsist independently of literary history and contemporary double entendre. Johnson reinforces the romance connection, and the idea of a Duessa for whom deluded heroes may joust, by calling Cowley's subjects 'phantoms of gallantry'. (ibid.8)

Johnson's exceptional capacity to respond to the 'pathetick' required, then, either the historical truth of passion, or its appearance, before the willed self-deception which led to identification could take place. It is high praise of Otway's *The Orphan* that 'its whole power is on the affections.' It can be excused other shortcomings, for 'if the heart is interested, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be missed' (ibid.145)

Waller similarly escapes the severe censure passed on Cowley, and his 'life' provides a useful historical definition of romantic love:

> Of his airy and light productions, the chief source is gallantry; that attentive reverence of female excellence which has descended to us from the Gothisk ages.  

(ibid.283)

This is a selective definition of 'gallantry'. The *Dictionary* includes 'whore-master' under its definitions of the noun 'gallant' and this would approach more nearly to the licentious elements which exist alongside courtly reverence in most romance.
However, it is not on these grounds that Johnson condemns the excessive use of love as motive passion for poetry or drama. In the same way that other kinds of fiction, like the romance or the modern novel, with its seductive mixed characters, provide dangerously false models for the young and inexperienced, as misleading expectation and misleading practice, so the Empire of Beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human passions and the variety of human wants. (ibid. 287)

This partial view is not, of course, the only danger in love stories, and in his criticism of All for Love, Johnson's condemnation is very much stronger. Dryden has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which through all ages the good have condemned as vicious and the bad despised as foolish. (Lives, 136)

Since one of Johnson's principal requirements of poetry is that it should be 'pathetick' he has further fault to find with Dryden's treatment of love. Dryden's strength is 'rather strong reason than quick sensibility,' and Johnson associates that desirable sensibility with a form of love which he suggests is ideal, even fictional:

1. Cf. also Johnson's praise of Shakespeare, Preface, Yale VII, 63
Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved and wishing only for correspondent kindness, such love as shuts out all other interest, the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with other desires, when it was inflamed by rivalry or obstructed by difficulties; He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic. 

(Lives, I, 458)

Here, Johnson seems to have narrowed the connotation of 'pathetic' to its contemporary meaning, and this definition of love may perhaps indicate why the amorous side of romance had less formative influence on Johnson than the martial. Love in the chivalric romance is characteristically 'obstructed with difficulties'. It is seldom reciprocal, seldom simply tender, and may often be 'inflamed by rivalry'.

Great allowances can be made for works which move the affections, and it is clear that Johnson, despite his contempt for the 'cant' of sensibility, shares the later eighteenth-century value for works that move the softer passions. His criticism is far from 'careless rapture', or willed emotionalism, yet the powerful analytical critic, whose formal and intellectual demands of poetry are so amply demonstrated, is nevertheless content to be disarmed by appeals to the heart alone.
4.2. Pope: Gothic 'Adventures and Misfortunes'

Johnson's condemnation of illicit love, both in his literary criticism and throughout his life, is consistently uncompromising. We find the same moral indignation aroused by Pope's Elegy for the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, whose suicide for 'amorous causes' is celebrated by the poet: 'Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.' (ibid. III,101). This highly romantic poem, with its gothic plot and its 'beckoning ghost along the moonlit shade,' might have been expected to please Johnson, and he grants that it 'must be allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness.' He also approves of its 'unpoetic' diction, suited to the spontaneity of romantic effusions: 'nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction.' But his judgement is, on the whole, extremely severe, and his summary of the events which inspired the poem harshly de-flating, ending: 'her desires were too hot for delay, and she liked self-murder better than suspense' (ibid. 101).

It is interesting to compare with this Johnson's response to Pope's other early poem, Eloisa to Abelard. Both could be described as romantic, both are undoubtedly gothic. The Elegy has

1. See, for example, his attitude to Diana Beauclerk Life, p.536.
2. Walpole notes the disparity in Johnson's response to the two poems. See Correspondence of Walpole and William Mason, 1851, i,171-2, quoted in The Critical Heritage, p.284.
its ghost, moonlight, its exaggerated passions, love, suicidal despair, revenge, the deathbed scene, the corpse of a persecuted maiden, the poet's curse, although these effects are inevitably undermined for a modern reader by Pope's conceits, and the almost comic neatness of his couplets.

In his review of Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, in the *Literary Magazine* of 1756, Johnson makes his first reference to *Eloisa to Abelard*, which, he says 'may be justly regarded as one of the works on which the reputation of Pope will stand in future times.' He approves Warton's historical approach to criticism, which gives the reader an assurance that his response is to 'the stability of truth':

> The critick pursues Eloisa through all the changes of passion, produces the passages of her letters, to which any allusion is made, and intersperses many agreeable particulars and incidental relations. There is not much profundity of criticism, because the beauties are sentiments of nature, which the learned and the ignorant feel alike.

*(Works, VI, 45)*

Johnson's comments on the poem, both here and in the *Lives*, owe much to Warton's own evaluation, even his assertion that 'of all stories ancient or modern, there is not, perhaps, a more proper one to furnish out an elegiac epistle.'

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The Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortunes of those who most deserve our notice. [This counters Johnson's insistence in Rambler 60 on the reader's indifference to the fate of kings]. Abelard and Eloisa were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection, for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supersedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without straggling into scenes of fable. (Lives, III, 235)

There are some surprising statements here; some closely follow Warton, and we know that Johnson was often glad to alleviate his labours on the Lives by borrowing. However, there are points of great difference in the two critics' estimation of other works (Lycedas and the Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady, for instance, are both enthusiastically praised by Warton) so that Johnson would not simply have passed on Warton's literary judgement unamended. Johnson characteristically stresses the historical truth of the story, while Warton dwells on the peculiarly gothic elements which Pope had added. Both critics stress Eloisa's religious resignation. In Warton's words:
It seems to be the poet's intention to show the force of religion over passion at last, and to show her a little calm and resigned to her destiny and way of life.

(p. 327)

It is hard to believe that either critic had read the poem objectively.

The Eloisa who utters the following lines is hardly resigned to the loss of her lover:

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures, of unholy joy:
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away...
O curst, dear horrors of all conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!

(11223-6, 229-30) 1.

Certainly, this is only one stage in Eloisa's vacillation, some of which is still more archly sensual, but the last thought of the poem is not for heaven, but for the future poet who will come to weep on the lovers' joint tomb, and the jaunty final couplet seems impossibly remote even from the sensually baroque visions of religious ecstasy which Pope links with his gothic cloister and romantic landscape:

The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost
He best can paint 'em who shall feel 'em most.

(11.365-6)

Johnson uses many lines from *Eloisa to Abelard* in the *Dictionary*, published the year before Warton's *Essay on...Pope*. A far from exhaustive search gives, besides many landscape references, some which seem significant as pointers to his response to the poem.

'Vestal' is illustrated by lines 207-8:

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How happy is the blameless vestal's lot?
The world forgetting, by the world forgot.

This picture of the truly devout nun, with which Eloisa contrasts herself, must have attracted Johnson, since he uses the following couplet to illustrate 'spotless':

Eternal sunshine of the _spotless_ mind,
Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd,

and continues (without acknowledging that Pope had borrowed the second line from Crashaw) to illustrate 'slumbers' with the couplet which follows it:

Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
Obedient _slumbers_ that can wake and weep.

Two further passages also select religious resignation, lines 329-32, to illustrate 'sparkle', and for 'dote', lines 335-6. This is one of Eloisa's fantasies of her own death and Abelard's reaction to it.

Ah then! thy once lov'd Eloisa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses die!
See the last _sparkle_ languish in my eye!...
Ah death, all-eloquent! You only prove
What dust we _dote_ on when 'tis man we love.

Abelard is also described as resigned, although his calm, it is clear, has a physical, rather than a spiritual cause. This quotation (ironically) is used to illustrate 'riot':

1. Johnson admired Crashaw; in the 'Life of West' he refers to him as 'Poet and Saint':_Lives_, III, 329, and he quotes him occasionally in the _Dictionary_.

---
Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose;
No pulse that flots and no blood that glows.

However, one quotation does refer to a more sensual episode, and it is used for 'delicious', defined as 'sweet; delicate; that affords delight; agreeable; charming; grateful to the sense or mind.' Several quotations for this and its cognates suggest sensuality:

Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye.

If we consider the historical story of Eloisa and Abelard, we may wonder that Johnson is so ready to endorse Warton's estimate: the lovers were indeed celebrated, but their love was initially illicit and clandestine, and the reason for its end was not repentance but castration. Moreover, Eloisa reiterates in the poem her passionate objections to travelling love by marriage, while Pope has suppressed the fact that she eventually consented to it. It is hard to imagine Johnson's reason assenting to lines like

Curse on all laws but those which love has made,
or

O happy state...
When love is liberty, and nature, law.

Johnson's first reference to the poem in the 'Life of Pope' sheds more light on the reasons for his response:

The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

(III,105)
What becomes very clear is that many elements which Pope has taken from the original letters, and much that he has added, like the Il Penseroso night-scene, the landscape, the gothic interiors, the ghostly vision, are associated with romance in this period. Both Warton and Johnson have subsequently suppressed the sensuality, which also, of course, belongs to romance, but which cannot be reconciled to one of the most conventional of romance endings, that of religious retirement after a life of love and war.

The most obvious romance paradigm for the religious end of an adulterous relationship is Malory's version of the ends of Lancelot and, especially, of Guinevere, who, after the death of Arthur,

\[
\text{lete make her} \text{self a nunne, and wered wyght clothys and blak, and grete penaunce she toke upon her,...And never creature coude make her miry, but ever she lyved in fast-ynge, prayers, and almes-dedis, that all maner of people mervayled how vertuously she was chaunged.}
\]

Lancelot, dismissed by Guinevere, finds a hermitage which stands between (romantic) cliffs by a chapel. There he retires and is joined by seven other knights. There are many more details in these few pages which fit Pope's poem.

If *Floisa to Abelard* can be accepted as history, however, the imagination has no need to 'straggle into scenes of fable.' There is plenty of material closely related to romance, in which Johnson's imagination not only can but does 'range at full liberty' to transform the poem into a simplified romance story.

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1. Malory *Works*, pp. 717-8. The hermitage to which Launcelot retires, with the little bell ringing for mass in the chapel, might have been in Johnson's mind on Inchkenneth and Iona. See below, pp. 403, 406.
5. The Gothic Landscape

Among passages which Johnson picks out for extraordinary praise in the course of his literary criticism, there are a number which describe a very similar scene, owing much to Il Penseroso, and its gothic imitators. In the Lives of the Poets, Johnson makes no specific comments on the landscape of Eloisa to Abelard, but he quotes extensively both from this and from Il Penseroso in the Dictionary.

Milton (like Il Penseroso) was an early reader of romance, and the poem's landscape owes much to this. Johnson's analysis of the two Milton poems makes little mention either of the landscape or of the romance references, though he concludes them to be 'two noble efforts of imagination.' He does note the folk-tales, 'the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance', in L'Allegro, and that 'the pensive man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister and frequents the cathedral,' and adds the biographical comment that 'Milton probably had not yet forsaken the Church' (Lives,I,167).

In his account of Il Penseroso, Johnson darkens the landscape of the poem since (as Hill points out) the Pensive man does not come out until the rain stops. Where Milton has a classical wood, 'arched walks and twilight groves', Johnson has a romance forest:

When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind he walks into the dark trackless wood, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication or some music played by aerial performers. (ibid.166)
Among illustrations to the *Dictionary* taken from *Il Penseroso*, are many from the extremely influential landscape passages. For 'curfew', for instance, we have the four lines:

Oft on a plat of rising ground,  
I hear the far off curfew sound,  
Over some wide-watered shoar  
Swinging slow with sullen roar,

And 'embers' supplies the following four lines:

Or if the air will not permit,  
Some still removed place will fit,  
While glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.

These are repeated for 'counterfeit'. Most striking, in the context of the gothic (the buildings, retirement, religious extasy) and particularly in relation to *Cloisa to Abelard*, is that generous quotation illustrating 'genius', 'storied', 'pealing', 'hermitage', and 'prophetic' cover the whole of the final section (11.154-177)\(^1\).

One clear link with the Pope poem is provided by the only illustrations for 'twilight' used as an adjective. These are the lines 131-4 of *Il Penseroso*:

When the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me goddess bring  
To arched walks of twilight groves,

and this very Miltonic passage from Pope, lines 163-170:

O'er the twilight groves, and dusky caves  
Long-sounding isles, and intermingled graves,  
Black melancholy sits, and round her throws  
A death-like silence, and a dead repose.

---

\(^1\) Cf. also 'virtuous' and 'consent' for romance magic, and 'pall' for Tragedy.
The four lines that follow are quoted for 'deepens':

Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmurs of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

'Visionary', defined as 'affected by phantoms; disposed to receive impressions', is illustrated by lines 161-2, which link the last-quoted passage to the erotically suggestive vocabulary, so familiar in eighteenth-century amorous verse, of the lines which illustrate 'quiver':

The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze.

The fine gothic ruin passage (lines 141-146), very close to Il Penseroso, is quoted for 'spiry' and lines 155-6 are used twice, for 'rocks' and for 'darksome'.

Elements of these gothic scenes from Il Penseroso appear in permutations with other romance elements in a number of passages from other poets and dramatists which Johnson particularly admired. In his discussion of Dryden's Annus Mirabilis, he singles out for praise the account of the returning fleets as 'one of the finest flowers of English poetry.' After quoting three rather prosaic stanzas, he ends with these lines from stanza 71:

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

Here, the extremes of romance landscape and incident are linked to the sacred building and supernatural terrors also suggested by Milton and Pope.
A much longer scene from Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* called forth a similar perhaps disproportionate eulogy, which indeed led to an argument with Garrick in 1769, as Boswell records:

Johnson said that the description of the temple in *The Mourning Bride* was the finest poetical passage he had ever read; he recollected none in Shakespeare equal to it.  
*(Life, p.412)*

Johnson is eventually induced to limit his claim to praise for the passage as 'a description of material objects, without any admixture of moral notions.' In the 'Life of Congreve' he repeats the claim:

> if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in *The Mourning Bride*.  
*(Lives, II,229)*

This comes from a night scene, with a suggestion of mysterious voices,

> or else some transient wind
> Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted isle,

Which leads to a description of a sublime scene:

> No, all is hush'd, and still as death,- 'Tis dreadful!
> How reverend is the face of this tall pile;
> Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
> To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
> By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
> Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
> And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
> And monumental caves of death look cold
> And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart...  
*(ibid. 229-30)*
The Congreve passage describes only the sacred building, without Dryden's other sensational elements, but the scene is night, and there are again references to the dead; both scenes create terror in their beholders, both correspond to Burke's sublime. Johnson goes on to define the effect of this passage:

He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet: he feels what he remembers to have felt before, but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognises a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty.

(ibid.230)

It is particularly interesting, in the light of Johnson's demand that poetry should treat of the universal, of that 'to which every bosom returns an echo', that not only the reader, but the reader-turned-poet, should respond in this way to a scene so markedly romantic: the 'familiar image' is a sacred building seen at night, and associated with fear and death.

A similar association of night, ruins, and sanctity with fear, is quoted approvingly in the 'Life of Dyer;' commenting on The Ruins of Rome, Johnson says that

Some passages...are conceived with the mind of a poet as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating edifices, he says,

At dead of night

The hermit oft, midst his orisons, hears

Aghast the voice of Time dispersing towers!

(Lives, III, 345)

Shenstone had written: 'The pilgrim oft,/ At dead of night...'. 
The slight misquotation again suggests that Johnson was quoting from memory. The same lines are used to illustrate 'orison' in the Dictionary. Two further references to poetry which Johnson particularly admired continue the association between romance subject-matter and landscape:

Such was his sensibility, and so much was he affected by pathetick poetry [Boswell tells us] that, when he was reading Beattie's Hermit in my presence, it brought tears into his eyes.

Beattie's hermit muses in a mountain cave on transience and death and tells how he has come to religious humility and hope after a life of anxiety. Beattie's ideas and images seem trite, his language conventionally poetic, and his cheerful dactylic tetrameter hardly conveys solemnity, but his hermit has found the moral security and repose which are clearly a great part of the nostalgic attraction in the romantic idea of mediaeval sanctity. When Johnson finds himself among ruined abbeys, hermitages, wild seas and romantic landscapes, in his journey to the Western Isles, his responses make clear how powerfully this aspect of romance had affected his imagination.

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1. Life, p. 1210, but cf. a letter from Astle to Boswell: 'I have heard him pronounce Beattie's charming Minstrell a dull, heavy, uninteresting fragment. Correspondence, II, 192.

2. Cf. also Johnson's comment on Grainger's Ode to Solitude, which he finds 'very noble' (Life, p. 873), and a passage from Yalden's Hymn to Darkness, which he pronounces 'exquisitely beautiful' (Lives, II, 301–2).
6. Dryden and Pope: the seduction of unreason

Johnson often speaks of the poetic imagination as a traveller or adventurer, and its wilder flights produce, as we have seen, seductive excellences irresistible in spite of reason.

Notwithstanding Johnson's great admiration for *Paradise Lost*, and his continual use of it in the *Dictionary*, Milton lacked for him the romantic attraction of Dryden. However,

> Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility...
> He sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence...

*(Lives, I, 177-8)*

Since Milton is treating a subject where no experience can furnish him with truth, this questing is to be approved. Dryden's case is rather different. His mind is shown as travelling in a romantically sublime landscape:

> Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy.

*(ibid. 460)*

This adventuring may result in nonsense, but, though Johnson points out passages containing absurdities (themselves landscape images), he accepts them with more than tolerance, adapting Cowley, to conclude: 'is so like sense 'twill serve the turn as well' *(ibid. 461).*
All the quotations with which Johnson illustrates Dryden's mental landscape are similarly romantic, and include the lines from *The Conquest of Granada* already quoted.

Among several quotations from this, and from *Heroic Love*, is one which 'although it may not be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry' (ibid. 462). The image is a 'way' metaphor, and it is very close in sentiment to many of the discussions of heroic daring that we have already considered.

No, there is a necessity in Fate,
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate;
He keeps his object ever full in sight,
And, that assurance holds him firm and right;
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,
But right before there is no precipice;
Fear makes men look aside, and so[then] their footing miss.

*(Lives, I, 462)*

Throughout Johnson's discussion of Dryden's work, there is an enthusiasm which is lacking in his approach to Pope, and it is clear that the romantic matter of much of Dryden's work and critical bias, as well as his artistic *demesure*, has something to do with this. A comment on the ending of *Absalom and Achitophel* underlines this connection. Artistically, the ending is unsatisfactorily abrupt, since it is dictated by historical fact, and Johnson asks:

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

*(ibid. 437)*
An Essay on Man is one of the rare works where Pope's attractions are found to approach those of Dryden in overpowering judgement. However, the heavily ironic tone of Johnson's commentary is very different from the indulgence he commonly shows to Dryden. His metaphors are those of conquest, seduction, and imprisonment:

This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence.

(Lives, III, 243)

Johnson goes on to enumerate the truisms disguised by these delusive charms, yet concludes that the poetic excellences 'enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgement by overpowering pleasure.' (ibid. 244).

In spite of this highly-praised technical accomplishment, the final judgement on the Essay is dismissive. There is nothing in Pope's subject matter to suspend judgement as Johnson is willing to do for the rhetorical excesses of Dryden's heroic romance.

In the celebrated comparison of Pope and Dryden, based on the traditional Homer-Virgil parallel, Dryden is made to play the part of Homer, the exuberant, overflowing, natural and primitive genius, not subservient to rule:

The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden.

( ibid. 222 )
Dryden, like Homer, is always clearly offered as the more attractive term of this grandly sustained comparison, and in his conclusion, Johnson admits that his judgement may be swayed by 'partial fondness'.

That this fondness is a sometimes unwilling response to romance elements in Dryden's work, is supported by Johnson's reaction to similar elements in Shakespeare. This, over some thirty-five years, represents by far the greatest body of criticism devoted to one writer.
7. Johnson on Shakespeare

7.1 The Preface

In Johnson's Preface to his edition of Shakespeare, his critical position is in broad agreement with the line of comment, generally approving, whose most influential exponents were Dryden, Pope, and Kames. Johnson's editorial research had obliged him to read extensively in earlier criticism, and we should, therefore, expect to find a carefully weighed judgement of it. In his Lives of the Poets, Johnson says of Dryden that: 'The account of Shakespeare must stand as a perpetual model of encomiastick criticism,' and the same could be said of his own assessment of this model:

In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence... (Lives, I, 41?)

In the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century criticism, Shakespeare became associated with the commonplace comparison of Virgil and Homer. Whether he stands alone, or whether he is compared to some more correct writer, Shakespeare, like Homer, becomes something like Nature itself. To Dryden:
he was the man who of all Modern, and
perhaps most Ancient Poets, had the
largest and most comprehensive soul.
All the Images of Nature were still
present to him

and he

look'd inwards, and found her there.  

This is a noticeable progression from 'fancy's child, warbl[ing]
his native woodnotes wild': although Dryden's Shakespeare, like
Milton's, is unlearned, he is not a mere child of Nature, but a
figure of mysterious powers. Johnson's Shakespeare perhaps owes
more to Dryden's Homer: by the seventeen-seventies, Shakespeare
had grown to Homeric stature as the elemental nursery of invention,
within whose soul all nature had an ideal existence. His innocent
untutored state put him into direct contact with primitive nature,
uncorrupted by the sophistication of learning. Johnson sees him
as a kind of Miltonic Adam:

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick
poetry with the world open before
him; the rules of the ancients
were yet known to few.

(Yale, VII, 69)

Like Homer's Greece, sixteenth-century England was seen as newly
born. Pope goes even further than Dryden in the preface to his
edition of Shakespeare: for him,

1. 'An Essay of Dramatick Poesy,' The Works of John Dryden
2. L'Allegro, 11. 133-4
Homer drew not his art so immediately from the fountain of Nature, it proceeded through some Egyptian strainers and channels...,

while

The poetry of Shakespeare is inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him. His characters are so much Nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. 1.

Here, Shakespeare has become an Aeolian harp, a medium for Nature's creative work.

It is remarkable that the image of Shakespeare as a kind of Orson, a representative of natural, instinctive man, culturally neutral, should have persisted in spite of all evidence to the contrary. Pope himself praises him for his wide reading, his knowledge of astronomy, natural philosophy, and mechanics, as well as his knowledge of mythology and the ancient histories. That the two propositions should continue to exist irreconcileably, side by side, is characteristic of this romantic, affirmative, Shakespeare criticism.

Johnson's Shakespeare is not a being possessing, or possessed by, greater than human powers. He is 'the poet of nature', but an active agent, since he 'holds up to his readers a faithful mirrour of manners and of life.' (Yale, VII, 62). It is, I think, significant that Johnson speaks of 'readers'. Although important passages in his Preface and critical notes deal with responses to dramatic representation, Johnson's criteria are more often literary,

an important distinction when considering how he responds to
Shakespeare as a writer of romance, rather than as a 'romantic'
dramatist. As so often for Johnson in areas connected with ro-
mance, there are unresolved tensions between statements almost
diametrically opposed: early in the Preface, Johnson tells us that
Shakespeare's great strength is in his 'just representations of
general nature', and that

The irregular combinations of fanciful
invention may delight awhile, by that
novelty of which the common satiety of
life sends us all in quest; but the
pleasures of sudden wonder are soon ex-
hausted, and the mind can only repose
on the stability of truth. (Yale, VII, 61-2)

He goes on to tell us that Shakespeare's real power is shown, not in
'the splendour of particular passages', but by 'the progress of his
fable, and the tenour of his dialogue'. I hope to show how much of
Johnson's response to Shakespeare depends on precisely 'the progress
of his fable', and on the 'novelty' and 'fanciful invention', whose
attraction for Johnson, sometimes unwillingly acknowledged, is so
frequently that of romance. It is because the protagonists are con-
vincing as men, truthful mirrors of nature, that Johnson can take
pleasure in their romance context.

In a passage which could well be reflecting on Dryden's heroic
plays, he praises Shakespeare for not limiting the motive passion
of his plays to love. As always, it is clear that Johnson's sym-
pathies lie with the martial and heroic, rather than the amorous
or sentimental, aspects of romance, although, as we shall see, a
gallant, often romantic tenderness, is often his own response to female characters in Shakespeare. The controversy about love in the theatre, which goes back at least to Corneille, was being canvassed throughout the eighteenth century. Johnson's admired Boileau, recognising love's progress from romance into theatre, had only pleaded that the softness of the modern romance should not corrupt ancient heroes: love was the surest way to move the passions, and therefore must be allowed.¹

Johnson's position on the unities has been discussed at length; it is hardly necessary to point out that though he is scarcely original in the creative commonsense he brings to the question, this does lead him to the 'romantic', anti-systematic, 'calorific' position. In the recurrent self-flattering image which poets have transmitted since Aristotle, the poet is very close to the hero: like the hero, he is endowed with superhuman powers, and these god-like attributes place him outside the moral framework of 'real' life, or at the least, outside convention. For many eighteenth-century critics, Shakespeare, above all writers, came to embody the 'gothic', un-rational British hero, symbolising, like the romance, all that was disordered, suggestive, exuberantly abundant, inexhaustibly rich, owning no petty restrictions. In Pope's preface to his Shakespeare, for instance, an apology for the romance elements in Shakespeare's plots shows Shakespeare himself as a

¹ Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux L'Art Poétique, III,93-114, Oeuvres Completas (Paris, 1939)pp.98-99
romance hero, and even more strikingly than the Johnson passage just quoted, doubles back to a romance image:

Stage poetry of all other is more particularly levelled to please the populace. In Tragedy, nothing was so sure to surprise and cause admiration, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural events and incidents...yet even in these, our author's wit buoyed up and is born above his subject; his genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance in the disguise of a shepherd or peasant: a certain greatness and spirit now and then break out which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

Shakespeare is not only a hero of romance; he comes to stand for all that is British and free, as against the tyranny of French political and literary prescription. This view of Shakespeare stays very consistent throughout the century, in face of equally consistent French disapproval. Addison, in Spectator 160, for instance, asserts that

There appears something nobly wild and extravagant in these great natural Genius's, that is infinitely more beautiful than all the Turn and Polishing of what the French call a bel esprit...

Warton, in his Essay on...Pope speaks of the

2. Spectator, II, 127. Johnson quotes from this to illustrate "extravagant."
false delicacy and refinement [which] have rendered some of the French incapable of many of the forcible and masculine images with which the ancients strengthened their compositions. Much less can such effeminate judges bear the bold and severe strokes, the terrible graces, of our irregular Shakespeare, especially in his scenes of magic and incantations. These gothic charms are, in truth, more striking to the imagination than the classical. 1.

Kames's position on the moral, rather than the poetic, licence given to the man of genius is still more explicit. After a Shaftesburian discussion of the relation between the moral sense and the educated aesthetic taste, and their necessary dependence on each other, he goes on to say that genius and correctness of taste are incompatible; he does not draw the inevitable conclusion. 2. The 'gothic' symbol can be pressed into the service of a number of different ideas. It may be associated with Protestant freedom of conscience, as against inquisitorial persecution, but an equally important polarisation would be one between a sterile, southern classicism, which might be manifested as Aristotelian critical rules (as interpreted by French or Italian critics), or as the rigid clarity and precision of Palladian architecture, as opposed to the irregular, numinous profusion of the gothic cathedral. Any of these northern terms may become an analogy for Shakespeare, as in Pope's well-known comparison:

1. Fifth ed. 1806, I, 382, n.
I will conclude by saying of Shakespeare that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient, majestic piece of Gothic architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. . . .

It [the Gothic] has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; tho' we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages...

We have here, as we should expect from the writer of An Epistle to Burlington, a rather apologetic avowal of the attraction of the gothic; it is this sense of the mind as an unwilling captive to romance, which we meet so often in eighteenth-century discussions of topics associated with it. There is a further obvious use of the gothic symbol: to polarise the mediaeval northern world of catholic devotion, religious retirement and sanctity, so essential an ingredient of romance, against contemporary French rationality, deism, or atheism. I would contend that, whatever Johnson's rational approval of what I have called the southern terms of these antitheses it is always with the northern term that his instinctive and imaginative sympathy lies. This is demonstrated again and again in The Rambler, in the literary criticism, in the occasional writing, and, as we shall see, in the Shakespeare criticism.

Johnson attacks Rymer, Dennis, and Voltaire, who had themselves attacked Shakespeare for his lack of decorum, in that his characters did not conform to their prescribed roles. His kings were

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not royal, nor his Romans Roman. This is another reductive and
generalising procedure, which Johnson rejects in favour of human
particularity and diversity. Shakespeare,
if he preserves the essential
classical heroes of 'The Knight's Tale' and the Recuyell of Troy
time or place, but gives to one age
behave like medieval chivalric knights. Guy of Warwick has no
or nation, without scruple, the
difficulties with language in Constantinople, any more than Antony
customs, institutions, and opinions
has in Egypt. Johnson does, however, himself censure Shakespeare
of another, at the expense not only
in a later passage, for historical inaccuracy:
of likelihood, but of possibility.
( Ibid. 72)
There seems to be some difficulty for Johnson in preserving the
idea of universal human nature entirely distinct from its particu-
lar manifestations under differing cultural conditions. There is
an interesting parallel in his objection to the Arcadia, in which
Sidney has 'confounded the feudal with the pastoral times', and
here it is open to question whether Johnson is speaking in the name of historical accuracy, or of literary decorum: Johnson had a great interest in, and a strong historical sense of, the feudal period; there is little to suggest that he had any such clear sense of an innocent pastoral Arcadia having had an historical existence.

Although Johnson's treatment of the unities is by no means a lone rebellion, it may be noted that he is in favour of a great deal more freedom than Joseph Warton advocates in his Essay on... Pope. In spite of Warton's championship of the sublime and the passionate against the rational and the witty in poetry, he still requires

in the drama, that no more events be crowded together than can be justly supposed to happen during the time of representation, or to be transacted on one individual spot. 1.

Johnson ridicules critical objections to extravagant changes of scene in Shakespeare; the spectator's imagination has no more difficulty in transporting itself from Rome to Alexandria than it had in supposing the stage to be Rome in the first place. We may add that the romance reader has no difficulty in following Guy of Warwick from Bordeaux to Dunsmore Heath, or Orlando from France to the Hebrides. Johnson may adopt Kames's common-sense argument from-experience to refute purist supporters of the unities, and

1 Essay on...Pope, I,121.
do it in an engaging tone of mock modesty at his own presumption, but he also knew by experience that the pleasure of the romance is not affected by its improbabilities. The degree to which the mind is willing to suspend disbelief is infinitely variable, and depends on the degree to which the author can 'enchain attention'.

The distinction that makes Shakespeare morally acceptable, however, is that human (if not moralised) truths are to be learnt by seeing real men in what are very often romance situations. Later in the Preface, Johnson answers an imaginary critic who asks how the drama moves if it is not credited: though we are moved by imagining the possibility of such things happening to us, the delight of tragedy consists in our consciousness of fiction: 'if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more' (Yale, VII, 78). This is close to Burke's definition of the terror which gives pleasure in the sublime. It certainly applies with even greater force to the romance, whose reader can in safety enjoy the terrors and delights of even greater vicissitudes. Similarly, 'we are agitated in reading the history of Henry the Fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agencourt.' We have reverted to the reader, and indeed, Johnson defines 'a dramatick exhibition' as 'a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect', and, therefore, 'imperial tragedy', unlike comedy, is more powerful on the page than acted. The imagination accustomed to romance has no difficulty with immense canvases depicting nations in conflict, with the numbers, the distances, the carnage and the
pomp that these present. Johnson claims that 'A play read, affects the mind like a play acted'; this very questionable general proposition does, perhaps, tell us of the intensity with which Johnson responds to the written word, rather than intend the logical conclusion that theatrical performance is unnecessary. Johnson concludes his vindication of Shakespeare's failure to observe the rules by dismissing the unities of time and space, which, 'by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety' (ibid. 79). We may remind ourselves that variety and novelty are what please the ignorant and the primitive, and that variety of characters and incidents are the essence of romance, and that they are as far as possible from the limited classical drama of France. In an interesting image, Johnson sees the drama adorned with the unities as a citadel unnecessarily decorated with the orders of classical architecture. Since this follows a scornful reference to Voltaire and French criticism, I think we may take it as an antithesis of the classical to the gothic.

On the 'mingled drama', another subject for French criticism of Shakespeare, Johnson recognises that Shakespeare transcends arbitrary cultural categories like tragedy and comedy; he has invented a new kind,

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            exhibiting the real state of sublunar nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination.
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(ibid. 66)
In long Peninsular romances, like Palmerin or Amadis, and in the Italian epics, there is, for all their conventions, a similar lack of imposed form. Although Johnson praises Shakespeare for the unity of his action, it is often the multiplicity of characters, reversals, scenes, moods and events that he finds seductively delightful. In the romance, as in life as he has described it here, sets of characters continually interrupt the action, and plots are interwoven. Johnson sees the synchronic diversity of the world: in the drama, as in the romance, it has, of course, to be shown diachronically. The world is a 'chaos of mingled purposes and casualties' (ibid.66) on which the ancients chose to impose the categories of comedy and tragedy. Later, Johnson retreats from this chaos to the 'general system' which is made up of 'unavoidable concatenation' (ibid.67) between high and low. An acute understanding of the artificiality of structures gives place to a Christian acknowledgement of a chain of cause and effect, ultimately designed by Providence.

Johnson censures Shakespeare for his lack of moral purpose, 'to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or men' (ibid. 71). This is the condemnation levelled at the modern novel in Rambler 4, and it could undoubtedly be levelled at most romance, in which the morality is extremely variable, even in its own sexual and martial context. It is, of course, an arbitrary structure that Johnson is demanding: moral considerations should over-ride the arbitrariness of life, since the function of drama is to instruct. The barbarity
of Shakespeare's age cannot excuse his failures of poetic justice, since there is an absolute moral necessity to see justice done. This position ignores the teaching that, for the Christian, a reward on earth is not to be expected and that it is precisely the persecuted and suffering on earth who are to be rewarded in heaven. The structure which Johnson wishes to see imposed is rather that of the romance and the fairy story. The good youngest daughter who has been kept in the kitchen by the cruel parent and the ugly sisters comes at last to marry the handsome Prince and regain her kingdom, the parent is reformed and the wicked die.

In trying to establish Johnson's true assessment of Shakespeare's England, we must make a distinction between the vulgar and the learned:

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance.

(ibid. 82)

This is an extraordinary statement, and it is difficult not to feel that Johnson has trapped himself in his own analogy. An infant may be unacquainted with 'the true state of things', but it is inconceivable that Johnson should be claiming that adult human beings can only apprehend truth through the medium of literature. If this were so, the value of the consensus of humanity would be severely undermined; more seriously, the unlettered man, since the 'true state of things' is unavailable to him, must also
be incapable of the moral judgements necessary to his salvation.

'Whatever is remote from common appearances', Johnson continues, 'is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar.' We may remind ourselves that from this barbarous and infantile culture, had evolved a common language which supplied 'the pure sources of genuine diction', 'a speech adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance,' and that this speech had, since the Restoration, regrettably been 'deviating towards a Gallick structure and phraseology'. We have already considered how strong an emotional pull towards the 'recesses of Northern learning' Johnson demonstrates in the Plan and Preface to the Dictionary. It is only caution, he says, 'lest my zeal for antiquity might drive me into times too remote' (ibid. sig.C), which prevents him from using illustrations from writers earlier than Hooker, Sidney, Raleigh, and Bacon. Johnson makes clear that in speaking of Shakespeare's audiences he is speaking of the vulgar, yet it seems curious that the image of the nation in a state of innocent, child-like barbarity should persist unmodified by Johnson's historical sense of the culture and language which he so profoundly admired.

I have demonstrated the extremely romantic nature of great numbers of the quotations which Johnson uses to illustrate the Dictionary, particularly, of course, from Sidney and Spenser, Drayton.

1. Preface to the Dictionary, sig.C
and Fairfax and other poets who were certainly not writing for the vulgar. The image of England that Johnson presents is of a nation of Quixotes, without Quixote's wisdom and learning:

> The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

(Yale, VII, 82)

In a similar passage in his dedication to Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated*, he tells us that Shakespeare lived in an age when the books of chivalry were yet popular, and when therefore the minds of his auditors were not accustomed to balance probabilities, or to examine nicely the proportion between causes and effects.

(ibid. 49)

What we have is clearly not a nation in a state of primitive innocence, although it is in its infancy, but one corrupted by romantic fiction. We cannot then appeal to the human consensus, to 'the commonsense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudice' (Lives, III, 441), who are allowed to be the best judges of Gray's *Elegy*. These comments make very clear Johnson's belief in the power of what is read to form or corrupt the judgement; as we have seen, they also call into question the notion of a universal, general nature, which has, over the years, judged Shakespeare a great writer, since 'human judgement, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty' (Yale, VII, 61), is at any time vulnerable to the corruption of bad literature. This progressivist view of human judgement must be Johnson's justification for asserting that it is no
longer the marvellous, the romance elements, which please in Shakespeare.

He explains their danger for the immature reader:

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste for the insipidity of truth. A play which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of Palmerin and Guy of Warwick, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that in-credibility, by which mature knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

( ibid. 82)

This, of course, runs directly counter to the account of the mind which turns with relief to 'rest on the stability of truth': there are, it seems, two 'natural' responses to romance, even though one arises only in the mature mind. 'Feasting on luxurious wonders' is characteristic of the sensual images in which Johnson so often writes of seductive fiction.

In his dedication to Shakespeare Illustrated, there is a similar comment: 'It was sufficient to recommend a story, that it was far removed from common life, that its changes were frequent, and its close pathetic.' (ibid. 49).

There follows a most revealing reverse:

This disposition of the age concurred so happily with the imagination of Shakespeare that he had no desire to reform it, and indeed to this he was indebted for the licentious variety, by which he has made his plays more entertaining than those of any other author. (ibid.)
There could hardly be a more explicit statement that, for Johnson at least, the over-riding pleasure to be found in Shakespeare is the pleasure of romance; while the mature judgement may remark the 'just representations of human nature', Johnson (who, we may suppose, included himself among those mature moderns whose 'judgement was gradually gaining upon certainty'), far from turning with disgust from this 'licentious variety', or counselling us to guard our imaginations against its dangerous seductions, offers it here as one of Shakespeare's first attractions. In the Preface, he states this even more clearly:

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through. (ibid. 83)

We note again that it is the (solitary) reader who is responding to Shakespeare, at exactly the narrative level where the romance as tyrant commonly 'seizes' the imagination and 'compels' the reader.
Johnson praises Shakespeare's extraordinarily capacious and accurate observation in terms which again raise the question of
the innocent primitive eye:

> the oldest poets of many nations
> must take their sentiments and
descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore, just,...and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast.

( Ibid. 89)

From this primitive simplicity, poetry always tends to degenerate, as successive poets copy from their predecessors; Shakespeare, like Homer, is one of these primitives. What seems impossible to reconcile with this is the notion of childishness and barbarity in the early poets and their audiences. Homer and Shakespeare produce licentious, disorderly copiousness, and this includes grossness of manners and moral sense, and such astonishing and marvellous events as fill the mind and disable reason. The primitive poet is praised for eliciting the response due to truth, yet his auditors are deluded barbarians or children, whose judgment is scarcely, it would seem, reliable. This difficulty is not peculiar to Johnson, but it is characteristic of many unresolved contradictions in Johnson's response to the romance elements, whether in Shakespeare or elsewhere. As we consider individual plays, these oppositions will become evident.

'Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagances are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of Cato' (Ibid. 84). This leads us to the celebrated comparison of
Addison and Shakespeare, so closely related to the commonplace comparisons of Vergil to Homer. In these, the emotive balance is always to the earlier, less correct, more romantic writer, as it is in Johnson's comparison of Pope and Dryden. For Dryden himself

The Grecian is more according to my genius, than the Latin poet...
Virgil was of a quiet, sedate, temper;
Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts and ornament of words; Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and expression which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him. 1

His parallel comparison between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare falls into the same pattern. Pope's Homer-Vergil passage is very similar: the critics are blamed for preferring the 'uniform and bounded walk of art' to the 'vast and various extent of nature.' 2

For him, Homer's work is a 'wild paradise, a copious nursery, containing seeds and first productions of every kind.' Homer's 'unequal' d fire and rapture', which he owes to 'the strength of his amazing invention', is such that 'no man of a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads him' (ibid. 4).

1. Preface to the Fables, Poems and Fables, p.524.
Here, it would be reprehensible not to be overpowered by the writer's licentious inventions: otherwise, the seductive effect on the reader's mind is the same as that of Shakespeare's licence as Johnson describes it. Among Homer's faults Pope places the barbarity of the manners which he portrays, 'when a spirit of revenge and cruelty reigned through the world...' (ibid.14). Pope is no sentimental primitivist, although, like Johnson, he very much values information on the manners of three thousand years ago. Homer is himself seen as a heroic innovator, who dares to use strange figures and metaphors (although the idea of 'daring' would seem to suggest a norm to depart from.) Even Homer's licence may be censured when he goes so far as to introduce speaking horses, but Pope's final judgement is that

that warmth of fancy will carry the loudest and most universal applauses which holds the heart of a reader under the strongest enchantment.

(ibid. 16)

Licentious, overwhelmingly powerful, capable of enchanting his readers, who are ravished, sometimes against their better judgement, Pope's Homer has the true heroic, even romantic, demesure.

As one reads these sets of comparisons, it is difficult not to feel that the form has sometimes imposed itself upon the judgement, but for Johnson, as we have seen in the Rambler, the procedure of balancing what is prudent, rational, and cool, against its opposites, is central to the structure of his reflections, and he almost always rejects the 'frigorifick wisdom' for generous
excess. When, therefore, Johnson praises Cato as 'the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning', it is not surprising to find him continue 'but Othello is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius.' (Yale, VII, 84). The sense of genius as generative is very close in all these images, both of Shakespeare and of Homer. The two poets are seen as a kind of Spenserian Garden of Adonis, of infinite, undefined, potential. Johnson praises Cato for expressing 'just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated and harmonious', but, he says, 'its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart.' There is no irresistible force, no generative ecstasy. He takes up Pope's metaphors of the Vergilian ordered garden, and the Homeric paradise, and his image of Homer as a great and fruitful tree; while Addison is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted ... the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. (ibid. 84)

This unusually extended and circumstantial metaphor uses the romance forest, with its alternations between thorny, fearful darkness and pleasant clearing: the delight of romance is that we move from the 'awful pomp' of great courts or great actions, to gentle dalliance by flower-bordered streams, in an 'endless diversity' of action. Shakespeare is a mine, in comparison with
the sterile, polished rarities of correcter writers. In eighteenth-century theory, the genial sun works in the womb of earth to ripen 'gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty.' (ibid). But even Shakespeare nods: Johnson finds his set speeches 'cold and weak'; a long speech, like narration, interferes with the action. Shakespeare's word-play, or quibbles, also interfere with terror and pity, or with the 'dejection' of 'tender emotions.' In another metaphor, which Johnson commonly uses in connection with literary delusion, we see Shakespeare as the traveller, led astray by will-o-the-wisps:

A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures, it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire;

(the full horror of the last phrase is easy to miss if mire is only thought of as dirt) 'It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible' (ibid.74). Clearly, an enchanter is at work here. During Johnson's long development of his own conceit on this theme, Shakespeare himself becomes the enchanter, who is 'amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense.' Becoming a runner, then a hawk, Shakespeare finds the quibble an Atlanta's apple, then 'the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world.' It is an extraordinary scene of illusions and metamorphoses, some implied, some clearly developed.

A particularly significant aspect of this tradition of Shakespeare criticism is that it establishes the status of the native, northern,
British writer as comparable to that of Homer. But in Johnson's account, since so much stress is laid on romance as shaping both Shakespeare's imagination and that of his readers, the comparison also tends to endow romance itself with a primitive Homeric grandeur.
7.1: Supernatural Machinery

7.1.1 Macbeth.

The Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth were published in 1745, and Johnson allowed them to stand, with few major alterations, in his edition of 1765.

Macbeth is a peculiarly significant play in terms of romance. The Highland risings and the public interest that followed their defeat had made known the survival of a feudal system very closely related to the 'historical' background of romance. A wild, martial, lawless people, whose highest values were devotion and valour, had dared to rise against the Hanoverian giant for the sake of their gallant Prince. Scotland was, moreover, the country of the romantic Mary Stuart. In more general terms, Macbeth deals with a conclusively northern nation, which is both distant enough to gain exotic excitement, and yet British enough to be opposed to Latin degeneracy. Its plot is drawn from 'true' history, and set in a distant, romantic, past. It deals with witchcraft, kings and nobles, wars, murders, ghosts, in a setting of castles and wild landscape, with storms and portents to heighten the atmosphere.

Between 1700 and 1750, it was second in popularity only to Hamlet. It is, I think, interesting that Johnson should have chosen Macbeth for his first major excursion into Shakespeare criticism.

1. Johnson's romantic attachment to Mary and to the Jacobite cause are demonstrated in Scotland, where Macbeth is insistently present for him and Boswell.
Since Macbeth was, in the popular mind, a play about witches, as Hamlet was a play about a ghost, it is natural that Johnson should offer a note on 'enter three witches' intended to defend Shakespeare from the charge of credulity. What he gives us, however, is a scholarly dissertation on the history of belief in witchcraft among Shakespeare's contemporaries. He begins his note by telling us that a contemporary writer who made use of enchantment would be banished to the nursery to write fairy tales, and continues:

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most by the learned themselves. (Yale, VII, 3)

As we have seen, Johnson combined an unshaken sense of the universality of human nature with an acute realisation of the need for historical perspective, and of the relative nature of adventitious criteria in judging literary works. We meet again the question of human consensus and the weight that Johnson habitually attaches to it: the voice which, over some hundred and fifty years, has established Shakespeare's greatness, is, we are now told, the voice of the credulous. As so often when Johnson is writing about the supernatural, one senses a self-protective tone of scorn, which is frequently belied by the matter. Here, he tells us,

These phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. (ibid. 3-4)
Here, as so often, 'phantom' is used for the delusion itself, which must be driven out, as Amadis and Palmerin fight phantom assailants created by enchantment. Johnson, although granting that the belief in enchantment was at its height during the crusades, refutes Warburton's claim that 'the first accounts of enchantment were brought to this part of the world by those who returned from their eastern expeditions'\(^1\) (ibid.).

Johnson goes on to describe Olympiodorus' account of an example of 'this kind of military magic', with a Greek quotation, and then proceeds to describe an episode in St. Chrysostom's De Sacerdotio, 'which exhibits a scene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age' (ibid.), with flying horses, 'armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magick' (ibid.5). Saint Chrysostom, then, a Father of the Church was, Johnson suggests, either credulous or licentious. Although his tone is in places ironic, in places scornful, he is, nevertheless, offering us a scholarly history of belief and there is, I believe, no ground for seeing this as parody of scholarly apparatus. The crusades, he tells us, provided a fertile ground for superstition,

not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a great distance, and distance either of time or place is sufficient to reconcile weak minds to wonderful relations. (ibid)

\(^1\) In his Supplement to Jervas's introduction to *Don Quixote* (1742).
This is an interesting extension of the idea of the romantic influence on the imagination of time and distance, since it is the crusaders, themselves present in the east, who become credulous, not the audience at home, to whom the Holy Land is distant. Johnson's reading of early travellers like Mandeville gave him sufficient support for the belief that accounts of travel in distant countries could readily be turned into romance narrative.

He now proceeds to Tudor belief:

> The Reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and tho' day was gradually encreasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight.  

(ibid. 5)

Again, the belief, not its object, is personified as a malignant phantom. Johnson alludes to the trial of the Witches of Warbois under Elizabeth, and continues to an account of James I and his Daemonologie, with a long quotation. Johnson seems to have been quite familiar with the work; he refers to it again in a note on The Tempest, and quotes from it casually in a discussion of Shakespeare's witches, in 1779. ¹ He recognises the evil that the politic and fashionable increase of belief in witchcraft produced under James I, but insists that Shakespeare is wholly justified in founding a play on 'this general infatuation...especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true'. (ibid. 6).

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¹ Journey, p.135.
It is curious, in the context of histories, that Johnson makes no mention of Shakespeare's conflation in Macbeth of several different stories which Holinshed took from Boece. In the Journey, he praises Boece, who is to be 'justly reverenced as one of the revivers of elegant learning', but finds that although 'his history is written with elegance and vigour,'

...his fabulousness and credulity are justly blamed. His fabulousness, if he was the author of the fictions, is a fault for which no apology can be made; but his credulity may be excused in an age, when all men were credulous.

(Yale IX, 15)

This would suggest a considerable familiarity with the history, yet it seems hardly conceivable that Johnson should not have turned to Macbeth's reign. As we shall see in the account of the journey to Scotland, Johnson had a very strong attachment to the idea of the historical Macbeth, which invested 'Macbeth country' with the prestige of 'classic ground'. It would surely have undermined this attraction if the details of Duncan's murder, the portents and much of the witchcraft, were acknowledged to be borrowed from other reigns.

1. Hector Boece's Scotorum Historia, 1527, used by Holinshed, would have contributed richly to Johnson's idea of a land of saints, kings, castles, superstition and violence.
2. Another indication that Johnson had not read Boece through is his comment on the 'English epicures' in V.iii. He scorbs Theobald's note, saying that the words are 'nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury' (ibid. 39). In fact, it is a leitmotiv of Boece: for him the decadence into culinary luxury equals the false gods of Israel, and in story after story, brings disaster on the Scots until they return to asceticism.
This long note on witchcraft ends affirmatively:

nor can it be doubted that the scenes
of enchantment, however they may now
be ridiculed, were both by himself
and his audience thought awful and
affecting.

(Yale, VII,6)

We must again consider what weight this affirmation carries.

Shakespeare has been offered as a comprehensive genius, a figure
of almost supernatural insight, who in some way represents and em-
odies Nature. Modern criticism, and the vicissitudes of critical
certainties, are treated by Johnson with little respect, in the
Preface as elsewhere. In spite of the tone and vocabulary of
self-protective ridicule, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that
Johnson's sympathies lie with Shakespeare and his audience: his
comments certainly make clear that he too found these scenes
'awful and affecting'.

Macbeth could easily be seen as an archetypal anti-hero of
nineteenth-century romanticism; his relation to chivalric romance
is less direct. At his first introduction, 'like Valour's minion,'
carving out his passage until he meets his enemy in single combat,
and 'unseams him from the nave to the chaps ' (Macbeth, I,2), he
appears as a romance hero, and Johnson clearly has a very strong
sense of him in this role, yet, commenting on Act I, sc. x, he calls
even this chivalric heroism into question. Lady Macbeth
urges the excellence and dignity
of courage, a glittering idea which
has dazzled mankind from age to age,
and animated sometimes the house-
breaker, and sometimes the conqueror;
but this sophism Macbeth has for ever
destroyed by distinguishing true from
false fortitude, in a line and a half

... I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.

(Yale, VII, 767)

This is Johnson speaking in the name of reason and compassion;
the romance hero's courage, though it accords with the peculiar
morality of chivalry, is seldom used for ends a Christian could
approve; the 'glitter' of the idea is, however, acknowledged.

The romance heroine, if she considers her knight unworthy
of her, may send him out to prove his valour in great trials,
often of dubious moral value, and if she is herself evil, an en-
chantress, she uses him for positively wicked ends. Lady Macbeth
is clearly recognisable as a romance enchantress as she calls on
the 'murdering ministers'. She tempts Macbeth, not only by an
appeal to courage, which is 'the distinguishing virtue of a sol-
dier' (ibid. 18), but also by an appeal to his vow. Remembering
Johnson's almost superstitious horror of vows, one can appreciate
the strength of his objection to this. Romance knights are con-
stantly bound by vows which engage them to their quest, sometimes
extracted under false pretences, but never to be broken, whatever
conflicts of loyalty this may engender.¹

¹. Cf. King John IV, iii, where Salisbury offers 'the incense of a
vow, a holy vow' in a speech illustrating knightly asceticism
in the service of glory. Johnson notes: 'This is a copy of the
vows made in the ages of superstition and chivalry.' (Yale VII,
426).
The 1745 Observations make no comment on Lady Macbeth's invocation to the evil spirits: in the edition of 1765, we are referred to Rambler 168 for a commentary. So much critical attention has been paid to Johnson's comments on 'dun', 'knife', and 'blanket' in Lady Macbeth's speech (I.v.48-52) which Johnson there attributes to Macbeth, that it seems worth pointing out Johnson's response to the rest of the passage:

"In this passage is exerted all the force of poetry, that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter." 

(Yale, V,127)

This definition seems significantly different from that of poetic genius in the 'Life of Pope', where it only 'collects, combines, amplifies, and animates.' Here, poetry, like an enchanter (or like Lady Macbeth herself), calls new powers, the 'murdering ministers' into being, 'embodies sentiment' as 'you spirits that wait on mortal thought', and, in the 'keen knife' which sees, 'animates matter.' Although the 'low' words should properly jar on Johnson's reader, he is still encouraged to register the horror of invoking night 'invested not in common obscurity, but in the smoke of hell.'

The power of Johnson's imagination responds to Shakespeare, as to all literature, with a far greater intensity than is normal. Terror of ghosts and of the dark was early attached to Shakespeare when the child, reading Hamlet in the Lichfield basement, had come up into the street to reassure himself with daylight and company, and
the reason for the popularity of *Daemonologie*, Johnson tells us, is that it 'had a tendency to free cowardice from reproach' *(Yale, VII,6)*.

Commenting on Act II, ii:

Now o'er half the world
Nature seems dead

he calls it an 'image which is perhaps the most striking that poetry can produce,' and compares it with a similar passage in Dryden's *Conquest of Mexico*:

in the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lull'd with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone.

(ibid. 19-20)

It is very clear that the true terror of the supernatural is to be felt by the solitary reader, rather than the spectator.¹

'I believe everyone that has attentively read this dreadful soliloquy is disappointed at the conclusion...' says Johnson, in offering an emendation, and then paraphrasing the passage beginning 'and take the present horror from the hour', he goes on:

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¹ Cf. a note on Henry V, II, iv, 51: '... He is bred out of that bloody strain/that haunted us in our familiar paths.' Warburton had substituted 'hunted' for 'haunted', but Johnson considered that 'The emendation weakens the passage. To "haunt" is a word of the utmost horrour, which shews that they dreaded the English as goblins and spirits.' *(Yale, VIII, 543)*.
Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, disturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrors of the night, at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of some supernatural discovery of his design...

(ibid. 21)

This seems a lively picture of the way the passage works on Johnson's own imagination, and, whatever his reason may say about the supernatural machinery of Macbeth, there can be little doubt of his imaginative response.

In his note on Act IV, sc. i, 'the chief scene of enchantment in the play,' Johnson praises Shakespeare for the judgement with which he has 'selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies' (ibid. 32). Johnson again cites a surprising number of works connected with witchcraft, among them Harsnett, Albertus Magnus, Camden on Ireland, and Reginald Scott's Discoveries.¹

That Johnson either knew these works already, or had felt it worth while to research the subject so thoroughly, indicates a remarkable interest, or surprising scholarly diligence. One comment is illuminating:

It is observable that Shakespeare, on this grand occasion which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horror. The babe whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth, the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer, and even the sow whose blood is used must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgement and genius.

¹ See ibid., notes, pp. 33-35.
It is hard not to suspect Johnson of irony here, yet the tone of the whole passage seems to preclude this, and we must suppose that, having spoken of witchcraft as 'fairy-tales' he is now sufficiently entered into his scholarly research to recognise a proper decorum in this recipe of horror. This is unusual, since Johnson is usually an enemy to anything gruesome, scatological, or obscene. He ends the long note conclusively: 'Many other circumstances might be particularised in which Shakespeare has shown his judgement and his knowledge' (ibid. 35). In a summary added to the 1765 edition, moreover, Johnson praises the play as deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action. (ibid. VIII, 795)

This is an extraordinary volte-face from the opening of the 1745 Observations: certainly those twenty years had seen a great change in the climate of opinion, and probably Johnson felt himself sufficiently established in reputation to risk the imputation of superstitious credulity. The 'proper' fictions, like the particular kinds of grandeur and solemnity in Macbeth, are closely related to romance, and we shall often find Johnson praising that most essential characteristic, variety of action. He retreats a little when he wonders:

1. Warton quotes the whole passage in his Essay on...Pope, I, 380.
whether it may not be said in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in Shakespeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

He concludes that here in Shakespeare, at least

The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall. (ibid.)

As in romance, Macbeth, who has become an ogre, a cruel tyrant defending his castle, is killed by a knight who was devoted to his death. Even the questionable dramatic propriety of Lady Macbeth's death corresponds to romance, where enchantresses who have controlled the action may be summarily disposed of. One of Johnson's most moving and significant notes on Shakespeare is on 'tomorrow and tomorrow'. He paraphrases 'she should have died hereafter' as

\[
\text{there would at length have been a time for the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love.}
\]

( ibid. VIII, 793)

This seems a remarkably chivalric and gallant expansion, and there is a growing identification with Macbeth as the paraphrase continues:

Such is the world - such is the condition of human life, that we always think to-morrow will be happier than to-day, but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed

\[1. \text{ Cf. eg. The Seven Champions of Christendom, above, p.93.}\]
away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were like me, reckoning on tomorrow.

The 'like me', is startling. Johnson cannot, of course, endorse a view of life 'signifying nothing', but the Quixote theme of a life passed in a futile quest is one of his most constant subjects. It is the contrast between the dull reality of wasted time, and romance imaginings (for Macbeth the 'vain and illusive predictions') leading to a fantastic goal which is always receding.

7.1.2 The 1765 Edition: Hamlet.

Although I shall discuss the plays in the order of Johnson's 1765 edition, it seems appropriate to except Hamlet, the second great tragedy in which the supernatural plays a major part, and by far the most frequently acted play between 1700-1750. Here, Johnson makes no prefatory apology for the supernatural, as he does in Macbeth, in The Tempest, and in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and his first note indicates a distinction between the supernatural machinery of those plays, and the ghost in Hamlet. In I,i, after Horatio has asked the ghost why it walks, Johnson comments: 'The speech of Horatio to the Spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions' (Yale, VIII, 960). This implies that these traditions are still current, and although the next note returns to a historical documentation, this implication is borne out by later commentary.

1. Hogan, loc.cit.
Following Horatio's next speech,

...and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine,

Johnson notes that

According to the pneumatology of that
time, every element was inhabited by
its peculiar order of spirits, who
had dispositions different, according
to their various places of abode. The
meaning therefore is, that all "spirits
extravagant," wandering out of their
element, whether aerial spirits visiting
earth, or earthly spirits ranging the
air, return to their station, to their
proper limits where they are "confined"
(ibid.)

It is not easy to determine whether, by his careful categories,
and the use of a word like 'pneumatology', Johnson is concerned
to demonstrate that the supernatural had a scientific status in
Shakespeare's time, or to confer such a contemporary status upon
it.

In a long refutation of Warburton's and Hanmer's amendments
to I.iv.46, the speech beginning 'let me not burst in ignorance...',
Johnson explains that Hamlet

amazed at an apparition, which, though
in all ages credited, has in all ages
been considered as the most wonderful
and most dreadful operation of super-
natural agency, enquires of the spectre,
in the most emphatick terms, why he
breaks the order of nature, by returning
from the dead; this he asks in a very
cnfused circumlocution, confounding in
his fright the soul and body.

(ibid. 969)
It is noteworthy that there is no apologetic 'afraid', no reference to superstition, in this rhetorically deliberate statement of the universal belief in, and fear of, ghosts. Nor can the weight here given to universal belief be discounted when we are considering such other superstitions as may no longer be current.

In Johnson's long paraphrase of 'To be, or not to be', he interprets the question as one of survival after death, and ends:

"for who would bear the vexations of life ... but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon "this regard," chills the ardour of "resolution," checks the vigour of "enterprise," and makes the "current" of desire stagnate in inactivity."

(ibid. 981)

This is precisely the balance and the vocabulary that we so often find in Johnson's work, above all in The Rambler; 'ardour', 'vigour', 'desire', belong with courage as youthful, romantic qualities that usually gain Johnson's sympathetic approval, whereas cold prudence and the terror of 'futurity' leads to the 'stagnation', that has such a dreadful force in his negative vocabulary. We cannot suppose that Johnson is even implying approval of self-murder, but we can be certain that he assimilates this debate between timorous, paralysing prudence and rash daring to his own experience, as he does the mood of 'tomorrow and tomorrow'.

Johnson's sympathy with romantic rashness is not by any means undiscriminating. In a note on IV.iv.53-6, he remarks that

The sentiment of Shakespeare is partly just, and partly romantick.

Rightly to be great,
Is not to stir without great argument,
is exactly philosophical.

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour is at stake,
is the idea of a modern hero.

(ibid. 995)

Here, the 'honour' of the modern hero is that which leads to the duel, which Johnson consistently disapproves. 'Honour', like 'patriotism', had become devalued by appropriation to contemporary political or social ends.

Johnson's notes on Macbeth and Hamlet, then, show interesting and contradictory responses to the supernatural. The Tempest, which has striking romance connections, adds further 'historical' weight to Johnson's scholarly explanations.

7.1.3 The Tempest

In The Tempest, the first play of Johnson's 1765 edition, this connection with romance is made explicit. A long note on I.i tells us:

That the character and conduct of Prospero may be understood something must be known of the system of enchantment, which supplied all the marvellous found in the romances of the middle ages,
and Johnson's first authority is the admired Hooker, who 'delivers the opinion of our poet's age' (ibid. VII, 122). The implication here is that the body of doctrine about the supernatural has remained substantially the same since 'the middle ages', and the question always to be asked is what distinction Johnson and his contemporaries really made between the 'romantic' sixteenth century and a more distant feudal age. At the end of this long note, offered with a perfect scholarly seriousness, and citing several other authorities, Johnson adds 'of these trifles enough'.¹ a rather perfunctory sop to sceptics, especially since he continues to treat enchantment with full critical gravity throughout the play.

Johnson seems to have responded with a surprising pleasure to the idea of fairies. They are a peculiarly English form of the supernatural; the spirits controlled by romance enchanters are seldom frolicsome, and, though they may be seductive, are much more often dreadful. In a note on 'Full fathom five', Johnson grants that Aerial's songs lack supernatural grandeur, but defines fairies as 'an order of beings to which tradition has always ascribed a sort of diminutive agency, powerful but ludicrous, a

1. This is an echo of Bacon, who, in his 'Essay on Masques and Triumphs', after a final paragraph on the proper arrangement of tournaments, ends 'but enough of these toys.' The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Moral, of Francis Lord Verulam (London, 1625, repr. Scolar Press, Yorkshire, 1971) p.226. Johnson quotes this for 'tournament'.


humorous and frolick controlment of nature, well expressed by the songs of Ariel' (ibid. 124) Johnson quotes, often at surprising length, from Drayton's Nimphidia to illustrate fairy passages: he clearly enjoyed this mock-chivalric tale of love and valour, which compares itself expressly to Don Quixote, and he quotes from it in the Dictionary.¹

If we compare the General Observations on The Tempest with the introductory disclaimer, we have a very similar pattern to that in Macbeth: of Shakespeare's plot, Johnson says that he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life,

perhaps a rather unexpected summary of The Tempest, but certainly corresponding to the most rational and mature praise given to Shakespeare by his admirers. Johnson continues:

In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin. The operations of magick, the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of un-taught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested. (ibid. VII, 155)

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¹ See eg. Tempest IV. i, 175, M.N.D. II, i, 40. Johnson owned oldys's 1748 edition of Drayton's poems. In his own story, The Fountains, the fairy godmother plays a seriously moral role.
This catalogue could describe numerous romance episodes, and Johnson appears to make no distinction between the critically respectable mimetic beauties, and the romance elements; there is, moreover, no sop to critical disapproval.

7.1.4 A Midsummer Night's Dream is supplied with several scholarly notes on fairies, bringing in Nimphidia and Il Penseroso as illustrations and authorities, to demonstrate Shakespeare's orthodoxy or suggest his influence¹, and the General Observation shows what these notes were intended to illustrate, and what pleasure Johnson takes in the play:

Of this play, wild and fantastical as it is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great.

(ibid.160)

This does seem to indicate that Johnson is approaching fairies as he does witchcraft, with historical seriousness, according them the status of a 'mode', and paying the same attention to their mythology as classical commentators pay to the often licentious, sometimes ridiculous, machinery of the epic. The reference to Spenser suggests that The Faerie Queene offers the 'heroic' version of this mode, as Nimphidia offers the mock-heroic, but Johnson does not

¹ Yale, VII, pp.135,143,144,159.
otherwise register the difference between Spenser's full-sized beings, who in fact represent the folk tradition, and the comic innovation which Shakespeare's diminutive beings initiate.
8. Johnson's Romantic Merchant

Johnson spends little time in considering the relation of Shakespeare's plays to their sources, possibly feeling that Charlotte Lennox's Shakespeare Illustrated and Farmer's projected Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare provided enough information. Frequently, however, we find that the variety of incident and the pattern of plot which he so much enjoys belong to the source. For the Merchant of Venice, Johnson makes a significant exception, and supplies an epitome, of some ten pages, of the Italian story Il Pecorone, published in 1378, from which Shakespeare took most of the plot (ibid. 232 and note). Shakespeare modernised the story, converting the romance plot and setting into a notional modern Venice. The original concerns the adventures of Gianetto, youngest of three sons, who, in the traditional pattern, has to make three attempts to win a lady, succeeding at the third. This hero is drawn from his proper avocation as a merchant by a report of the lady's beauty, and of her challenge to all comers. The complications of his friend's bond to a Jewish money-lender, the lady's disguise as a lawyer, and the story of the rings, correspond closely to Shakespeare's plot. More significant is the considerable detail which Johnson includes, which has no relation to Shakespeare's Belmont: the lady is a chatelaine, who has 'barons, counts and knights in great number' (ibid. 232) as her servants. Gianetto tells her that he is entirely devoted to her service. The
trial the lady sets her suitors is to make love to her, but she
drugs them before they come to bed, and is then able to seize all
their goods as a penalty for failure; this kind of behaviour is
common to many romance seductresses (there is a similar episode
in the first chapter of *Amadis de Gaule*). On Gianetto's third
attempt, he

goesc to the castle, the day is spent
in joy and feasting; and to honour
him, a tournament is ordered, and
many barons and knights tilted that
day. (ibid. 234)

Gianetto is warned not to drink the drugged wine, and succeeds in
his third trial.

When Gianetto came out of his chamber,
he was knighted, and placed in the chair
of state, and was proclaimed sovereign
of the country, with great pomp and
splendour; and when the lords and
ladies came to the castle, he married
the lady in great ceremony. (ibid. 235)

In this happy state, Gianetto forgets his responsibility to the
godfather, who is pledged for his bond, and thereafter the plot
is close to Shakespeare's.

One particular attraction of the Italian story for Johnson is
that it unites the circumstantially described 'real' world of mer-
chants and money-lenders with a purely romance setting and story.
Shakespeare's plays offer real men in situations, plots, and set-
tings which often owe much to romance. This story unites the
worlds, and shows the progress of a young man from one to the
other; it also illustrates as graphically as possible, the danger
that by living in the romance world we become likely to neglect, unpardonably, our duty to our friends. It is the kind of story by which Don Quixote entices Sancho: not an island merely, but a kingdom, is the prize which transforms the merchant into a man of power, living happily ever after with his beautiful lady.

Johnson makes no comment on the nature of the trial, nor on Shakespeare's alteration of the plot and setting, he simply offers the story.

He says little of the play itself, although he complains that the story is 'wildly incredible, and the changes of the scene so frequent and capricious,' but he approves the easy diction, and finds that 'the comick part raises laughter, and the serious fixes expecta-
tion. (ibid. 222, 241). It is constantly Johnson's praise of Shakespeare that the reader or spectator, like the reader of romance, longs to know what will happen next: a parallel praise, which he gives, for example, to The Merry Wives, is that 'it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end,' and this, he says, demonstrates 'that power by which all works of genius shall finally be tried' (ibid. 341).
9. King Lear and Shakespeare's Pathetic Heroines

It would be absurd to suggest that Johnson's enjoyment of
King Lear depends only, or primarily, upon its fairy-tale plot or
characters; if that were so, The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, or
Pericles would gain almost as high praise. However, the General
Observations are suggestive:

The tragedy of Lear is deservedly
celebrated among the dramas of
Shakespeare. There is perhaps
no play which keeps the attention
so strongly fixed; which so much
agitates our passions and interests
our curiosity. The artful invol-
tutions of distinct interests, the
striking opposition of contrary
characters, the sudden changes of
fortune, and the quick succession
of events, fill the mind with a
perpetual tumult of indignation,
pity, and hope.... So powerful
is the current of the poet's
imagination, that the mind, which
once ventures within it, is hurried
irresistibly along.

( ibid. VIII, 702-3 )

This grand metaphor, entirely appropriate to Shakespeare as a
great force of nature, demonstrates again Johnson's belief that
fiction should ravish the attention and that Shakespeare, through
the great energy, variety and endless invention which he shares
with romance, does have this power; we are again reminded of
Pope's Homer.

Johnson reflects on the improbability of Lear's behaviour, but
concludes that 'perhaps if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity
and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will
appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own.' (ibid. 703) The criterion of what constitutes barbarity and ignorance for Johnson may shift. Here it is referred back to the dark ages, although

Shakespeare,...by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilised, and of life regulated by softer manners. (ibid.)

But earls and dukes play their part in romance, and certainly belong in Shakespeare's time, which had been characterised in the Preface as barbarous. Clearly, Shakespeare is not reliable as a guide to manners, since 'he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.' (ibid) The history of romance is, of course, full of these anachronistic impositions: Sir Orfeo, the Recueil of Troy, 'The Knight's Tale', Arcadia, the Midsummer Night's Dream, all impose romance structures on supposedly classical fable or setting.

The intensity with which Johnson responds to fiction cannot be better illustrated than by his well-known defence of Tate's alterations to King Lear:

if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate that I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor. (ibid. 704)
Commenting on the Tate version, and Addison's disapproval of it, he says:

A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse.

(ibid.)

Johnson recognises that the imposition of poetic justice, like the imposition of unity of kind, or unity of action, is an arbitrary structuring of the chaos of experience. But this is not a question of literary criticism, as is Johnson's discussion of the unities in the Preface, and in Rambler 156 and 158. The question is closer to that of mixed characters in Rambler 4. In both cases, a simplified pattern of crime and punishment, goodness and reward (meted out on earth rather than in heaven) is to be imposed on the perplexities and injustices of real life. In Rambler 4 this is to guard the young and unsophisticated reader from the attraction of men 'splendidly wicked,' but in Lear, Johnson's concern is with a wider public, 'all reasonable beings'. In both cases, moral usefulness goes beyond mimetic truth:

it is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art, to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation.

(Yale, III, 22)
In one case, the novelist is to offer models for imitation by the young; in the other the playwright is to satisfy a taste formed, perhaps, by such simplified narratives, in those 'reasonable beings' who are said 'naturally' to love justice. In both cases, Johnson acknowledges that the picture painted will not be representative of general truth. We may counter these judgements by Johnson's answer to Dennis' criticism of Cato:

> Whatever pleasure there may be in seeing crimes punished and virtue rewarded, yet, since wickedness often prospers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it prosperity on the stage... The stage may sometimes gratify our wishes: but, if it be truly the mirror of life, it ought to show us sometimes what we are to expect.

(Addison, Lives, 4, 135)

In every case, Johnson is considering the reader's psychological response. There can be little doubt that audiences, or readers, whose common experience of fiction was the romance or romantic novel, would be happier when their expectations of poetic justice were met. It may be that Cordelia's death outraged the public taste more than, say, Desdemona's because Lear so obviously suggests a fairy story, but it is hard to believe that all eighteenth-century readers or spectators responded with Johnson's passionate intensity.

Although he did not find the sentimentally gallant 'vast French romances' of the seventeenth century as interesting as the earlier romances of chivalry, his own treatment of fictional heroines is, nevertheless, extremely tender and gallant. His remarks on Henry VIII, IV, ii are at first sight the antithesis of romantic:
This scene is above any other part of Shakespeare's tragedies, and perhaps above any scene of any other poet, tender and pathetick, without gods, or furies, or poisons, or precipices, without the help of romantick circumstances, without improbable sallies of poetical lamentation, and without any throes of tumultuous misery.

(Yale, VIII, 653)

In fact the scene does include a strange masque-like vision, in which white-robed personages with laurel wreaths present the dying Queen with a garland. But the pathetic weight of the scene is in the suffering of a chaste and humble wife whose last thoughts are for her daughter, and in the moral fable of Wolsey's end, who, in the romance tradition, begs to end his days in an abbay in these pathetic words:

O father abbot,
An old man, broken with the storms of state
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;
Give him a little earth for charity. 1.

In his General Observations on Henry VIII, Johnson attributes the play's contemporary popular success to 'the splendour of its pageantry', but reiterates his view that 'the meek sorrows and virtuous distresses of Catharine have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy' (ibid. 657).

Catharine is to be pitied as wife and mother, but she is also a high-born lady in distress, like Mary Stuart, whose plight roused Johnson's gallant indignation in Scotland, and like 'The Queen, the Beauty' who 'set the world in arms' in The Vanity of Human Wishes.

1. Johnson uses the passage preceding this to illustrate 'abbey'.
10. The Hero

Johnson's main critical attention is paid to Falstaff in the General Observations on *Henry IV,* and he dismisses Hotspur as 'a rugged soldier, cholerick, and quarrelsome,' who 'has only the soldier's virtues, generosity and courage,' while

The prince, who is the hero both of the comick and tragick part, is a young man of great abilities and violent passions, whose sentiments are right, though his actions are wrong... In his idle hours he is rather loose than wicked, and when the occasion forces out his latent qualities, he is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is raised into a hero, and the hero again reposes in the trifler. The character is great, original, and just.

( *ibid.* VII,523)

The heroic part of *Henry V* gets even less attention, merely a reference to 'many scenes of high dignity.' The hidden hero is a common romance figure, whether disguised, or, his noble birth unknown, playing a humble role until the moment of trial.

Johnson's lack of sympathy for Hotspur seems a little surprising. He is, however, entering a critical battlefield.

Gildon and Theobald, commenting on the speech

...methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon...

had seen it as 'absolute madness' ( *ibid.* 461-2 and note).

Johnson felt that Warburton, on the other hand, had gone too far in finding in it 'profundity of reflection and beauty of allegory'.
This sally of Hotspur concludes that it may be, I think, soberly and rationally vindicated as the violent eruption of a mind inflated with ambition and fired with resentment; as the boastful clamour of a man able to do much, and eager to do more; as the hasty motion of turbulent desire; as the dark expression of indetermined thoughts.

( ibid.)

It is not clear whether it is Hotspur who is 'vindicated' for his demesure, or Shakespeare, who properly gives such a speech to such a character. I find puzzlingly lacking the bias of attraction which we find in Johnson's attitude to Dryden's Almanzor, for example, and to many other excessive warriors. On Hal's comic description of Hotspur, 'who kills me six or seven dozen Scots at a breakfast...', Johnson rather unnecessarily and solemnly paraphrases

I am not yet of Percy's mind, who thinks all the time lost that is not spent in bloodshed, forgets decency and civility, and has nothing but the barren talk of a brutal soldier.

Johnson does, however, respond warmly to Vernon's description of the Prince and his comrades: it is a remarkably romantic picture, and has all the circumstantial detail of beavers, plumes, cuisses, and golden coats, which Johnson so much enjoyed, and he says of it 'A more lively representation of young men ardent for enterprise perhaps no writer has ever given' (ibid. 482).
In *Othello*, however, Johnson does find a sympathetically heroic figure. In a note on Othello's speech beginning 'whether of antres vast and desarts idle...', Johnson strongly defends it from the ridicule of Rymer and Shaftesbury:

> Whoever ridicules this account of the progress of love, shews his ignorance, not only of history, but of nature and manners. It is no wonder that in any age, or in any nation, a lady, recluse, timorous, and delicate, should desire to hear of events and scenes which she could never see, and should admire the man who had endured dangers, and performed actions, which, however great, were yet magnified by her timidity.

(ibid. VIII, 1019)

The situation in which the warrior or knight errant returns to the court to recount his adventures to his lady is an essential part of the mechanism of romance. It is only through report, whether that of his defeated enemies, or his own, that the knight gains the honour by which he obtains the lady's favour. Othello's catalogue of battles and sieges, of

> ...the most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hairbreadth escapes in the imminent deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance of my travel's history,

is exactly that of numbers of romance narratives, and the landscape of

> ....antres vast and desarts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven
is inescapably reminiscent of what was universally seen as 'romantic' landscape by the later eighteenth century. On 'anthropologi,' and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders' (Act I, ii, 140-143), Johnson notes: 'Of these men there is an account in the...travels of Mandeville, a book of that time.' Although Mandeville's Travels were written in the mid fourteenth century, Johnson may have been thinking of Wynken de Worde's printed version of 1499 (still hardly contemporary with Shakespeare) or of some later edition.

Pope had glossed 'antres' as 'grottoes'. Johnson dismisses this, offering "Rather, 'caves' and 'dens'." These, as we have seen, are a vital component of romance landscape, while the grotto, although it may be associated with classical nymphs, is more likely to suggest to Johnson Pope's own modish construction.

Johnson's General Observations on Othello are unusually positive:

The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration,

he begins, and goes on to sketch the principal characters which 'are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer.' It is not easy to reconcile this sense of modern decline, rare in Johnson's criticism, with the 'barbarity' of Shakespeare's age, to which Shakespeare's own temper so happily corresponded, nor with the belief that humanity is 'gaining upon judgement'. 
The character of Othello has exactly those heroic qualities to which we consistently find Johnson responding, sometimes against his judgement. He praises 'the fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge.' Othello is a hero very different from Prince Hal, whose manipulation of his friends is far from heroic; he is, indeed, much closer to Hotspur in his unreflecting response to emotional stimuli. But Othello, in terms of romance, is much more. Not only does he win his lady's affection by narrating his own romance; he is also its martial hero, characteristically ardent; ingenuous, and therefore vulnerable to the ignoble wills of the wicked.

Iago fits satisfactorily into the romance role of the subtle agent of evil, whose purpose is often to destroy the hero, and whose motives are often impenetrable. Johnson praises Shakespeare's portrayal of

the cool malignity of Iago
silent in resentment, subtle in his designs,
and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance.

Iago meets Johnson's requirement for didactic simplification:

There is always danger lest wickedness conjoined with abilities should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

(ibid. 1047)

Although the innocent Desdemona dies, Iago's end restores poetic justice and the patterning of romance.
'Licentious Variety'\

Among Johnson's praises of *Othello*, he notes that 'the scenes, from the beginning to the end, are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story' (ibid. 1048). It becomes clear, as play after play is summarised, how important this multiplicity of incident is to Johnson's enjoyment. He finds, for example, *The tragedy of Coriolanus is one of the most amusing of our author's performances,* and, after a summary of the characters, in which they appear as mere humours, he tells us that they make a very pleasing and interesting variety; and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. (ibid. 823) Coriolanus is, of course, a military hero, upon whose sole arm the fate of nations depends, capable of taking a town single-handed, and, like Achilles and Almanzor, and many romance heroes, his own honour over-rides his allegiance. Johnson's Observations on *Antony and Cleopatra* are perhaps the most marked example of the value he sets on fast-moving action and variety of scenes and persons: *This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last. But the power of*
delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene; for, except the feminine arts, some of which are too low, which distinguish Cleopatra, no character is very strongly discriminated ....The events, of which the principal are described according to history, are produced without any art of connection or care of disposition.

(ibid. 873)

It would be hard to find a clearer acknowledgement of those aspects of Shakespeare which most delight Johnson, and which enchain his imagination. In *Rambler* 156, he had stated that 'those plays will always be thought most happily conducted which crowd the greatest variety into the least space.' (*Yale* V,68).

We have seen, then, that Johnson responds to Shakespeare for very diverse qualities, of which the most critically respectable is his portrayal of a 'common humanity', which, in spite of all evidence of cultural and historical variation, Johnson maintains to be universal. I have noted how fragile this concept is, and how many of Johnson's own comments conflict with it.

Opposed, in Johnson's account, to the truth to nature of Shakespeare's characters, are the wild fictions and the supernatural in his plots, and the licentiousness of incident and cast, which are at one time castigated as appealing to the childish and barbarous, at another praised as enchaining imagination, and thus fulfilling the primary requirement of any literary work, and it has been striking how consistently Johnson writes as a reader, rather than a spectator, of Shakespeare.
In Johnson's 'Letter on Du Halde's History of China,' he discusses the opposite psychological effects of the novel and the familiar:

Any custom or law, unheard and unthought of before, strikes us with that surprise which is the effect of novelty; but a practice conformable to our own pleases us, because it flatters our self-love, by showing us that our opinions are approved by the general concurrence of mankind. Of these two pleasures, the first is more violent, the other more lasting; the first seems to partake more of instinct than reason, and is not easily to be explained, or defined; the latter has its foundation in good sense and reflection, and evidently depends on the same principles with most human passions.

(Works, VI, 1-2)

Although this passage deals with lived experience, it is clearly to the inexplicable, indefinable workings of instinct that the marvellous in romance also appeals, and, as we have seen, Shakespeare's plays are able to suspend 'good sense and reflection', to fill the mind, seize the imagination, and hurry it along irresistibly. But the passage also suggests a Mandevillian motive for the converse desire to find reinforcements for our self-esteem in the familiar, 'on the same principle with most human passions,' and this tends rather to undermine the approval implied by 'good sense and reflection.' Although no such doubt is cast on the idea of a universal humanity in the Shakespeare edition, the psychological observation is significant.
We have noted that critics, from Dryden on, have seen Shakespeare himself as a romantic figure. In the Preface, Johnson tells us that he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life, that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprise and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them.

(Yale, VII, 88-9)

This is a very typical image of the literary adventurer: 'enterprise and perseverance' arise as personifications of knightly qualities, they 'predominate', with all the force of that etymology, and bid 'help' and 'hindrance' vanish, as enchanters' phantoms always vanish before the resolute knight. Johnson continues:

The genius of Shakespeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, "as dewdrops from a lion's mane."

Here as in the great soliloquies, we see how Johnson can identify himself with the heroic protagonist. Shakespeare, above all writers, embodies the heroic quest and the triumphant success of the literary knight errant who rises from obscurity to honour.

Shakespeare, as a writer and a man, belongs to the vigorous un-shackled richness of the gothic tradition, which is for Johnson hierarchical, northern, and mediaeval, as opposed to southern, classical or modern; the conclusion seems inescapable that Johnson finds Shakespeare associated inextricably and on many levels with the romance of chivalry.
RELIQUES
OF
ANCIENT ENGLISH POETRY:
CONSISTING OF
Old Heroic BALLADS, SONGS, and other
PIECES of our earlier POETS,
(Chiefly of the Lyric kind.)
Together with some few of later Date.
VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall.
M DCC LXV.
CHAPTER 6: THE JOURNEY TO SCOTLAND

1. The Scottish Quixote

I got an acquisition of more ideas by it than by anything that I remember. I saw quite a different system of life. (Life, 1218)

If the Vision of Theodore transformed the romance landscape of Johnson's metaphor into allegory, the journey which he and Boswell made to Scotland in 1773 completed the development. Johnson himself became the adventurer, his mind stored, his imagination excited, by a number of accounts of feudal Scotland.

Like Quixote, he was too late to find the feudal system intact, but his quest, unlike Quixote's, was not a romantic delusion: he travelled as a sober explorer, and both he and Boswell were rewarded with abundant evidence of 'that peculiar and discriminative form of life, of which the idea had delighted our imaginations' (Yale, IX, 110). During the journey, however, the passionate strength of Johnson's responses to some aspects of Scottish life culminated, in the Islands, in a striking self-identification with the heroes and manners of the clans, which he firmly equated with those of the romance of chivalry.

The Journey is unique among Johnson's works in offering us a full-length autobiographical narrative; it is, moreover, very significantly amplified by Boswell, who brings a different and more conventionally romantic response to Scotland, and to 'the ancient feudal state of subordination.' (Tour, 226),
It is unusual to be able to enumerate the writers who have furnished a Quixote's library in real life. Here, we can confidently claim at least four authors, apart from the Scottish historians Hector Boece and James Buchanan, who helped to form Johnson's ideas of feudal Scotland. Boswell begins his *Journal* by telling us that

Martin's Account of those islands

had impressed us with a notion that we might there contemplate a system of life almost totally different from what we had been accustomed to see; and to find simplicity and wildness, and all the circumstances of remote time or place, so near to our native great island, was an object within the reach of reasonable curiosity. (Tour, p.167)

As so often on the journey, Boswell is able to supply what Johnson has either forgotten, or chosen to suppress of his own motives or responses:

Dr. Johnson has said in his *Journey*, 'that he scarcely remembered how the wish to visit the Hebrides was excited', but he told me, in summer, 1763, that his father put Martin's Account into his hands when he was very young, and he was much pleased with it.

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In many cases, Boswell's additions illustrate the strength of Johnson's emotional responses to Scottish experience. Since Johnson read and approved Boswell's notes upon almost the whole journey, there is no reason to believe that Boswell was inventing or elaborating these responses.

1.1 Quixote's Library

Martin Martin's *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* was written about 1695, and first printed in London in 1703 before the Jacobite risings, and the subsequent legal dismantling of the Clan system. Two other accounts of specifically Hebridean travels also contributed to Johnson's expectations: William Sacheverell's account of his *Voyage to L-Columb-Kill* made in 1688, and Kenneth Macaulay's *History of St. Kilda*, from a journey made in 1758. Thomas Pennant's first *Tour in Scotland, 1769*, published in 1771, was also an important influence. Between Martin's account and Pennant's, not only had the ancient Scottish system of life been undermined, but a new romantic sensibility had changed the traveller's response to 'simplicity and wildness' in landscapes and manners, and led him to a conscious cultivation of the sense of 'remote time and place.'

3. *A Tour in Scotland, 1769* (Chester, 1771). His second volume was *A Tour in Scotland, Part II* (London, 1776).
Martin holds a peculiar place, however, in relation to Johnson's expectations about Scotland, since, if Johnson read him as a child, he would have brought an uncritical delight to the strange customs that he describes:

> Children are entertained with stories full of prodigies; their experience not being sufficient to cause them to be so readily startled at deviations from the natural course of life.

*(Life, 1076)*

Thus, Martin's descriptions of pagan customs, magic objects, second sight, and heroic warfare, would have been assimilated to chivalric romance without any clear discrimination. Johnson's later judgement, at least regarding Martin's style, is more critical: since his time, the common style has improved, and 'a man could not write so ill if he should try' *(ibid. p.909).*

A more serious, and perhaps more puzzling judgement, which Johnson makes in the *Journey*, is that Martin has wasted his precious opportunity to describe the now lost feudal world:

> He lived in the last century, when the chiefs of the clans had lost little of their original influence. The mountains were yet unpenetrated,... and the feudal institutions operated upon life with their full force. He might therefore have displayed a series of subordination and a form of government, which, in more luminous and improved regions, have been long forgotten, and have delighted his readers with many uncouth customs that are now disused, and wild opinions that prevail no longer.

*(Yale, IX, 64-65)*
Martin, like children reading romances, had himself no means of knowing what is marvellous and

The mode of life which was familiar
to himself, he did not suppose un-
known to others.

There is a particular sadness in Johnson's reflection that 'what he has neglected cannot now be performed' since an illiterate nation has no records but the pageantry and ceremonies which have been destroyed, at first by Scottish reformers then by punitive English laws.

Martin's intention in writing his account is entirely anti-
romantic: the main part of it concerns the way of life, flora
and fauna, geology and resources of the islands, and Martin is
writing as a seventeenth-century empirical observer, rather than
as an eighteenth-century picturesque traveller. He is decidedly
progressivist, especially in his attitude to the improvements
effected by the Reformed Church, and there is little sense of any
attraction to the feudal past that he describes.

Martin, like Johnson, felt it necessary to apologise for
writing about the British Isles:

the modern itch after the knowledge
of foreign places is so prevalent,
that the generality of mankind be-
stows little thought and time upon
the place of their Nativity.

(Martin, p.viii)

Seventy years later, Johnson can still plead the general ignorance
of Scottish geography:
To write of the cities of our own island with the solemnities of geographical description, as if we had been cast upon a newly discovered coast, has the appearance of very frivolous ostentation.

Martin has a long section describing 'the ancient and modern customs' of the Western Isles, and paints a hierarchical society which would have been immediately recognisable to romance readers. Courage and loyalty are the motivating virtues, and the development of the young chieftain takes place within an elaborate structure of ritual and ceremony, which, Martin claims, has been recorded by Druids, orators and bards. It was an important part of Johnson's quest to look for evidence of this romantic form of heroic narrative. The absolute jurisdiction of clan chiefs, up to the High Kingship of the Isles, which Martin describes, is also characteristic of romance and corresponds closely to the social pattern which, as we have seen, so powerfully affected Johnson's imagination.

The physical setting for the society Martin describes is unquestionably romantic; wild country, mountains, the sea, islands, caves, rocks and cataracts are dominated by castles, inhabited or ruined, Scottish or 'Danish'. There are still older heroic relics, the standing stones or circles associated by the Islanders with the heroic legends of Finn McCool, celebrated by Macpherson's Ossian.

1. Yale, IX, 13. The shipwreck image is significant.
The aspect of the Islanders' life which may have affected Johnson most powerfully was their religious faith. Although Martin is consistently, even tediously, scornful of Catholic superstition, the daily life of many of the Islanders is shown to be informed with fervent devotion, embodied in a complicated pattern of ritual and taboo associated with particular places. Among these sacred places is Iona, but Martin's account stresses rather the relics of ancient kings, the stately tombs, heraldic inscriptions and life-size figures of men in armour to be seen there.

Besides the Islanders' Christian piety, Martin also gives examples of superstition, magic objects and healing wells, herbal medicine, and descriptions of a haunted valley, all of which he ridicules. The more surprisingly, he then ends with a long discussion of second sight, of which he is entirely convinced, and which he supports by the testimony of many witnesses whom he claims to be credible.

Martin's account of feudal life, of religious devotion, and of the supernatural, would have had a powerful attraction for a child whose imagination had been furnished by reading romances. It would also have shown what changes were due to Protestant reformers, and perhaps nourished the young Johnson's Jacobite and Tory habits of thought.
When Boswell wrote of the romantic expectations which Iona
had aroused, and of his disappointment, he remarked that Johnson,
on the other hand

had taken his impression from
an account of it subjoined to
Sacheverel 's History of the
Isle of Man, where it is said,
there is not much to be seen
here.

(Tour, p.386)

Sacheverell was Bishop of Sodor and Man, and his approach to the
ancient Catholic faith is more complicated than Martin's. He
looks back to a primitive Celtic Christianity uncorrupted by the
Popish superstition introduced by Augustine's followers. He
thus combines a tone of urbane Gibbonian mockery with an ex-
pressed approval of ancient sanctity, and (greatly sympathetic
to Johnson) a strongly expressed dislike of reforming iconoclasm.
He stresses what has been lost, allowed to decay, or wilfully
destroyed, of the ancient monuments of both Christian piety and
Scottish, Irish and Danish royalty. Both Martin and Sacheverell
refer several times to the Scandinavian connection with the Islands,
underlining their peculiarly gothic or northern associations.

Sacheverell gives a very romantic picture of the Highlanders,
very close to that of Johnson's wild northern hero:
there appeared in all their actions a certain generous air of freedom, and contempt for all those trifles of luxury and ambition which we so servilely creep after, 1.

and he tells us that he finds 'a natural beauty and graceful modesty' in the women. He describes Highland costume and weapons in some detail, and his account would have prepared Johnson for one 'distinctive form of life' which had already been suppressed by 1774.

Although Kenneth Macaulay's account of St. Kilda was only published in 1764, and had no part in laying the foundations for Johnson's romantic interest in the Western Isles, it built on those already laid, dealing with a number of themes related to romance. Macaulay was sent by the S.P.C.K. to catechise the St.Kildans, to preach to them, and to report back on their religious state. 2 He calls the St. Kildans 'our domestic Indians,' and the community he describes has the charm that the eighteenth century found in primitive innocence. The islanders are still isolated from the evils of civilization, and lead a virtuously simple life without money, and with a Theocritean gift for poetry. They are hospitable, open, and heroically courageous.

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2. Johnson complimented Macaulay on 'a very pretty piece of topography; but, having talked to him, decided that there was 'a combination in it of which Macaulay is not capable'. The book had actually been written by Dr. John McPherson of Skye. *Tour*,234.
Macaulay is even more scornful of Popish superstition than his predecessors. Monastic retirement is a favourite target, and he constantly indulges in witticisms at the expense of monks, 'a lazy, useless race of mortals'\(^1\) provoking Johnson to his most splendidly ironic response.

However, Macaulay's admiration for the unspoilt islanders is proportionately great, and he writes at length of their heroic feats of climbing on the dangerous cliffs, in terms which equate these to exploits of chivalry. He enthusiastically describes the Islanders' poetry, heroic and amorous; Johnson, on the other hand, could not be brought to believe that they could find enough subject-matter or images, in their rugged island. Both Sacheverell and Macaulay write admiringly of the landscape of the Islands; Macaulay has acquired the vocabulary of the picturesque traveller, and finds St. Kilda 'a truly romantic place' (Macaulay, p.187).

Pennant's published Tours drew a complicated response from Johnson, who was following closely in his footsteps, both as traveller and travel-writer. Johnson did not attempt to compete with Pennant \(^2\) in his comments on the state of the country, and

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since Pennant was consciously following the Gilpin genre of picturesque travel, Johnson does not attempt to supply this kind of description either. Pennant, unlike the other travellers, is thoroughly and consciously steeped, not only in early chivalric romances and ballads, but also in authors whom the later eighteenth century found romantic, Chaucer, Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare. Pennant makes no distinction between early and late romance, and his own most romantic passages are a fantasy inspired by Ossian and his rhapsody on Elizabeth, Spenser and Sidney (the latter in the final volume of his Tours). In spite of this fiction-conditioned response to Scotland, Pennant is firmly anti-Stuart and, here at least, deserves Johnson's comment that 'He's a Whig, Sir; a sad dog' (Life, p.933).

William Collins' Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, Considered as the Subject of Poetry, which also draws on Martin's accounts of the Hebrides and St. Kilda, demonstrates very clearly that the idea of Scotland as an essentially romantic country was already available to a poetic imagination in 1749-50, over a decade before Macpherson published Fingal. Collins' poem refers to a number of aspects of Scotland to which Johnson was to respond with interest or enthusiasm, and which made Scotland 'romantic' for many eighteenth-century Englishmen.

'Wake perforce thy Doric quill', the poet tells his friend John Home,
Tis Fancy's land to which thou set'st thy feet
Where still, 'tis said, the Fairy People meet.

He writes of fairy magic, of witchcraft, of 'Old Runic Bards',
who write dirges for dead chieftains or the 'Sounding Tale of
War's Alarms'. He writes of second sight and ghostly premon-
itions of death, of the 'glimmering mazes' with which the Kaelpie
lures travellers to drowning. He refers to Iona,

Where beneath the show'ty west
The Mighty Kings of three fair Realms are laid,
whose ghosts walk at night 'In pageant Robes, and wreath'd with
sheeny Gold.' The virtuous St. Kildans appear 'blest in primal
Innocence', and finally Collins writes of Macbeth, whose scenes
of witchcraft he compares to Tasso's enchanted wood. Tasso
is turned into a romantically credulous Bard:

How have I sate, where pip'd the pensive Wind,
To hear His Harp by British Fairfax strung,
Prevailing Poet, whose undoubting Mind
Believ'd the Magic Wonders which He sung!

Although Johnson had not seen Collins' poem, but only heard of
it through the Wartons, it is at least possible that he may have
discussed Martin with his friend. When he describes the road
to Fores as being 'classic ground' to an Englishman (Yale XI, 25),
he is, of course, speaking of Shakespeare, but, like Collins, he
also brings to Scotland all the romantic associations of the
Italian heroic romances, of British folk-tales, of northernness
and the martial wildness of the clans.
Had Collins been writing on the wider romance associations of the Hebrides, rather than their popular superstitions, he might have referred to Ariosto's frequent use of the Northern nations, and of the Hebrides, in *Orlando Furioso*. In Book X, Ariosto makes much of the exotic wildness of the misty north. Following an epic catalogue of English, Scottish and Irish lords who come to aid Charlemagne, he writes of men from Sweden and Norway, from Thule and remote Iceland, and sums up:

Da ogni terra, in somma, che la giace,
Nimica naturalmente di piace.

They are warlike men from a wild landscapes,

Delle spelonche usciti e delle selve

the caves and forests of romance, and these wild men are described as being hairy 'como belve'.¹ This too, would have contributed to Johnson's romance associations with Scotland.

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2. The Quest

We will live in the old Castle.

(Life, p.327)

However much Johnson's imagination had been excited by the accounts of the earlier travellers and poets, it is unlikely that without Boswell's encouragement he would have undertaken the formidable journey. The initiative had been Johnson's: shortly after they met, in 1763, Johnson told Boswell of his desire to visit the Western Isles, and proposed that they should go there together on Boswell's return from Holland. This then seemed to Boswell 'a very romantick fancy' (ibid, p.318) and the context makes clear that he means 'wild' or 'improbable'.

Boswell, although a Lowlander, was heir to an ancient house, with an intense romantic attachment to the idea of feudalism and to the Stuarts. If his sensibility and his vocabulary in describing landscape are, like Pennant's, closer to the fashionable norm than Johnson's, he responds to and encourages Johnson's most exaggerated romantic notions, and in some cases goes beyond him.

At their third meeting, Boswell talked to Johnson about Auchinleck, and Johnson assured him that
to be a Scotch landlord,...
is, perhaps, as high a
situation as humanity can
arrive at.

(ibid. p.290).

Boswell comments that this idea had been formed on what
Johnson had heard of the Highland Chiefs, and adds regretfully
that of late years most of these had destroyed their princely
power.

The subject of Auchinleck was again discussed before
Boswell went to Holland, and Johnson 'asked questions and made
calculations' on the estate and population.

He took delight in hearing
my description of the roman-
tick seat of my ancestors.
'I must be there, Sir, (said
he) and we will live in the
old castle; and if there is
not a room in it remaining,
we will build one.'

(ibid. 327)

This conversation exemplifies two separate aspects of
Johnson's response to the feudal past. The first, his natural
philosopher's desire for accuracy, measurement, 'the stability
of truth'; the second his enthusiastic participation in the
idea of feudal Scotland. Both differ from that of the con-
ventional picturesque traveller.

Hurd, in his Letters on Chivalry and Romance wonders what
way there can be of
persuading the generality of readers that the romantic manners are to be accounted natural, when not one in ten-thousand knows enough of the barbarous ages, in which they arose, to believe they ever really existed.

It is these manners which Johnson is in search of. There is a revealing conversation with Lord Monboddo, on the subject of Homer, in which Johnson praises his portrayal of 'manners', and they agree that this is the most valuable part of any history, but that in 'general history', the reader has to 'take all the facts' before he reaches what is interesting, 'therefore I esteem biography,' says Johnson, 'as giving us what comes near to ourselves, what we can turn to use' (Tour, pp. 208-9). This is, of course, a very common theme of Johnson's. What is of value is the universal and domestic, the 'scenes of common life'. But in Scotland, he is in search of a very particular kind of 'common life', in which the manners of the romance are still to be found.

This antiquarian approach is almost the opposite of the romantic one which imposes a ready-made set of fictional

1. Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1761) p.329.
preconceptions on to an appropriate landscape, castle, or portrait, although both approaches may have evolved from a similar initial involvement with the romance. There are many passages in the two printed accounts of the journey that state Johnson's explicit aim in going to Scotland: at Corriechatachan, for instance, he tells us that 'We saw in every place, what we chiefly desired to know, the manners of the people.' He is, of course, often disappointed:

We came thither too late
to see what we expected,
a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life,
(Yale, IX, 54, 57)

but, as I shall show, he found a great deal to feed both his historical and his imaginative needs.

The second aspect of Johnson's response to the idea of feudal Scotland is his remarkable readiness to adopt and play a feudal role himself. The imaginative identification of himself with the knight errant, which so powerfully affects his mental geography, and which is to be seen in his metaphors, and in the continued emphasis in his writings on the journey or quest, is externalised in a unique way during the journey
to Scotland. Johnson is for the first time in physical contact with many of the elements which have fed his romantic imagination. He is enacting a quest, and he finds many surviving examples of the clan system, and many material reminders of it. There are castles, savage landscapes, the supernatural, and the powerfully suggestive remains of ancient sanctity, and of the still older Northern antiquities which had become assimilated to romance in England. There are some notable lacks. The forest, essential to the romance landscape, is deplorably missing, and so are the fruitful gardens and flowery meadows that should contrast with it. There are no bards left, and no body of Gaelic poetry. All in all, however, Johnson is very satisfied indeed:

Our ramble in the Islands hangs upon my imagination, [he writes to Boswell in 1717,] I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again.

(Life, p.818)

It would clearly be a distortion of the truth to see Johnson's interest in Scotland as no more than a search

1. Boswell wrote in his Journal: 'He said to me that the time he spent on this tour was the pleasantest part of his life.' (p.394).
for the romantic Middle Ages. As is usual in his response
to romance, his reason and his compassionate judgement remain
detached, and often opposed to any sentimental role as
laudator temporis acta, or as advocate of reaction, and he
is constantly concerned with the present and future state
of Scotland.

The titles of the two published accounts of Johnson's
quest are, I believe, significant. Johnson chose the ancient
'Journey' and the very suggestive 'Western Isles' with all the
romantic significance of lost paradises, from the Hesperides
to Lyonesse and the Celtic Isles of the Blessed. Boswell,
on the other hand, adopted the fashionable 'Tour', aligning
himself with the Gilpinesque picturesque traveller, of which
Pennant had already given a polished specimen.

Johnson's printed account of his journey begins at
Edinburgh, but letters to Mrs. Thrale tell us that his
gothic pleasures began earlier, with York Minster, 'an
edifice of loftiness, and elegance, equal to the highest hopes
of architecture' (Letters, I, 338). Its nave could only
be compared to the Dome of St. Paul's. We have already
noted that Johnson's response to gothic architecture was
not a question of taste or fashion. Post-Reformation
Scotland, with its 'ruins of religious magnificence' (Tour,
p. 198) provides many occasions for him to display the strength
of this response and demonstrate its nature.
He was impressed in a different way by the Norman architecture of Durham, and remarked on the Bishop's Palace, which 'has the appearance of an old feudal castle', with a drawbridge against the Scots. The Cathedral impressed him in the same way as the Welsh castles would:

The Cathedral has a massiveness and solidity such as I have seen in no other place; it rather awes than pleases, as it strikes with a kind of gigantick dignity, and aspires to no other praise than that of rocky solidity, and indeterminate duration.

(Letters, I, 339)

This was a good introduction to feudal might. Pennant's account of Durham had described the princely state kept by mediaeval prince-bishops. Here and at Alnwick we miss Boswell's illuminating additions, which so often show Johnson as alive to romantic associations: in his dealings with Mrs. Thrale, this exuberance was generally pruned.
3. Scotland

In discussing Johnson's response to Scotland, I shall consider the journey in relation to a number of aspects of romance:

1. Mediaeval Christianity;
2. Johnson's Jacobite sympathies;
3. Feudal society, warlike and domestic;
4. Macbeth;
5. The supernatural;
6. Romantic landscape, and
7. Johnson's romantic role-playing.

This will, of course, entail an a-chronological approach, and necessitate covering the same ground more than once.

3.1 'The ruins of religious magnificence' and the lost faith.

Johnson's attitude to Catholicism is ambivalent. In various discussions which Boswell reports in the Life, it is clear that Johnson is much drawn to some aspects of this Church. It is, he says, 'a Church where there are so many helps to get to heaven,' and he continues,

\[\text{I would be a Papist if I could.} \]
\[\text{I fear enough; but an obstinate rationality prevents me. I shall never be a Papist, unless on the near approach of death, of which I have a very great terour.} \]

His dislike of Presbyterianism, however, is consistent, and it is an obstinately irrational strength of feeling which informs his attitude to the old religion in Scotland. The churches he finds ruined by Reformation suggest a wide range of romance associations. The great Cathedrals and Abbeys suggest both feudal magnificence and ancient hospitality: the smaller chapels on the islands are a reproachful reminder of the strength of ancient faith and its destruction, first by reforming zeal, and then by contemporary laxity. When these chapels are associated with feudal castles, they are still more securely identified with the religious element of chivalry, the Grail quest, knightly vigils, ceremony, and the monuments of feudal families. Finally, there are the tiny hermitages or cells, whose romance connections are even more insistent. Johnson's comments frequently reflect this range of associations and expectations as the different buildings either fulfil or disappoint them.

The 'ruins of ancient magnificence' in St. Andrew's Cathedral, once the seat of the Archbishop of Scotland (and of considerable importance in Scottish mediaeval history) sadden Johnson as 'mournful memorials'. Here he first describes the 'epidemical enthusiasm' of Knox's reformers, 'compounded of sullen scrupulousness and warlike ferocity' which is giving way to 'laxity of practice and indifference of opinion' (*Yale, IX*, 5-6).
 Later, Johnson visits the University, and is prevented from seeing the chapel;

a decent attempt, as I was since told, has been made to convert it into a kind of greenhouse, by planting its area with shrubs. This new method of gardening is unsuccessful; the plants do not hitherto prosper.  

(ibid. 7)

This deceptively gentle, ironic tone is one Johnson uses several times during the tour for church reformers, in marked contrast to other less temperate reflections. He goes on to tell us that the present sinking into decay of the University is more distressing to the traveller than the 'violence of Knox and his followers', which he can view with as little emotion as 'the irruptions of Alaric and the Goths.' (ibid. p.9).

This may be Johnson's rational reaction, but Boswell's account gives us a clearer indication of his emotional response to the ruined Cathedral

Dr. Johnson's veneration for the Hierarchy is well known. There is no wonder then, that he was affected with a strong indignation, while he beheld the ruins of religious magnificence...Dr. Johnson seemed quite wrapt up in the contemplation of the scenes which were now presented to him. He kept his hat off while he was upon any part of the ground where the Cathedral had stood.  

1.

In this place where Scottish history added weight to sacred tradition, the question of religious retirement was raised:

as we walked in the cloisters,
there was a solemn echo, while
[Johnson] talked loudly of a
proper retirement from the world.

Johnson had little sympathy for the extremes of mediaeval asceticism. He defines the adjective 'ascetick' as 'employed wholly in exercises of devotion and mortifications' and quotes from South's Sermons:

None lived so long a life as monks and hermits, sequestered from plenty to a constant ascetick course of the severest abstinence and devotion.

South is no friend to Catholic practices, though there seems a certain approval here. For the noun, Atterbury's Sermons provide an illustration which defines Johnson's own practice as a moralist:

He that preaches to man should understand what is in man;
and that skill can scarce be attained by an ascetick in his solitudes.

Religious retirement did, clearly, have a considerable attraction, but, as usual, he considered that retirement may most properly be earned by a life of active benevolence. He allowed that the excessively scrupulous who

find their scrupulosity invincible,
so that they are quite in the dark,
and know not what they shall do, - or those who cannot resist temptations...may retire.
This is again Johnson's rational and consistent stance, but what follows is remarkably revealing:

I, never read of a hermit, but
in imagination I kiss his feet;
never of a monastery but I
could fall on my knees, and kiss
the pavement. (ibid. 199)

This marked emotional ambivalence is, as we have often seen, characteristic of Johnson's response to ideas associated with romance. He returns at once to condemn retirement, for people who know nothing of the world, as 'dangerous and wicked'; however, he goes on quietly to say that he has thought of retiring himself, but that he has found his vocation more to the active life. It is an interesting mixture of tones. Mrs. Thrale bears witness to Johnson's remarkable emotional response to the enclosed life, telling us that his respect...for places of religious retirement was carried to the greatest degree of earthly veneration and recording his parting from the Prior of the Benedictine Convent at Paris, where a room was allotted to him, 'with tears of tenderness ' (Anecdotes, p.91).

From Aberdeen, the travellers go straight to Aberbrothick, whose monastery is of great renown in the history of Scotland. Its ruins afford ample testimony of its ancient magnificence.
Johnson's comments on Aberbrothick barely refer to its important part in Scottish history, but though he says little of the monastery, his final comment is significant:

I should scarcely have regretted my journey, had it afforded nothing more than the sight of Aberbrothick.

(Yale, IX, 11).

Dislike of the reformers could lead Johnson into some injustice. Elgin Cathedral had been ruined 'by the irruption of a highland chief, whom the bishop had offended', but, in Johnson's eyes, it 'afforded us another proof of the waste of reformation', since, having been restored, although it was not destroyed by the tumultuous violence of Knox, it was more shamefully 'suffered to dilapidate, by deliberate robbery and frigid indifference' (ibid. p.23). Since the Reformation, Elgin had been stripped of its lead, ostensibly to pay for a military expedition. Johnson adds

I hope every reader will rejoice that this cargo of sacrilege was lost at sea.

The general neglect of churches in the eighteenth century is notorious. Horace Walpole could adorn Strawberry Hill with stained glass and brasses he found neglected in country churches

1. Yale, IX, 24. For Johnson's famous comment on the threat that Lichfield might suffer the same fate, see ibid. pp.24-5.
all over England. In Johnson's mind, this neglect was clearly connected with the dangerous philosophies of the Enlightenment; for him, deism and atheism were almost synonymous, and both likely to be labelled Whiggism: 'It seems to be part of the despicable philosophy of the time to despise monuments of sacred magnificence.'

Pennant's description of Elgin is much fuller and Johnson as usual avoids duplicating material. Pennant quotes Boece as saying that Duncan was buried at Elgin, and relates that the roof and spire

have fallen in, and form the most awful fragments, mingled with the battered monuments of kings and prelates. 1.

Further on, at Raasay, in the truly feudal air of the Islands, Johnson's anger at dereliction was impressively voiced. He was on the whole, delighted with Raasay, exclaiming 'this is truly the patriarchal life, this is what we came to find', and the unroofed chapel disappointed him proportionately. Martin had described a number of crosses commemorating the Ladies of the Island, but the travellers only found boundary stones, and it was this that provoked Johnson's remarks on Martin's shortcomings as a feudal historian. The ruinous state of the Chapel led him to general reflections on the neglect of churches:

1. Pennant, Tour, 1769, p.128.
It is not only in Raassay that the chapel is unroofed and useless; through the few islands which we visited, we neither saw nor heard of any house of prayer, except in Sky, that was not in ruins. The malignant influence of Calvinism has blasted ceremony and decency together; and if the remembrance of papal superstition is obliterated, the monuments of papal piety are likewise effaced.

(Yale, IX, 65)

This is a powerful retort to the continual mocking attacks on Popery and Popish superstitions made by Martin, Sacheverell and Pennant. To their sometimes crude ridicule he returns one of his finest pieces of paradoxical irony:

It has been, for many years, popular to talk of the lazy devotion of the Romish clergy; over the sleepy laziness of men that erected churches, we may indulge our superiority with a new triumph, by comparing it with the fervid activity of those who suffer them to fall.

(ibid.)

He reflects on the lack of serviceable churches on the islands, then returns to the subject of hermits:

The religion of the middle age, is well known to have placed too much hope in lonely austerities. Voluntary solitude was the great act of propitiation, by which crimes were effaced, and conscience was appeased; it is therefore not unlikely, that oratories were often built in places where retirement was sure to have no disturbance.

(ibid.66)
We have noted the many roles the hermit may play in romance, and Johnson's own use of the figure. At their most spiritual they may provide a parallel Christian moral judgement at odds with the prevailing martial spirit of the romance, a conflict which is constantly present for Johnson himself.

As the travellers approached Iona, the culmination of the voyage viewed as a pilgrimage, Johnson's imagination was strongly alive to religious significance. The travellers visited Inchkenneth, where Sir Allan Maclean lived with his cultivated wife and daughter, and, as we shall see, this was a place that especially evoked romance for Johnson. He and Boswell had been told of an ancient 'seminary for ecclesiasticks' there, but could find no traces of it; they were interested to visit 'a venerable chapel, which stands yet entire, except that the roof is gone.' (ibid. 144). The Catholic past of the church is emphasised by a bas-relief of the Blessed Virgin beside the altar, and by a little bell still lying on it 'which though cracked and without a clapper, has remained there for ages, guarded only by the venerableness of the place.' Here were two significant, and, for Johnson, moving emblems of Catholicism, and he describes the chapel in more detail to Mrs. Thrale. In this churchyard he did find 'grave-stones of chiefs and ladies', and he comments that:

Inch Kenneth is a proper prelude to Icolmkill. It was not without some mournful emotion that we contemplated the ruins of religious structures, and the monuments of the dead.

More cheerfully, Johnson and Boswell visit a tiny subsidiary of Inchkenneth, 'named Sandiland, I suppose, in contempt... I doubt not but when there was a college at Inchkenneth, there was a hermitage upon Sandiland.' This apparently sober reflection is followed by Johnson's delightful, if rare, parodying of himself as romantic traveller:

Having wandered over those extensive plains, we committed ourselves again to the winds and waters; and after a voyage of about ten minutes, in which we met with nothing very observable, we were again safe upon dry ground.

Boswell's account of the night sail to Iona adds an interesting narrative perspective:

As we sailed along by moon-light, in a sea somewhat rough, and often between black and gloomy rocks, Dr. Johnson said, 'If this be not roving among the Hebrides, nothing is'. —The repetition of words which he had so often previously used, made a strong impression on my imagination, and, by a natural course of thinking, led me to consider how our present adventures would appear to me at a future period. 1.

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1. Tour, p.384. I have noted the use of 'roving' and 'rambling', to define 'errant', and the associations with chivalry. A rover may also be a pirate. See ch.I, p.22. Boswell's natural course of thinking sees their 'adventures' as matter for romance narrative.
This is one among many illustrations of Johnson's sense of himself as an adventurer. Before reaching Iona they passed the Nuns' Island, 'perhaps from an ancient convent', as Johnson surmised, and with this preparation landed on Iona,

the venerable seat of ancient sanctity, where secret piety reposed, and where fallen greatness was reposed.

(Letters, I,381)

The tone of almost the whole report on Iona is curiously flat. The earlier comprehensive accounts by Martin, Sacheverell, and especially Pennant, deprived Johnson of any justification for scientific enquiry. Two ideas only seem to elicit enthusiasm: the sacred black stones, and the cemetery of the nunnery, and there is no mockery in his description of either. The travellers could not see these stones, but the language in which Johnson describes them is striking: they are those

on which the old Highland Chiefs, when they made contracts and alliances, used to take the oath, which was considered as more sacred than any other obligation, and which could not be violated without the blackest infamy... They would not have recourse to the black stones, upon common occasions, and when they had established their faith by this tremendous sanction, inconstancy and treachery were no longer feared.

(Yale,IX,150)
Johnson's almost superstitious dread of vows is well attested, and his note on *King John* II, iii, 67-71, that 'this is a copy of the vows made in the ages of superstition and chivalry', confirms the connection with romance.

The cemetery of the nunnery was, Johnson comments,

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till very lately, regarded with such reverence, that only women were buried in it. These reliques of veneration always produce some mournful pleasure. I could have forgiven a great injury more easily than the violation of this imaginary sanctity.  
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(ibid.)

The note of personal involvement is unmistakeable, and the powerful 'violation' underlines Johnson's chivalric warmth.

Boswell adds to the sense of the travellers' disappointment, not least when he is denying it. He tells us he and Johnson 'cordially embraced' when they

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landed upon the sacred place, which, as long as I can remember, I had thought on with veneration.  
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(Tour, p. 385)

He goes on to say that

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the venerable scene was rendered much more pleasing by the company of my great and pious friend, who was no less affected...than I was
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and against this assurance, we may remember Johnson's final re-
We now left those illustrious ruins, by which Mr. Boswell was much affected, nor would I willingly be thought to have looked on them without some emotion.

(Yale IX, 153)

Further comment makes clear what Boswell's expectation had been:

We were both disappointed, when we were shewn what are called the monuments of the Kings of Scotland, Ireland, and Denmark, and a King of France. There are only some gravestones flat on the earth, and we could see no inscriptions. How far short was this of marble monuments, like those in Westminster Abbey—where I had imagined here!

(Tour, pp. 386-7)

Sacheverell had offered a sober and sceptical account of Iona, but the travellers had brought Martin with them, and his description would have raised great expectations. Boece would have reinforced these, since in his history, reign after reign ends with burial at Iona: a ninth-century king's sword and coat-armour are sent there, banners are deposited after battles. There is an account of a sea battle between Macbeth and a Danish fleet, when the vanquished Danes give great sums of gold to be buried there, and Boece tells that their ancient sepulchres are still there, engraved with Danish arms. He has also many stories of the miraculous holiness of the early saints, and their attempts to bring peace to warring kings.
After the inspiring beauty of York, and the suggestively feudal majesty of Durham, after Johnson's passionate involvement with the ruined Scottish Abbeys, Iona seems not to have roused his imagination fully, except in the particulars which related it to his ideas of feudal wildness or mediaeval sanctity. Throughout his travels, Johnson is deeply engaged with 'the savage clans and roving barbarians' to whom Iona had brought 'the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion'. His celebrated reflection upon the emotions proper to Iona and Marathon reflect interestingly on other literary and historical associations which he brings to so much in his Scottish journey:

Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings.  

(Yale IX, 148)

We have noted how frequently Johnson, as moralist, warns of the danger of errant imagination, which is only too likely, when unchained, to prevail dangerously over man's fragile power to face the present in sober truth. It is only the present time which is given to us in which to live such a life as shall fit us for heaven. Clearly, being under 'the power of our senses', we can sink to being merely brutish, but only sensory perception can inform us about the real world of men, as opposed to the seductive world of fantasy, 'the invisible riot of the mind', in which we may

1. See chapter 4 above, and eg. Ramblers 9, 30, 41, 108, 203, 207
indulge if we allow the past or future to predominate over the present. Romance, of course, seeks what is suggestively distant in time and space, and on Iona, Johnson rejects the sober imprisonment of the diurnal:

Far from me and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona?

(Yale, IX, 148)

It is interesting that the heroic achievement of Marathon should here parallel mediaeval sanctity. It is again a conclusion in favour of a 'calorifick' response to the idea of Iona, rather than to the disappointing fact.
3.1 'That Unfortunate House': Johnson and the Stuarts.

The idea of the House of Stuart, associated as it was with the heroic feudal system of the clans, and the ancient sanctity of the Catholic Church, held a strong attraction for Johnson. Hereditary succession and the right of primogeniture were, for Johnson, essential parts of this system, and he was attracted by the doctrines of the divine right of kings and the apostolic succession of bishops.

Boswell, acknowledging that Johnson's 'tenderness for that unfortunate House' was 'well-known', refers to speculation that Johnson's silence during the years 1745-6 might have been due to a 'sympathetick anxiety' for the Stuart cause (Life, p. 128). Although he offers a more rational explanation, this is clearly an attractive idea. Johnson's devotion to Mary Stuart is central to his Jacobite sympathies. In 1760, he wrote a favourable review of William Tytler's vindication of Mary: Boswell cites this as proof of 'the generosity of Johnson's feelings' (Life, p. 250), and quotes from it:

It has now been fashionable, for near half a century, to defame and vilify the House of Stuart, and to exalt and magnify the reign of Elizabeth. The Stuarts have found few apologists, for the dead cannot pay for praise; and who will, without reward, oppose the tide of popularity?

1. Works VI, 80-81. Tytler appears as a courageous challenger among the crowd of venal flatterers, and 'slaves of fashion' of Grub Street,
Tytler's challenge to Hume's assertion of the genuineness of the Casket Letters satisfied Johnson, and clearly pleased him on several counts, not least for its opposition to Hume.

We see in Pennant's response to Mary and Elizabeth that the question had been polarised into a chivalrous partisanship, which entailed the defence of one romantic Queen against the other: in his Tour of 1776, Pennant writes of Spenser as 'the sweet, the melancholy, romantic bard of a romantic Queen, the moral, romantic client of the moral romantic patron, Sir Philip Sidney'.¹ In Edinburgh, Johnson demonstrated gallantly how closely the idea of Mary was associated with romance. If a beautiful princess is held captive by her enemies, the remedy is clear; therefore Johnson condemned the Scots,

who could let your Queen remain twenty years in captivity, and then be put to death, without...your ever attempting to rescue her, and such a Queen, too! as every man of any gallantry of spirit would have sacrificed his life for her.

(Tour, p. 184)

It is significant that, even as late as 1784, Mary's unfortunate and obstinate flight to England was the example he chose to deter Mrs. Piozzi from leaving England for Italy. (Letters, III, 178).

When Johnson's various pronouncements on the Jacobite question are weighed,² it seems clear that his Jacobitism is a romantic

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2. See Life, pp. 304, 840, 1195.
allegiance which his reason condemns. However, Whig opposition could provoke him into violent defence of the Stuarts' right to the throne; of his strong antipathy to William of Orange there can be no doubt, and in a moment of sober reflection, he doubted that he could swear to the disputed supremacy of the House of Hanover (Life, 515). Since Johnson's Jacobite leanings were common knowledge, his Journey was read with great interest. Horace Walpole reported that George III was shocked to find Johnson 'a Papist and a Jacobite.' Boswell's Tour might have confirmed him in this belief. Thirty years after the '45, the travellers found themselves continually reminded of it. When McQueen, the inn keeper at Anoch, described 'that ill-advised, but brave attempt', Boswell tells us that he himself 'could not refrain from tears'. (p.249). In Boswell's account of his feelings about the 1745 rising, there is, I believe, a close approximation to Johnson's:

There is a certain association of ideas in my mind upon that subject, by which I am strongly affected. The very Highland names, or the sound of a bagpipe, will stir my blood, and fill me with a mixture of melancholy and respect for courage;

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1. See eg. Tour, p.331: 'that scoundrel, King William.'
with pity for an unfortunate
and superstitious regard for
antiquity, and thoughtless
inclination for war; in short,
with a crowd of sensations with
which sober rationality has
nothing to do.

(ibid.)

In the *Journey*, Johnson gives only the soberest and most prudent
account of his meeting with Flora Macdonald, although his tribute
to her is now carved on her grave:

a name that will be mentioned
in history, and if courage and
fidelity be virtues, mentioned
with honour.

(Yale, IX, 67 and note)

He is more lively in a letter to Mrs. Thrale. Having said that
Flora Macdonald has 'a pleasing person and elegant behaviour',
he continues

I am sure that whatever regard
was bestowed on me, was liberally
repaid 'If thou likest her opinions
thou wilt praise her virtue.'

(Letters, I, 367)

Flora Macdonald's romantic audacity in bringing the disguised
Prince to Sir Alexander Macdonald, in whose house were billeted
a party of English soldiers, and leaving him below with the ser-
vant while she dined with the officers, clearly delighted Johnson.
He tells Mrs. Thrale that he slept in the Prince's bed at
Kingsburgh, and that the royal sheets had been kept to use as a
winding-sheet for the lady of the house. 'These are not Whigs',
he adds, perhaps unnecessarily; the usage emphasises the oppo-
sition between Whiggism and the romantic connotations of the
Jacobite idea: loyalty, love, veneration, and courage in the face of danger. Boswell amplifies the account with great relish; his dramatic sense delighted in seeing one or other of his images of Johnson (the great moralist, the editor of Shakespeare, or, as here, the champion of the English Tories) in its apotheosis.

In his draft Journal, he remarks that

To see Mr. Samuel Johnson
salute Miss Flora Macdonald
was a wonderful romantic
scene to me.

(Journal, p.159)

In the Tour, he altered the adjective to 'striking'. It is interesting that the same word is used in connection with the sight of Johnson at Macbeth's castle. Boswell is conscious of the need to show himself an impeccable Hanoverian. He hunts for a name for the Prince that will not offend either side, and settles for Prince Charles Edward. He then feels able to indulge his Jacobite sentiments:

To see Dr. Samuel Johnson
lying in that bed, in the Isle of Sky, in the house
of Miss Flora Macdonald,
struck me with such a group
of ideas as it is not easy
for words to describe,

(Tour, p.281)

and at breakfast Johnson told him that 'he would have given a good deal rather than not have lain in that bed' (ibid.)

Flora Macdonald was clearly, for all her gentle manner, a woman of spirit. She delighted Johnson by telling Boswell that she had heard he was coming to the Hebrides with 'one Mr. Johnson, a young English buck.' Boswell's sense of occasion is completed
when she tells Johnson the story of the escape. Upon Johnson's prompting, Boswell wrote an account of this, compiled from accounts from various eyewitnesses, with additions from Raasay, and printed it in his *Tour*. It is as far as possible from Pennant's unsympathetic picture. Even without any predisposition to the Jacobite cause, the reader finds a remarkably romantic story. Princes who escape from among their enemies (even disguised as women)\(^1\) are common in romance, and in this story there are many details of heroism and devotion, and of almost superhuman feats of strength and endurance. This true and detailed narrative of a central heroic figure, exposed to dangers from which he triumphantly escapes, perfectly fulfils Johnson's requirements of biography, with its unique power to 'enchain the heart by irresistible interest' (*Yale*, III, 319).

The romantic connotations of the figure of the fugitive in wild country, familiar from Border historians and ballad-writers, is underlined by Boswell, who frequently calls Charles 'The Wanderer'. Added to this are stories of the self-sacrifice of followers, the outwitting of enemies, apparent near-escapes from detection. For Johnson and Boswell, who had met many of the participants, the story confirmed the excitingly romantic nature of 'that ill-fated house', and dignified the romantic story as fact.

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When staying at Corriechatachan

Dr. Johnson kept a close whispering conference with Mrs. M'Kinnon, which, however, was loud enough to let us hear, that the subject of it was the particulars of Prince Charles' escape...Upon that subject, there was something congenial between the soul of Dr. Samuel Johnson, and that of an Isle of Sky farmer's wife.

*(Tour, p.338)*

Boswell ended his story with a long passage arguing the Hanoverian right, *de facto*, but also *de jure*, to the throne. However, as in most of the conflicts between romance and reason that we have noted in Johnson's own writing, the reader would have been encouraged to the romantic view expressed in Johnson's comment on the rebellion, made in 1777, that 'It was a noble attempt' *(Life, 8:45)*.
3.2 'The Old Feudal system.'

As we have seen, Johnson had talked to Boswell several times about the Scottish feudal system in previous years. Meeting Johnson in 1772 at Sir Alexander Macdonald's London house, Boswell 'argued warmly for the old feudal system', while Sir Alexander argued for freedom and independence. Johnson between the two Scots, maintained that

\[\text{though there must be a high satisfaction in being a feudal Lord,...we are to consider, that we ought not to wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one.}\]

\[(\text{Life, p.} 482)\]

There is no romantic enthusiasm here, and this, on the whole, remains Johnson's position when he reflects coolly.

At Lough Ness, Johnson felt that they had at last reached the Highlands. From then on they would travel on horseback in 'a country upon which perhaps no wheel has ever rolled' \((\text{Yale, X}, 29)\). The knight errant seldom follows a road, certainly not in any conveyance. Characteristically he is riding through unknown forest or pathless desert, and often needs a damsel or a dwarf to guide him; Boswell and Johnson have two Highlanders. Johnson now begins to recall his sources:
Civility seems part of the national character of the Highlanders. Every chieftain is a monarch, and politeness, the natural product of royal governments, is diffused from the laird through the whole clan. 1.

Hurd's description of feudal society seems close, as does Sacheverell's character of the Highlander. Since their 'business was with life and manners', the travellers visited a Highland hut, and Johnson remarked that 'the old laws of hospitality still gives this licence to a stranger' (ibid. 32).

In a society without money, hospitality is a necessary condition of the system of dependence, and a reinforcement of power. It is, of course, an essential condition of romance, and one which Don Quixote still expects to find in seventeenth-century Spain.

Johnson meditates at some length on mountainous regions which, he says 'are everywhere the scenes of adventures, stratagems, surprises, and escapes' (ibid. 38), a phrase which could be applied unchanged to romance. The mountains have the same fragmenting effect as the early feudal divisions: enmities, feuds, theft,

1. This belief elicits proper courtliness from the travellers: 'we knew that the girls of the Highlands are all gentlewomen, and treated her with respect,' Johnson tells us of the innkeeper's daughter at Anoch (ibid. 37).
'irregular justice', are the results of this ungovernable and un conquerable terrain. In discussing the evils of the unlimited jurisdiction of the Chiefs, he reminds us that

those who had thus the dispensation of law, were by consequence themselves lawless. Their vassals had no shelter from outrages and oppressions; but were condemned to endure, without resistance, the caprices of wantonness, and the rage of cruelty.

(Yale, IX.46)

While the Chiefs had this resemblance of royalty' Johnson continues

...a claim of lands between two powerful lairds was decided like a contest for dominion between sovereign powers. They drew their forces into the field, and right attended on the strongest.

(ibid.47)

He tells of battles between the clans of Mackintosh and Macdonald, of treaties and alliances between the Highland lords. We are, then, in a romance world ruled by numerous kings who are violent, capricious, and not answerable to any central authority; the immediate causes of fighting between clans also remind us of romance: each

petty nation...will exalt its own chiefs, each will boast the valour of its men, or the beauty of its women, and every claim of superiority irritates competition.

(ibid. p.45)
Johnson remarks on the abruptness of the change that has

overtaken the Highlands:

We came thither too late to see
what we expected, a people of
peculiar appearance, and a system
of antiquated life. The clans
retain little now of their original
certainty, their ferocity of temper
is softened, their military ardour
is extinguished, their dignity of
independence is depressed, and their
reverence for their chiefs abated.
Of what they had before the late
conquest of their country, there
remain only their language and
their poverty.

(ibid. 57)

This is a significant passage, indicating the conflict between

Johnson's strong response to the idea of the heroic clan system,
and his recognition of the benefits of justice and security. Even
the last sentence, which seems to balance an evil with a good, is
qualified. In another of those misleadingly restrained passages
which hide great anger, he tells us that

there were lately some who
thought it reasonable to refuse
[the Highlanders] a version of
the holy scriptures, that they
might have no monument of their
mother-tongue.

1.

On poverty, he properly observes:

that their poverty is gradually
abated, cannot be mentioned among
the unpleasing consequences of
subjection.

1. Ibid. p.57-58. Cf. Johnson's vehement letter to the Jacobite
William Drummond, Life, pp.313-5. Comparing the motives of
Catholics and Reformers for withholding the Gaelic bible, he
exclaims 'Surely, the blackest midnight of popery is meridian
sunshine to such a reformation.' (p.374).
But the language makes clear that Johnson sees a free people now conquered, and suffering beneath an English yoke. He ends the passage with ambiguous regret:

Such is the effect of the late regulations, that a longer journey than to the Highlands must be taken by him whose curiosity pants for savage virtues and barbarous grandeur.

( Ibid. p. 58)

As he has already told us that these are indeed what he was looking for, there is a pleasant self-mockery in the florid phrase.

Johnson is delighted with the hospitality of Malcolm Macleod of Raasay, where the travellers 'found nothing but civility, elegance and plenty' ( I bid. p. 59). He tells with pleasure of an old Highland alliance

between Macleod of Raasay and Macdonald of Sky, in consequence of which, the survivor always inherits the arms of the deceased; a natural memorial of military friendship.

( Ibid. p. 60)

'Military friendship' is a powerful theme in romance, but it also suggests Homer, and it is, interestingly, to a Homeric scene that Johnson compares Raasay:

Such a seat of hospitality, amidst the winds and waters, fills the imagination with a delightful contrariety of images. Without is the rough ocean and the rocky land, the beating billows and the howling storm: within is plenty and elegance, beauty and gaiety, the song and the dance. In Raasay, if I could have found an Ulysses, I had fancied a Phaeacia.

( Ibid. p. 66)
This contrast between savage nature and courtly luxury is very
classic characteristic of romance, and, as we shall see, Raasay also
suggested a romance comparison. There is no doubt that, looking
at 'primitive' manners, Johnson to some extent equated ancient
Greek and feudal behaviour. He tells us that

like the Greeks in their
unpolished state, described
by Thucydides, the Highlanders,
till lately, went always armed.

(ibid. p.45) 1.

Johnson's fullest discussion of feudal jurisdiction demonstr-
ates clearly the ambiguity of his own response to it. After
describing the method of agriculture on Skye, and the system of
subordination, he summarises the condition of the people:

The inhabitants were for a long
time perhaps not unhappy; but
their content was a muddy mixture
of pride and ignorance, an in-
difference for pleasures which
they did not know, a blind vener-
ation for their chiefs, and a
strong conviction of their own
importance.

( ibid.,p.89)

There is no trace here of romanticising; however, as he develops
the statement, the affective balance changes:

1. Cf. parallels between Homer and 'romantic', Ch.5 above. Hurd
writes: 'There is a remarkable correspondency between the
manners of the old heroic times, as painted by their great
romancer, Homer, and those which are represented to us in
Their pride has been crushed by the heavy hand of a vindictive conqueror, whose severities have been followed by laws, which, though they cannot be called cruel, have produced much discontent, because they operate upon the surface of life, and make every eye bear witness to subjection. To be compelled to a new dress has always been found painful.
(ibid.)

Developing the idea of lost military dignity, Johnson's tone is gently ironic, rather than romantic:

An old gentleman, delighting himself with the recollection of better days, related, that forty years ago, a chieftain walked out attended by ten or twelve followers, with their arms rattling. That animating rabble has now ceased. The chief has lost his formidable retinue.
(ibid. 90)

But Johnson now begins to question the real wisdom of disarming a country whose geographical nature still makes it unsuited to central government. The dangers are still those of the fragmented feudal states of romance:

These islands might be wasted with fire and sword before their sovereign would know their distress. A gang of robbers... might lay a wide region under contribution. The crew of a petty privateer might land on the largest and most wealthy of the islands, and riot without control in cruelty and waste.
(ibid. 91)
These are all dangers which knights may be called in to avenge or avert. Pirates, or rovers, play a useful part in plot complication, kidnapping and transporting protagonists, and, as we shall see, the idea had a considerable hold on Johnson's imagination. What follows is perhaps the most striking presentation of his divided attitude to heroic militarism. First, we find the strong emotional attraction of an idealised chivalric state:

It affords a generous and manly pleasure to conceive a little nation gathering its fruits and tending its herds with fearless confidence, though it lies open on every side to invasion, where, in contempt of walls and trenches, every man sleeps securely with his sword beside him; where all on the first approach of hostility come together at the call to battle, as at a summons to a festal show; and...engage the enemy with that competition for hazard and for glory, which operate in men that fight under the eye of those, whose dislike or kindness they have always considered as the greatest evil or the greatest good.

This was, in the beginning of the present century, the state of the Highlands. Every man was a soldier who partook of national confidence, and interested himself in national honour. To lose this spirit, is to lose what no small advantage will compensate.

(ibid.)

1. Cf. eg. Orlando Furioso, Harrington XIII,54-6, for Hebridean pirates, 'barbarous and savage wights', who abduct Angelica to feed the Orc. Pirates play a significant part in Felixmarte de Vrcania, by abducting the hero's mother, and ensuring his birth in mysterious circumstances.
If this were Johnson's conclusion, he might properly be accused of a certain romanticism, but reason and compassion now draw the dark side of this attractive picture:

It must however be confessed, that a man, who places honour only in successful violence, is a very troublesome and pernicious animal in time of peace; and that the martial character cannot prevail in a whole people, but by the diminution of all other virtues. He that is accustomed to resolve all right into conquest, will have very little tenderness or equity. All the friendship in such a life can be only a confederacy of invasion, or alliance of defence....

Till the Highlanders lost their ferocity, with their arms, they suffered from each other all that malignity could dictate, or precipitance could act. (ibid, 92)

There are many stories of such atrocities in both accounts of the Scottish journey, and, as we have seen, they can be paralleled by stories of horrific cruelty in most romances, and the strongest arguments against romances have always been that they incited readers to violent action, while for those who praised their mirror function, this action was described as heroic. In the Life, Boswell draws attention to Johnson's divided feelings about war; he quotes Johnson as saying that
every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea....The profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness. (p.926)

But Boswell also quotes a letter in which Johnson writes that his godson

is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life...a soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption,

and Boswell continues such was his cool reflection in his study but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown. (ibid. 926-7)
3.3 'Sage and Solemn Tunes'[^1]: Scotland's heroic narrative.

i. The bards and Ossian

There many Minstrales maken melody,  
To drive away the dull melancholy,  
And many Bardes, that to the trembling chord  
Can tune their timely voyces cunningly,  
And many Chroniclers that can record  
Old Loues and warres for ladies done by many a Lord  
(Faerie Queen, I, v, 3)

Quoted for 'bards' in the Dictionary.

Although heroic valour was of central importance to his response to romance, Johnson enquired into many other customs and ceremonies associated with feudal life. He was baffled and disappointed by the unreliable nature of Highland evidence. Since that way of life was gone, the travellers were ‘willing to listen to such accounts of past times as would be given us' (Yale IX, 110). He had been told that the local history (which should have provided further evidence of the heroic reality of the recent past) had been preserved by the bards, 'of whom one is said to have been retained by every great family' (ibid. 111). Not only were these romantic figures in themselves, belonging as they did to the hierarchy of the courtly household, but they also furnished the heroic legends they figured in. Spenser, in the stanza quoted above, differentiates the roles of bards, minstrels and chroniclers.

[^1]: Il Penseroso, 1.117.
Percy, in his 'Essay on the ancient Minstrels' in the *Reliques*, traces their descent from the earlier bards:

> The MINSTRELS seem to have been the genuine successors of the ancient BARDS... who under different names were admired and revered, from the earliest ages ... by almost all the first inhabitants of Europe. (Vol.I,xv)

and many of his verse histories and ballads are described as having been sung by them. Many of these concern Scotland and the Borders, and the *Reliques* may well have helped to form Johnson's interest in the bards. Boece gives a less romantic picture than Percy's when he tells us approvingly that Macbeth had passed laws obliging fools, minstrels, bards and all such idle people to earn their living by some craft.¹

Johnson was first told that every great house had a bard, or poet, and a senachie, or historian; one old gentleman told him that he remembered one of each. Later enquiries led Johnson to conclude that both offices had died out some hundreds of years earlier, and he became increasingly sceptical about Erse literature, since there were neither stores of ancient manuscripts, nor even any family documents or letters in the language:

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After what has been lately talked
of Highland Bards, and Highland
genius, many will startle when
they are told, that the Erse never
was a written language.  
(Yale, IX, 114)

Although, as he grants, he does not know Erse, he maintains that
an oral language could never be polished, enriched, or in any way
improved.  Eloquence must die with the speaker, and, without
reading, a man cannot acquire the principles of reasoning, poetic
images, breadth of knowledge or elocution.

Johnson's strength of feeling on the subject of Macpherson's
Ossian is interesting.  The matter, heroic as it is, might have
been expected to appeal to him, but

The poem of Fingal[he told Dr. Maxwell]
was a mere unconnected rhapsody, a
tiresome repetition of the same images.

It had  neither end or object, design or moral.  
(Life, 443)

These are all faults shared by romance, and they did not prevent
Johnson from enjoying that; what Ossian lacks is the pace and ex­
citement of romance.  Its poetic circumlocutions slow down the
action, heroic boasting is veiled in negatives, and the language
is consciously archaic, with a heavy debt to the Old Testament.
There are no marvels in Ossian, no sorcerers or enchanters, no
magic weapons.  Above all, Ossian failed as a source of informa­
tion about manners.  There is little circumstantial detail in
the poems, no domestic life, no castles or armour.  Johnson told
Martin McQueen that he considered Macpherson's *Fingal* to be as gross an imposition as ever the world was troubled with. Had it been really an ancient work, a true specimen how men thought at that time, it would have been a curiosity of the first rate. As a modern production, it is nothing. (Tour, 320-1)

Johnson could read seventeenth-century versions of romance, like Shirley's abridged translations, with pleasure; he could enjoy Ariosto and Tasso, avowedly writing of events many centuries earlier, or Spenser, writing of fairyland in archaic language; the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries seemed close enough to feudal chivalry to satisfy the eighteenth century. Johnson's rejection of *Ossian* reflects the difference between him and Pennant. The strangeness, the poetic Celtic twilight, which Macpherson evoked, were enough to ensure the great popularity of *Ossian*. They continued the process of turning the Scottish landscape into 'classic ground' for romantic Englishmen, which we have noted in Collins' *Ode*. Macpherson's poems provided a native 'classical' literature, so that travellers could seek out Fingal's tomb on Arran as so many generations of Englishmen on the Grand Tour had visited Vergil's tomb in Italy. But for Johnson to be moved in this way, it was necessary for the literature to be genuinely ancient, or to have an established connection with the romantic past.
4. Macbeth

As we have seen, Macbeth did have 'classic' status: although neither Johnson nor Boswell allows himself such rhapsodies as Pennant does, it is clear that the imagination of both was strongly affected by the idea of Shakespeare's Macbeth, who was, moreover, an historical character, chronicled in Boece, and so linked to the northern past.

Long before the travellers reached sites associated with Macbeth, Boswell tells us that on their way to Monboddo 'It rained, and the scene was somewhat dreary', and that 'Dr. Johnson repeated with solemn emphasis, Macbeth's speech on meeting the witches' (Tour, p.207). Johnson's first mention of Macbeth in the Journey is far from solemn:

At Fores, we...entered upon the road, on which Macbeth heard the fatal prediction; but we travelled on, not interrupted by promises of kingdoms... (Yale IX, 25)

As we should expect, he adds nothing in his letter to Mrs. Thrale.

Boswell's account is fuller:

Dr. Johnson again solemnly repeated -

How far is't called to Fores? What are these,
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire?
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't?

He repeated a good deal more of Macbeth. His recitation was grand and affecting. (Tour, p.232)
Johnson went on to adapt the 'all hail' for Boswell's benefit, to his delight hailing him as 'Dalblair and Auchinlech'. It is an early example of Johnson's pleasure in playing Scottish roles. Hannah More, in her *Memoirs*, illuminates the strength of romantic feeling engendered by *Macbeth*. Johnson told her the following year:

> that when he and Boswell stopt a night on the spot (as they imagined) where the Wierd Sisters appeared to Macbeth, the idea so worked upon their imagination that it quite deprived them of rest. However, they learnt the next morning to their mortification that they had been deceived and were quite in another part of the country.

The 'mortification' may, perhaps, have been attributable not only to the travellers' disappointment, but also to a sense of their own romantic excesses; however, it also witnesses to the need Johnson felt for that historical certainty that *Ossian* failed to provide. Boswell himself reports that, having been to visit the corpse of a man hanging in chains, he found that Johnson's attempts to frighten him with the witches were only too successful (*Boswell, Journal*, p. 84).

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Johnson's account of Cawdor (Calder) Castle is dry and factual. He notes the drawbridge and moat, and the ancient tower, whose 'walls are of great thickness, arched on the top with stone, and surrounded with battlements' (Yale, IX, 26). Boswell adds some interesting detail, but the tone remains far soberer than Pennant's rhapsody. 'Macbeth's Castle' at Inverness roused some excitement, for Boswell at least: 'I have had great romantick satisfaction,' he wrote to Garrick,

in seeing Johnson upon the classical scenes of Shakespeare in Scotland...the situation of the old Castle corresponds exactly to Shakespeare's description.

(Tour, p.394)

A raven had obligingly perched on one of the chimney-tops, allowing Boswell the satisfaction of quoting from Macbeth 'the raven himself is hoarse...etc'. Boswell is delightedly conscious that he has the editor of Shakespeare on this classic ground, and that Garrick will envy him, and Garrick indeed responds: 'Your account of your journey to Fores, the raven, old castle, etc., made me half mad' (ibid. p.395).

Johnson remarks that the castle

stands upon a rock so high and steep, that I think it was once not accessible, but by the help of ladders, or a bridge.

(Yale, p.27)
Inaccessible castles are, of course, common in romance,¹ it adds greatly to the romantic attraction of Scottish castles that they are generally built on rock, often overlooking the sea, and very difficult to reach. Here again, the Scottish journey allowed Johnson to encounter in his own person what he had hitherto known only as romantic fiction. His excitement at treading the classic ground of Macbeth is very strongly associated with the landscape, the visual and emblematic setting of romance.

Johnson's choice of Macbeth for his earliest extended Shakespeare commentary, and his lengthy discussion of its supernatural elements, are a significant pointer to another romantic aspect of Scotland for which early narratives and histories had furnished evidence, the world of ghosts, folk-superstitions, phantom voices, and the second sight.

1. See Ch. II, pp.51-2, cf. also Orlando Furioso, Canto IV, St.12, 13, for a particularly spectacular castle, although Harrington compresses the description.
5. The Supernatural

In Johnson's discussions of the supernatural in Shakespeare, especially in Macbeth and Hamlet, there is an interesting tension between statements dismissing as childish the belief in ghosts and witchcraft, on the one hand, and, on the other, the appeal to the consensus of humanity, which is there supported by such weighty authorities as Hooker. Johnson's reputation for credulity was anxiously, though unconvincingly, refuted by Boswell.¹

In his final 'epitome' of Johnson, he claims that

he was prone to superstition,
but not to credulity. Though
his imagination might incline
him to a belief of the mar-
vellous and the mysterious,
his vigorous reason examined
the evidence with jealousy.

(Life, p.1399)

There is abundant evidence of Johnson's imaginative response to the idea of ghosts, and, like Addison, he brings the consensus of mankind to his support:

all argument is against it;
but all belief is for it.

(Life, p.900)

This ambivalence is characteristic of Johnson's response to many topics associated with romance; the martial hero, the Catholic Church, Jacobitism, and romance itself.

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¹ See, eg. Life, 288,472,951.
It seems likely that romance reading laid an early foundation for Johnson's interest in the supernatural, but Boswell suggests a more spiritual motive. When, in 1772, Mrs. Williams told him of an example of second sight in Wales

he listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated,

and Boswell remarks that

his elevated wish for more and more evidence of spirit, in opposition to the grovelling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions.

(Life, p.462)

The supernatural, in the form of witches, phantoms, prophecies and enchantments, is essential to romance narrative. If Johnson's enquiries in Scotland were to prove any of the wonders described by the earlier travellers, this would contribute further to his 'historical' reconstruction of romance as an accurate representation of feudal society.

The question of witches was raised early in the journey, hardly surprisingly, since Macbeth was so much in the travellers' minds. In Edinburgh, there was a discussion as to whether witches could raise storms; Johnson's conclusion was surprising:

Why, sir, if moral evil be consistent with the government of the Deity, why may not physical evil be also consistent with it? It is not more strange that there should be evil spirits, than evil men; evil unembodied spirits, than evil embodied spirits. And as to storms, we know that there are such things; and it is no worse that evil spirits raise them, than that they rise...
and he returns to the consensus argument: 'you have all mankind, rude and civilized, agreeing in the belief of the agency of preternatural powers' (Tour, p.187-8).

But, although Johnson may have gone to Scotland with his imagination heated by the idea of Macbeth's witches, there is little further mention of them outside that context, nor much in either account of the journey, about the superstitions, folklore, charms, magic wells and talking spirits which Martin reports. The only significant exception is the Black Stones of Iona. The main enquiry into the supernatural concerned the second sight, which Johnson defines as

an impression made either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant or future are perceived, and seem as if they were present.

(Yale, IX,101)

These 'romantic' dimensions of time and space may add to the interest of second sight for the observer, but Johnson's enquiries discovered that the seer himself has no choice in his visions: they are thrust upon him, and bring him no material advantage nor social prestige.

Johnson's emotional bias in this enquiry is made clear by one remark:

the Islanders of all degrees, whether of rank or understanding, universally admit it, except the ministers, who universally deny it, and are suspected to deny it, in consequence of a system, against conviction.

(Yale, IX,108-9)
Presbyterian ministers behave 'Whiggishly' in asserting material-istic scepticism, and Johnson castigates them (as he had castigated Soame Jenyns), because

by presuming to determine what is fit, and what is beneficial, they presupposed more knowledge of the universal system than man has attained.

(ibid. 109)

After a long discussion of the questions, Johnson ends: 'I never could advance my curiosity to conviction; but came away at last only willing to believe.' This attractive openness, although it may properly be read as empirical and philosophical, also indicates the emotional attraction that the supernatural had for him (ibid. 110).

Although, as might be expected, Johnson reacted strongly, even perversely, against reforming scepticism, the fact that even the sceptical Martin had assented to the second sight, must have reinforced its credibility. Undoubtedly, then, the presence of this extraordinary faculty, unknown to Anglo-Saxon England, helped to endow the Highlands with yet more romantic attraction for Johnson.
6. 'Wild objects, mountains, waterfalls.'

Precipices, marshes, rivers in spate, dangerous bridges, dreadful abysses, the houseless heath, and the rage of the elements. This is the catalogue of Will Marvell's imaginary terrors, which 'misses nothing of romantic danger but a giant and a dragon' (Yale II, 154) and these components of the landscape of Scotland play a very significant part in verifying the truth of gothic fictions for Johnson.

Although Johnson refused to apply the cant of the 'improver' or of the picturesque traveller, to landscape, his own descriptions of Ilam and Hawkestone demonstrate his response to the sublime and romantic extremes of landscape and his association of different landscape moods with literature. Although there are no passages of comparable elaboration in the various accounts of the Scottish journey, there is abundant evidence that Johnson was consciously in search of wilderness, not only in manners, but also in the landscape through which the quest journey passed. Boswell makes this clear early in his Tour. The travellers were offered a short cut through Lord Findlater's domain, which was, Boswell says, admirably laid out, but

Dr. Johnson did not choose to walk through it. He always said, that he was not come to Scotland to see fine places, of which there were enough in England; but wild objects, - mountains, - waterfalls, - peculiar manners; in short, things which he had not seen before.

(Tour, p.230)
Boswell, rather surprisingly, continues:

I have a notion that he at no
time has had much taste for
rural beauties. I have myself
very little.  

(Tour, p.230)

He is perhaps speaking of man-made landscapes; certainly, both
travellers respond to the combinations of natural features which
may compose a romance landscape, and Boswell demonstrates, at
Dunvegan and Auchinleck, his consciousness of what makes a proper
setting for a feudal castle.

At Gordon Castle, Boswell cannot present Johnson because he
does not know the Duke well enough, but remarks that 'we were at
any rate in a hurry to get forward to the wildness which we came
to see.' The attractions of 'venerable superstitious state'
might have offered a delaying romantic attraction, had 'this noble
family...still preserved that sequestered magnificence which they
maintained while Catholicks,' and the travellers might then have
'devoted some time to [its] contemplation ' (Tour, p.232 and note).

Johnson's imagination had already been struck by a number of
very suggestive scenes on the east coast. At Slains Castle,
'the rage of the elements' alone was missing:

We came in the afternoon to Slanes
Castle, built upon the margin of
the sea, so that the walls of one
of the towers seem only a contin-
uation of a perpendicular rock,
the foot of which is beaten by the
waves. To walk round the house
seemed impracticable. From the windows the eye wanders over the sea that separates Scotland from Norway, and when the winds beat with violence must enjoy all the terrifick grandeur of the tempestuous ocean. I would not for my amusement wish for a storm; but as storms...will sometimes happen, I may say, without violation of humanity, that I should willingly look out upon them from Slanes Castle.

(Yale, IX, 18-19)

Johnson was disappointed of his desire for sublime seas in the Hebrides as well; at Dunvegan, the travellers had...more wind than waves, and suffered the severity of a tempest, without enjoying its magnificence. The sea being broken by the multitude of islands, does not roar with so much noise, nor beat the storm with such foamy violence, as I have remarked on the coast of Sussex.

( Ibid. 69-70)

Boswell notes only one occasion where Johnson's desire for wild seas was gratified, where at Col 'the sea rose very high in foaming waves on the shore. Mr. Johnson contemplated it intensely'

(Journal, 266).

As we have seen, Johnson's imagination frequently projects what he sees to the extremes characteristic of romance. Although Slains Castle offers a noble prospect, it needs the added drama of the storm to complete it, in the same way that the traveller must be solitary, benighted, and without a guide to feel the full impact of the lighted castle; danger is an important element in these additions.

1. One extremely romantic landscape at Talisker suggests to Johnson shipwreck and tempest, with its trees, and 'its lofty hills streaming with waterfalls' (Ibid. 75).
From Slanes Castle, the travellers are taken to see

The Buller, or Bouilloir, of Buchan, which no man can see with indifference, who has either sense of danger or delight in rarity.

(ibid. 19)

Fear and danger are important elements in Burke's definition of the sublime, as they are, of course, in the pleasures of romance reading, and here Johnson deliberately courts the experience of terror. The Buller is 'a rock perpendicularly tubulated,' but the unwieldy language of natural philosophy gives place to the vocabulary of Johnson's metaphor. The rock is

United on one side with a high shore, and on the other rising steep to a great height, above the main sea. The top is open, from which may be seen a dark gulf of water which flows into the cavity, through a breach made in the lower part of the inclosing rock.

(ibid.)

Here is dreadful height, and here is the gulf. The travellers walk round the top, and Johnson savours the danger, which was clearly real:

The edge of the buller is not wide, and to those that walk round, appears very narrow. He that ventures to look downward sees, that if his foot should slip, he must fall from his dreadful elevation upon stones on one side, or into the water on the other. We however went round, and were glad when the circuit was completed.

(ibid. 19-20)
Boswell found the edge of the 'monstrous cauldron...somewhat horrid to move along', and was alarmed to see Johnson 'striding irregularly along'. (Tour, p. 222). Not content with this dangerous circuit, Johnson insisted on taking a boat to experience the Buller from inside:

We entered the arch...and found ourselves in a place, which, though we could not think ourselves in danger, we could scarcely survey without some recoil of the mind....We were enclosed by a natural wall, rising steep on every side to a height which produced the idea of insurmountable confinement. The interception of all lateral light caused a dismal gloom. Round us was a perpendicular rock, above us the distant sky, and below an unknown profundity of water. If I had any malice against a walking spirit, instead of laying him in the Red-sea, I would condemn him to reside in the Buller of Buchan.

(Yale IX, 20)  1.

Here, the image of a subterranean dungeon with an inaccessible opening in the roof is magnified to Piranesian dimensions. Imprisonment is almost as important a component of romance as the journey, and the scene most impressively illustrates such images of captivity in some gigantic edifice, of human smallness and powerlessness against either the giant or the enchanter. It is interesting that Johnson should think of captivity in this context, and Boswell reports his adding a further romance detail:

1. For this allusion to the walking spirits of the Red Sea, see note, ibid.
Dr. Johnson observed what an effect this scene would have had, were we entering into an unknown place.

(Tour, 223)

There are many such examples of Johnson's desire to imagine himself a solitary adventurer exploring untrodden ground. Now follows an entirely characteristic transition from the romantic to scientific observation:

But terror without danger is only one of the sports of fancy, a voluntary agitation of the mind that is permitted no longer than it pleases.

(Yale IX, 20)

This is also, of course, a definition of the pleasure of both romance and tragedy. The sublime, Burke supposes, evokes its powerful response from our sense of self-preservation, and is a pleasure only because we are not really in danger. Sudden terror, like sudden wonder, gives place to rational admiration, and, as here 'minute inspection', as the travellers remark on unexplored caves, and Johnson speculates as to their use as a refuge for 'the pirates of ancient times.'

Loch Ness 'was as sequestered and agreeably wild as could be desired,' Boswell remarks, 'and for a time engrossed all our attention' (Tour, 243). It had put Pennant in mind of Armida's 'Bower of Bliss', but for Johnson, the scattered little cornfields 'only served to impress more strongly the general barrenness' (Yale, IX, 30).
Boswell makes no mention of the next, far more spectacular, scene, the Fall of Fiers; Pennant had raised great expectations by his description of vast precipices and the awful roaring of water far below, and Johnson clearly came to it in receptive mood:

The country at the bridge
strikes the imagination with
all the gloom and grandeur
of Siberian solitude.
(ibid. 33)

Here, then, we are reminded of the ultimate northernness and isolation; Johnson's self-conscious pleasure in the poetically distancing effect of this evocation is underlined by the alliteration.

The falls are only reached by the 'trouble and danger' of clambering over 'very rugged crags,' but the travellers' adventurous persistence is rewarded:

We came at last to a place where we could overlook the river, and saw a channel torn, as it seems, through black piles of stone, by which the stream is obstructed and broken, till it comes to a very steep descent, of such dreadful depth, that we were naturally inclined to turn aside our eyes.
(ibid. 33-34)

The vocabulary suggests the primeval violence which formed the Falls. It is interesting that the instinctive reaction is to turn aside. On the Buller, Johnson had spoken of those 'who dare to look down.' Courage is necessary to enjoy sublime terrors. Unfortunately, they are not here complete; since the travellers
visited the place at an unseasonable
time, and found it divested of its
dignity and terror.

After the preceding passage, this is surprising, since such a
setting and such a descent seem to establish both. Having de-
cribed the present unimpressive state of the river, Johnson en-
gages in the usual projection of the actual towards a romantic
extreme:

We were left to exercise our thoughts,
by endeavouring to conceive the effect
of a thousand streams poured from the
mountains into one channel, struggling
for expansion in a narrow passage,
exasperated by rocks rising in their
way, and at last discharging all their
violence of waters by a sudden fall
through the horrid chasm.

It is a remarkably vigorous description, where the rivers struggle,
and the rocks rise up like assailants. The 'horrid chasm' is no
mere romantic hyperbole; the horror is certainly felt and en-
joyed, but the chasm is also 'rough, rugged'. The syntactical
pattern, where clause follows clause of agressive action, cor-
responds to many of Johnson's 'assailant' metaphors.

Pennant's description is more conventionally picturesque and
less idiosyncratic than Johnson's, with 'vast' cataracts and pre-
cipices, a 'darksome glen', and a 'chasm', though Johnson may
have borrowed 'discharging' from him (Tour, 1769, p.170).

The barren Highland moor had, at first sight, little charm for
Johnson, and he feels it necessary to apologise for describing
'this uniformity of barrenness'. The traveller might 'sit at
home, and conceive rocks and heath, and waterfalls', and the
reader might think
these journeys...useless labours
which neither impregnate the
imagination, nor enlarge the
understanding.

(Yale, IX, 40)

The argument is a little lame: until we compare descriptions
with realities, Johnson explains,

we do not know them to be just.
As we see more, we become possessed
of more certainties, and con-
sequently gain more principles
of reasoning, and found a wider
basis of analogy.

However, in a broad sense, the whole journey did exactly that.
It furnished Johnson with certainties of romance landscape and
feudal life where he had before had only second-hand or fictional
accounts.

The barren moor which had elicited this comment, between Aoch
and Glensheals, gave place to a green valley which suggested a
romance contrast to Johnson. It was 'not very flowery, but
sufficiently verdant'. This, the guides told them, was the
only place to pasture the horses 'because no grass would be found
in any other place.' Johnson, with a straight face, remarks that

the request was reasonable and
the argument cogent. We therefore
willingly dismounted and diverted
ourselves as the place gave us
opportunity.

His next comment tells us of one element lacking in the Scottish
landscape:
I sat down on a bank, such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign. I had indeed no trees to whisper over my head, but a clear rivulet streamed at my feet. The day was calm, the air soft, and all was rudeness, silence, and solitude.

(Yale, IX, 40)

The clearing in the forest, or the flowery meadow after the desert, where the knight (and his horse) refresh themselves is, as we have seen, a very significant element in romance plot. The Scottish scene was 'sufficiently' verdant, but not sufficiently flowery, and it lacked the pleasant grove, but it contrasted satisfactorily with the surrounding wildness¹, and Johnson continues:

Before me, and on either side, were high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging, forced the mind to find entertainment for itself. Whether I spent the hour well I know not; for here I first conceived the thought of this narration. (ibid.)

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¹ In 1783, Johnson describes a similarly pleasing scene to Queeny Thrale: 'I am here in a place which might furnish without any help from fiction the scene of a romance... the lawn and the hill, the thickets and the water, are almost equal to the fancy of a Troubadour' (Letters, III, 66).
One 'entertainment' he found for his mind was the idea of himself as a writer of romance, for this is what his 'narration' would be. He had already experienced enough of 'that peculiar form of life' to see the journey as a quest. The travellers and their guides were crossing the wilds alone 'where no wheel had ever rolled', in search of the romantic Western Isles, and the last of the feudal clan system. They had already seen ruined abbeys, Slains Castle, the country of Macbeth, spectacular landscapes. Moreover, they had that morning heard from Donald McQueen of 'that ill advised, but brave attempt' which ended at Culloden, and this had brought tears to Boswell's eyes (Tour, p.249).

However, Johnson was far from seeing himself as the invincible hero of romance. He goes on to his customary projection of the present into romance extremes, in a passage which tells us much of his response to artificial, as opposed to natural, landscape:

We were in this place at ease and by choice, and had no evils to suffer or to fear; yet the imaginations excited by the view of an unknown and untravelled wilderness are not such as arise in the artificial solitude of parks and gardens, a flattering notion of self-sufficiency, a placid indulgence of voluntary delusions, a secure expansion of the fancy, or a cool concentration of the mental powers.

(Yale, IX, 40-1)

It is precisely the 'artificial solitude of parks and gardens' which Johnson consistently rejects. Later eighteenth-century landscape gardeners attempted to create scenes which would evoke
distinct emotions, among them sublime horror, but Johnson's fancy
did not there expand sufficiently to suspend disbelief. In face
of the real danger of the Buller, he could enjoy fear, while re-
serving the right to turn back to safety: he could not be lost
in Shenstone's mazy woodland paths, nor fancy himself in the
limitless romance forest in the Duke of Gordon's domain, even
though both proprietors were trying to evoke a version of wild
nature. Johnson's syntax is elegantly balanced, in a way en-
tirely appropriate to the artful scene. 'Flattering' and 'secure',
in Johnson's usage, warn us of the dangers of 'voluntary delusion',
while 'a cool concentration of the mental powers' however desirable,
is very different from the ideas evoked by the Highlands:

The phantoms which haunt a desert
are want, and misery, and danger;
the evils of dereliction rush upon
the thoughts; man is made unwillingly
acquainted with his own weakness, and
meditation shews him only how little
he can sustain, and how little he can
perform.

( ibid. 41 )

The contrast between the artificial and the real solitudes is
startling. From classical cadences of control and balance, we
move to a violent scene whose images are unequivocally romantic,
moving between the real desert and the metaphorical assailants
which attack the wanderer's thoughts. He goes on to elaborate
this projection in a way which makes clear that he is not think-
ing of the poverty-stricken Highlanders, but of the wanderer:
There were no traces of inhabitants... whoever had been in the place where I then sat, unprovided with provisions and ignorant of the country, might, at least before the roads were made, have wandered among the rocks, till he had perished with hardship, before he could have found either food or shelter. Yet what are these hillocks to the ridges of Taurus, or these spots of wildness to the deserts of America.

( Ibid. 41)

Johnson's eye may have been prevented from wandering. His mind's range is towards sublime extremes of privation, of height, of extent, to more distant and exotic countries, as his mind plays on an archetypal romance situation, even while he is himself in a place suggestive of romance.

Johnson returns to this kind of projection several times on the Islands. It was above all the romance contrast between the dark and trackless waste, and the welcome of the lighted castle that impressed him, and these episodes will be dealt with in their context. But the Islands offered one more feature of romance landscape in great variety, the inhabited cave. Frequently stories either of clan warfare, of piracy, or, more rarely, heroic legends of Finn McCoul, were attached to these caves. Some of these caves were disappointing for one reason or another, but MacKinnon's cave on Mull fulfilled all the travellers' expectations. It had a most romantic legend attached to it:

\[\text{tradition says, that a piper and twelve men once advanced into this cave, nobody can tell how far; and never returned.}\]

(Tour, p. 383)
Pennant may have led the travellers to expect caves whose
'tops were lofty and resembled gothic arches.' (Tour, 1772,p.123),
and here Johnson found one

vaulted overhead with an arch
almost regular, by which a
mountain was sustained, at
least a very lofty rock.

(Letters, I, 380)

Johnson enjoys the idea of incalculable weight above him, as of
the un-measured profundity of the Buller. The travellers climbed
'from this magnificent cavern', through a passage 'obstructed
with great stones' to 'a second expansion of the cave, in which
there lies a great square stone, which might serve as a table.'
(In the Journey, he tells us that this was called Fingal's
table).

...The cave goes onward to an
unknown extent; but we were
now 160 yards
... underground; we had but
one candle, and had never heard
of any that went further and
came back. We therefore thought
it prudent to return.

(Letters, I, 381)

In the Journey, Johnson gives a further indication of his
image of himself as an explorer, saying that 'we had already gone
as far as any former adventurer...' (Yale, XI, 146), and Boswell
records the impression made by the cave: 'Dr. Johnson said this
was the greatest natural curiosity he had ever seen.' (Tour,p.384),
In this case, the imagined danger is already added to what is
seen, by the story of the lost piper, so no projection is neces-
sary.

1. For a living-cave, in which a stone table plays its part in a
heroic rescue, see Harington's Orlando Furioso, XIII,i, 37,38.
Both Boswell and Mrs. Thrale insist that Johnson was unmoved by the beauties of nature. We have noted, in this section, Johnson's response to landscapes which have romance associations. The Hawkestone description shows him capable of elaborating this response, and specifying its literary associations. But the return journey to Inverary demonstrates again how intensely he could be delighted by sublime or romantic excess, although here, too, he refuses to use the vocabulary of the picturesque tourist.

The travellers were benighted, but, as they were now on a good military road, they could enjoy the wild scene:

The night came on while we had yet a great part of the way to go, though not so dark, but that we could discern the cataracts which poured down the hills on one side, and fell into one general channel that ran with great violence on the other. The wind was loud, the rain was heavy, and the whistling of the blast, the fall of the shower, the rush of the cataracts, and the roar of the torrent, made a nobler chorus of the rough musick of nature than it had ever been my chance to hear before.

(Yale, IX, 158)

Here, at least, there was no need for romantic projection.

He wrote to Mr. Thrale:

I should have been sorry to have missed any of the inconveniences, to have had more light, or less rain, for their co-operation crowded the scene, and filled the mind.

(Letters, I, 382)
Auchinleck was a fitting end to Johnson's romantic quest, and lived up to his long-held feudal expectations. Lord Auchinleck, like other Scottish landlords, lived in a modern house. Johnson was

less delighted with the elegance of the modern mansion, than with the sullen dignity of the old castle. I clambered with Mr. Boswell among the ruins, which afford striking images of ancient life. It is, like other castles, built upon a point of rock, and was, I believe, anciently surrounded with a moat. There is another rock near it, to which the drawbridge,...is said to have reached.

(Yale, IX, 161-2)

Boswell's expectations of the visit to Auchinleck are expressed in his letter to Garrick:

Think what enthusiastick happiness I shall have to see Mr. Samuel Johnson walking among the romantick rocks and woods of my ancestors at Auchinleck!

(Tour, p.395)

This follows Boswell's description of the visit to Macbeth's castle, and shares the excitement, the 'romantick satisfaction'.

His description of Auchinleck in the Tour again underlines the peculiar appropriateness of finding Johnson in this romantic setting:
On one side of the rock on which [the castle's] ruins stand, runs the river Lugar, which is here of considerable breadth, and is bordered by other high rocks, shaded with wood. On the other side runs a brook, skirted in the same manner, but on a smaller scale. I cannot figure a more romantick scene.

(ibid. 417)

Here were not only the visual elements of romance, but rich historical associations. Johnson recounts one story:

Here, in the ages of tumult and rapine, the laird was surprised and killed by the neighbouring chief, who perhaps might have extinguished the family, had he not in a few days been seized and hanged, together with his sons, by Douglas who came with his forces to the relief of Auchinleck.

(Yale, IX, 162)

At Auchinleck, Johnson at last found the trees which had been missing in earlier landscapes:

Dr. Johnson was pleased when I shewed him some venerable old trees, under the shade of which my ancestors had walked. He exhorted me to plant assiduously.

(Tour, p.418)

Boswell only regretted that the ancient family chapel, the 'remains of sanctity', had been used to build the mediaeval house which had succeeded the castle.
Johnson found in Scotland much evidence of 'that peculiar form of life' which he had travelled in search of. He saw memorials of mediaeval sanctity and of feudal violence; he met eyewitnesses of the noble but misguided attempt to restore the romantic Stuarts; he saw the full range of romance landscape, and remarked on its associations. I would now like to consider more fully how Johnson's imagination was seized by the idea of himself as adventurer or romance traveller, and to show how enthusiastically he threw himself into that role.
7. Enacting 'The Fictions of Gothic Romances'.

The first essential for a knight errant is a weapon. Before the travellers set out, Johnson

from an erroneous apprehension
of violence...had provided a
pair of pistols, some gunpowder,
and a quantity of bullets.

(Tour, p.192)

Boswell assured him that these were unnecessary, and he left them in Edinburgh, keeping the large English oak stick, which figures, like Hercules' club, several times during the journey. It would be satisfying to know what assailants he imagined he would engage in single combat on his Northern Adventure.

A theme which recurs throughout the journey is Johnson's fantasy of owning an island. In 1772, he had already encouraged Boswell to buy St. Kilda, which was for sale (Life, 462). It is clear here, from his elaborated plans for the stores, the boat, the prefabricated house, that his imagination had been playing with this idea for some time. He offered to be Boswell's Lord Chancellor, or whatever he pleased. We have seen how the idea of Boswell as a feudal lord had attracted him; here he saw him as a king. When Boswell asked if he was serious, Johnson assured him of it.

1. Cf. Tour, p.211. 'When he took up his large oak stick, he said "My Lord, that's Homeric".' For the Scottish journey he also provided himself with the only pair of spurs he ever owned (Life, 1385n), and see also Life, p.1311, where Johnson arms himself with sword, belt and musket, to serve in the Militia.
Almost as soon as the travellers leave Edinburgh, Johnson is able to play this game again. Crossing the Firth of Forth, Johnson asks to land on Inch Keith

a small island, which neither of my companions had ever visited...
Here, by climbing with some difficulty over shattered crags, we made the first experiment of unfrequented coasts.  
(Yale, IX,3)

This is characteristic and engaging self-mockery. The island has a further attraction, a ruined fort, with an inscription to Mary Queen of Scots. Johnson reflects on how assiduously the island would be cultivated and adorned if it were near London.

Another engaging episode early in the journey helps to establish Johnson's frame of mind. At Aberdeen, Boswell tells us,

He laid hold of a little girl,... and representing himself as a giant, said, he would take her with him! telling her, in a hollow voice, that he lived in a cave, and had a bed in the rock, and she should have a little bed cut opposite to it.  
(Tour, 214)

Here, Johnson had been talking of the need for the Scots to come to England to gain polish, and it was for the child's education that he proposed to kidnap her.1

1. See Chap.2, pp.20 and 37, for kidnapping mentors in romance.
As the travellers entered the Highlands, Johnson's sense of knight errantry was greatly increased; they were now to travel on horseback, and Johnson underlines this with an appropriate word: 'We mounted our steeds on the 30th of August' (Yale IX, 30).

At Fort Augustus, Mr. Trapaud, the governor, treated the travellers with 'that courtesy which is so closely connected with the military character' (ibid. 34). This surprising generalisation must surely be linked to chivalry. Johnson was very interested in fortifications, although he hesitated to comment on those of Fort Augustus and Fort George. It may have been the idea of military life which encouraged him to distribute money to a party of soldiers they met on the road. Boswell tells us

he was saluted 'MY LORD' by all of them.... He is really generous, loves influence, and has the way of gaining it. He said 'I am quite feudal, sir.'

(Tour, p.246)

This leads Boswell to regret that though he is not himself a patriarchal chief, related by blood to his clansmen, he is, however, resolved that he will at least be a feudal one. A similar example of feudal largesse occurred at Glenshiels where Johnson distributed money to a number of children:

the people were much pleased, [very] gave us many blessings, and said they had not had such a day since the old Laird of Macleod's time.

(ibid. p.251)
Boswell continually encourages Johnson's role-playing.

He was pleased when I told him
he would make a good Chief. He
said 'were I a chief, I would
dress my servants better than
myself, and knock a fellow down
if he looked saucy to a Macdonald
in rags...'.

(ibid. p.251)

Although Johnson had enjoyed the hospitality of Lord Errol at
Slanes Castle, his first encounter with a true Highland Laird
was at Armadale, on Skye. Here he and Boswell carried their
feudal game to extraordinary lengths:

Sir Alexander Macdonald having
been an Eton scholar, and being
a gentleman of talents, Dr. Johnson
had been very well pleased with
him in London. But my fellow-
traveller and I were now full of
the old Highland spirit, and were
dissatisfied at hearing of racked
rents and emigration; and
finding a chief not surrounded
by his clan, Dr. Johnson said,
'Sir, a highland chief should
not be allowed to go farther
south than Aberdeen...in general,
they will be tamed into insig-
nificance.

(Tour, p.254-5)

It is significant that to Johnson's compassion and distress for
the plight of poor Highlanders should be added the romantic re-
gret for the decline of heroic wildness and benevolent feudalism.

Two days later, the game is pushed further:
My endeavours to rouse the English-bred Chieftain in whose house we were, to the feudal and patriarchal feelings, proving ineffectual, Dr. Johnson this morning tried to bring him to our way of thinking.—

Johnson 'were I in your place, sir, in seven years I would make this an independent island. I would roast oxen whole, and hang out a flag as a signal to the Macdonalds to come and get beef and whiskey.' — Sir Alexander was still stating difficulties. — Johnson 'Nay, sir; if you are born to object, I have done with you. Sir, I would have a magazine of arms.' — Sir Alexander 'They would rust!' — Johnson 'Let there be men to keep them clean. Your ancestors did not use to let their arms rust'.

We attempted in vain to communicate to him a portion of our enthusiasm. He bore with so polite a good-nature our warm, and what some might call Gothic, expostulations, that I should not forgive myself were I to record all that Dr. Johnson's ardour led him to say.

(Tour, p.256)

Sir Alexander treated this insistence as joking, but there is evidently a very strong emotional charge behind Johnson's game of re-creating the romantic past. Although the travellers were disappointed in their host (whose meanness was notorious), one surviving feature of feudal life pleased Johnson:

As we sat at Sir Alexander's table, we were entertained, according to the ancient usage of the North, with the melody of the bagpipe.
Ceremonial music plays an important part at the courts and castles of romance. Arrivals and departures are heralded by fanfares. Meals are brought in to trumpets, and trumpets accompany the hunting-parties. Dancing and singing require music, and the bard or minstrel sings heroic song to entertain the noble company as they dine. The bagpipes of the Hebrides were a reminder of these customs; moreover they had very ancient romantic associations of their own. At Armadale, Johnson is told the history of a lament that the piper is playing; as he says, 'everything in this country has its history', and this tune had been played by a piper as his clan set fire to a church containing their enemies. This horrible story recalls comparable savage cruelty in romance. Here, at least, Johnson is hearing heroic story as he dines, and comments that

narrations like this, however uncertain, deserve the notice of a traveller, because they are the only records of a nation that has no historians, and afford the most genuine representation of the life and character of the ancient Highlanders.

(Yale, IX, 50)

When Johnson is describing the few pleasures of the islanders, he includes the 'solace' of the bagpipes, although these, too, are threatened, and he records the hereditary office of piper, and the pipers' college in Skye. He ends his discussion of the bagpipes by remarking:
I have had my dinner exhilarated
by the bagpipe, at Armidel, at
Dunvegan, and in Col.

There can be little doubt that this strange, ancient and
threatened instrument powerfully affected Johnson for reasons
not purely musical, and Boswell tells us that 'Dr. Johnson appeared
fond of it, and used often to stand for some time with his ear
close to the great drone' (*Tour*, p. 372).

From Armadale, the travellers were to cross to Raasay, but
they spent another night on Skye, at Coirechatachan, where
Mckinnon, a tenant of Sir Alexander's, entertained them. To
cross the island, they were again led by Highlanders. Since the
bogs were unsafe,

the journey is made generally from
precipice to precipice; from which
if the eye ventures to look down,
it sees below a gloomy cavity,
whence the rush of water is some-
times heard.

(*Yale*, IX, 53)

Though Johnson immediately tells us that there is 'more alarm
than danger' in these journeys, it is often clear that his
imagination played on the potential hazards.

After the travellers' contention with Sir Alexander Macdonald,
they had been confined by weather to Slate, and there Johnson had
written the first of two Latin odes on Skye. The first stresses
the contrast between the wild journey and the haven:
Enclosed in the deep recesses
of the sea, howling with gales,
beset by rocks, how welcome,
misty Skye, do you open your
green bay to the weary traveller.
Care, I do believe, is exiled
from these regions; gentle
peace surely dwells in these
places: no anger, no sorrow
plans traps for the hours of
rest. But it is no help to
a sick mind to hide in a hollow
crag or wander through trackless
mountains or count the roaring
waves from a rock...

(Poems, p.150)

Stoicism, he says, is not enough: only God can calm 'the onrush
of the stormy heart.' Johnson's second ode, 'De Skia Insula'
written at Coirechatachan, stresses the bleakness of the island,
and its lack of fertility 'where the life of fierce men, dignified
by no culture, is but ugly squalor' (ibid. 152).

These wild landscapes, as the first ode suggests, provided
a striking contrast to the warmth and light of the travellers'
welcome and it is this contrast which most clearly suggests
romance to Johnson. In wilderness after wilderness, we find his
mind wandering to the condition of the knight errant, the lonely
wanderer, forced 'to tread the dreary paths without a guide.'

Commenting on the lack of inns in the Hebrides, Johnson is
again intensely aware of what might be a traveller's condition:

He that wanders about these wilds,
either procures recommendations
to those whose habitations lie
near his way, or, when night and
weariness come upon him, takes the
chance of general hospitality.

(Yale IX,54 )
His frequent use of words like 'wanderer', 'rover', even 'rambler', suggest, not a pilgrim, progressing to a known goal, but a knight errant in search of adventure, who must also, of course, 'take the chance of general hospitality.'

The sea crossing to Raasay struck Boswell as heroic; Malcolm Macleod, the hero of the '45, came over to fetch them, and sang an Erse song as they rowed. Later the boatmen also sang, and Johnson observed that naval music was very ancient. He 'sat high on the stern,' Boswell writes

\begin{quote}
like a magnificent Triton....Here I was strongly struck with our long projected scheme of visiting the Hebrides being realised. I called to him, 'We are contending with seas;' which I think were the words of one of his letters to me. \\
\end{quote}

To land on Raasay, the travellers had to clamber with great difficulty over rocks. A flight of stairs might have been made, but Johnson wondered whether

\begin{quote}
for many ages, it was not considered as a part of military policy, to keep the country not easily accessible. The rocks are natural fortifications, and an enemy climbing with difficulty, was easily destroyed by those who stood high above him.\cite{Yale, IX, 59}
\end{quote}

The romance contrast is clearly evident at Raasay; although the house was modern, Johnson here found many of the elements of courtly life: 'We found nothing but civility, elegance, and plenty'.

After dinner, there was dancing,

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\begin{refnote}
1. \textit{Tour}, p.265. The phrase Boswell refers to, 'I hope the time may come when we may try our powers both with cliffs and waters,' gives further evidence that the wild landscape made a significant part of Johnson's expectations \cite{Life, p.454}.
\end{refnote}
...nor did ever fairies trip with greater alacrity. The general
air of festivity, which predominated in this place, so far remote from
all those regions which the mind has been used to contemplate as
the mansions of pleasure, struck the imagination with a delightful
surprise, analogous to that which is felt at an unexpected emersion
from darkness into light.

( ibid. )

Thirtysix people sat down to supper at two tables, itself a
splendidly feudal scene. Johnson's account to Mrs. Thrale of
his entertainment plays with the idea of Raasay as an independ-
dent kingdom. In this he was encouraged by their companions:

we were introduced into the house,
which one of the company called
the Court of Raarsa, with politeness,
which not the court of Versailles
could have thought defective.

(Letters, I, 361-2)

Although Lady Macleod 'makes no very sublime appearance
for a sovereign', they had three sons and twelve daughters, and

all Raasay's daughters were pretty, especially the eldest
daughter, who, appropriately, was a celebrated beauty, while
Lady Raasay was at least a good housewife. After supper, the
ladies sang Erse songs:

to which I listened as an English
audience to an Italian opera, de-
lighted with the sound of words which I
did not understand.

(Yale, IX, 59)
but although one was a love song, and one the farewell of an
emigrant, Johnson was disappointed that they could not be trans-
lated, and comments:

What sentiments would rise, on
such an occasion, in the heart
of one who had not been taught
to lament by precedent, I should
gladly have known. (ibid) 1.

In spite of this further failure of Highland information, he
said of this little court that 'more gentleness of manners, or a
more pleasing appearance of domestic society, is not found in the
most polished countries,' and Boswell remarks that he was 'so
delighted with this little scene, that he said "I know not how we
shall get away" (Tour, p.267). As we have seen, he compared
Raasay to Phaeacia; enchanting and enchanted paradises in which
the hero is detained are, of course, common to classical and
romance narrative.

Raasay had all the elements of romance: a ruined chapel,
an island hermitage and a ruined castle, even if not an impressive
one. Moreover, the late laird had led out a hundred fighting
men in 1745; Johnson, who is usually discreet in his written com-
ment on the subject, used this as the basis for a computation of
the population. Boswell is more frank:

1. He may have been reminded of Miranda's 'effusions of untaught
affection' in another romance scene (Yale, VII, 135).
In Rambler 186 and 187, his own dwellers in the northern re-
moteness of Greenland, Ajut and Anningait, command a finished
style of poetical rhetoric.
What a princely thing it is to be able to furnish such a band!
Raasay has the true spirit of a chief. He is, without exaggeration, a father to his people.

(Tour, p.271)

At Raasay, they met Macleod, the 20th chief of that clan, who invited them to Dunvegan. Though they had moved from one princely household to another, this was their first approach to a habitable castle. Boswell records its full romantic grandeur:

The great size of the castle, which is partly old and partly new, and is built upon a rock close to the sea, while the land around it presents nothing but wild, moorish, hilly and craggy appearances, gave a rude magnificence to the scene.

(ibid. p.297)

In the Journey, Johnson describes it more coolly. The new house forms two sides of a square, but on the third is the skeleton of a castle of unknown antiquity, supposed to have been a Norwegian fortress, when the Danes were master of the Islands. It is so nearly entire, that it might have easily been made habitable, were there not an ominous tradition in the family that the owner shall not long outlive the reparation.

(Yale, IX,68.)

Johnson and Boswell continually urged their Highland hosts to return to their feudal castles. Here at least, this romantic prophecy provided an excuse for their failure to do so. Johnson's account to Mrs. Thrale, rather unusually, makes clear the romantic ideas the castle and its landscape evoke:
The place at which we now are, is equal in strength of situation, in the
wildness of the adjacent country, and in the plenty and elegance of the
domestic entertainment, to a castle in Gothick romance. The sea with a
little island is before us; cascades play within view. Close to the house
is the formidable skeleton of an old castle probably Danish and the whole
mass of building stands upon a protuberance of rock, inaccessible till
of late, but by a pair of stairs on the sea side, and secure in ancient
times against any enemy that was likely to invade the Kingdom of Skie.

(Letters, I, 353)

In terms of landscape setting, of a sense of the gothic past and
its violence, the catalogue is remarkably complete, and the contrast is stressed between the wildness of setting and the luxury
of the courtly life.

At Dunvegan, as at Raasay, Johnson is very conscious of
the feudal past. In the Journey, he describes the dangers of
which people were afraid:

not only of declared wars and
authorised invaders, of roving
pirates, which, in the northern
seas, must have been very common;
but of inroads and insults from
rival clans, who, in the plenitude
of feudal independence, asked no
leave of their Sovereign to make
war on one another.

(Yale, XI, 68)

The stress is again on the anarchic and dangerous society common
to romance and to the romantic past of Scotland.
Johnson illustrates the savagery of clan feuds by two stories of vengeance carried out by the Macleods, and tells briefly of 'some traces of former manners, and...some standing traditions (Yale IX,70). Boswell's account, however, shows how these had excited Johnson's imagination: Dunvegan had its heroic figure, Roderick Macleod, known as Rorie More, or great Rorie, not from his size but from his spirit. Properly, he had a heroic possession, a drinking-horn, appropriate to the lord of a Danish castle, and as might be expected, a tradition attached to it. It held a bottle and a half, and

\[
\text{every Laird of Mieod,...must, as a proof of his manhood, drink it off full of claret, without laying it down.}
\]

(Tour, p.300)

Not only Rorie More's drinking-horn, but his armour, were of heroic proportions

- we also saw his bow, which hardly any man now can bend, and his Glaymore, which was wielded with both hands, and is of prodigious size. We saw here some old pieces of iron armour, immensely heavy.
- The broadsword now used, though called the Glaymore,...is much smaller than that used in Rorie More's time.

(ibid.)

This is, of course, a common theme in heroic narrative from Homer onwards. The narrator, looking back to the heroic days of his youth, deplores the degeneration of contemporary youth, so that there is always a sense of distance and loss. Boswell underlines this decline by commenting that
there is hardly a target now
to be found in the Highlands.
After the disarming act, they
made them serve as covers to
their buttermilk barrels.

(Tour, p.300)

Johnson took a great interest in Highland weapons. In the
Journey he describes them in some detail, ending:

The dirk or broad dagger, I
am afraid, was of more use
in private quarrels than in
battles....

After all that has been said
of the force and terrouf of
the Highland sword, I could
not find that the art of defence
was any part of common education.
The gentlemen were perhaps some-
times skilful gladiators, but the
common men had no other powers
than those of violence and courage.
Yet it is well known, that the on-
set of the Highlanders was very
formidable...men accustomed only
to exchange bullets at a distance,
...are discouraged and amazed when
they find themselves encountered
hand to hand, and catch the gleam
of steel flashing in their faces.

(Yale IX, 113-4)

In renaissance romance, it is not uncommon to lament the invention
of gunpowder, which puts an end to all chivalry. To underline
the change, Johnson continues:

the Highland weapons gave opportunity
for many exertions of courage,
and sometimes for single combats in the
field; like those which occur so fre-
quently in fabulous wars,

(ibid. 114)
and he gives an illustration of two such combats at the battle of Falkirk.

Boswell records a conversation at Dunvegan which shows how Johnson's imagination played on Highland weapons:

I think the heavy glaymore was an ill-contrived weapon. A man could only strike once with it. It employed both his hands, and he must of course be soon fatigued with wielding it; so that if his antagonist could keep playing a while, he was sure of him. I would fight with a dirk against Rorie More's sword. I could ward off a blow with a dirk, and then run in upon my enemy. When within that heavy sword, I have him; he is quite helpless, and I could stab him at my leisure, like a calf.

(Tour, p. 313)

This recalls innumerable conflicts between knights and giants. In these, as we have noted, the normal heroic position is reversed. The hero is no longer stronger than his adversary, and must depend on his wits. If Rorie More is a giant, Johnson must use superior intelligence and agility to overwhelm him. It is pleasing to think of Johnson, who generally sees himself as a giant or a Hercules in his heroic role-playing, adopting the role of nimble giant-killer.

At Dunvegan, Boswell and Johnson harried Lady Mcleod, who wanted to build a house on a farm five miles from the castle, where she could make a garden. Boswell, while allowing this, insisted that the castle should still be the family seat. Lady Mcleod, not unnaturally, complained of the difficulties of house-keeping at Dunvegan; it was 'a Herculean labour to make a dinner there,' and she asks:
must we have no more convenience
than Rorie More had? He had his
beef brought to dinner in one
basket, and his bread in another...
(Ibid, p.308)

She goes on, with great spirit, to complain that

it is very well for you, who
have a fine place and everything
easy, to talk thus, and think of
chaining honest folks to a rock.
(ibi

Perhaps she had Angelica, another Hebridean victim, in mind.

Johnson seconds Boswell 'with a strong voice, and most determined
manner':

'Madam, rather than quit the old
rock, Boswell would live in the
pit; he would make his bed in
the dungeon.' - I felt a degree
of elation, at finding my resolute
feudal enthusiasm thus confirmed
by such a sanction.
(ibi

Macleod of Dunvegan joined in the feudal game by offering
Johnson the Island of Isay, on condition that he would reside
in it for three months every year. Offers of islands are com-
mon rewards of valour in romance, and Macleod may well have
thought he had a Quixote and a Sancho Panza under his roof.

In the Journey, Johnson only says that the weather had pre-
vented them from visiting the offshore islands, and that he 'was
particularly desirous to have visited Isay,' but does not explain
his reason. In his letter to Mrs. Thrale, however, his delight
in the game was clear:
Macleod has offered me an Island, if it were not too far off I should hardly refuse it; my Island would be pleasanter than Brighthelmston, if you and ' Master could come to it, but I cannot think it pleasant to live quite alone...That I should be elated by the dominion of an island to forgetfulness of my friends at Streatham, I cannot believe...

(Letters, 1,353-4)

Boswell expands Johnson's account:

Dr. Johnson was highly amused with the fancy. I have seen him please himself with little things, even with mere ideas like the present. He talked a great deal of this island; how he would build a house there, how he would fortify it, how he would have cannon, how he would plant, how he would sally out and take the Isle of Muck; and then he laughed with uncommon glee, and could hardly leave off...M'leod encouraged the fancy of Dr. Johnson's becoming owner of an island; told him that it was the practice in this country to name every man by his lands, and begged leave to drink to him in that mode: 'Island Isa, your health!'

The rest of the company joined in the toast, while 'Dr. Johnson bowed to each, with great good humour' (Tour, p.327). Boswell does not seem to connect the enthusiasm with which he and Johnson had played the Scottish feudal game with this new manifestation of it. It is noticeable how much more romantic Johnson's fantasies have become since Inch Keith. There, he had planned to have a garden, vines, and all sorts of trees; and his plans for St. Kilda had been still more utilitarian. At Isay, he is to be a Highland Chieftain, not a mere Colonist. He is to avail himself of unchivalric weapons, and turn aggressor; is it, perhaps,
a giant's role he is playing here? His friends had always been
disconcerted by Johnson's outbursts of uncontrollable laughter
(Life, 548-9, 637). Here, surely, the 'uncommon glee' relates
to Johnson's lifelong emotional identification with a romance
role. Played out in this way, it appears to have liberated him.

It was perhaps this glee which prompted him to say

I cannot but laugh to think of
myself roving among the Hebrides -
at sixty. I wonder where I shall
rove at fourscore.

(Tour, p.346)

Johnson was delighted with Dunvegan, where, he said, he had
'tasted lotus' (Yale, IX, 71). As we have seen, he uses Homeric
images interchangeably with romance ones. That the associations
are not mutually exclusive is clearly demonstrated by a reflection
that Johnson made after the journey from Talisker to Corriechatachan.

He begins with a characteristic identification with the errant
traveller:

We staid however so long at Talisker,
that a great part of our journey was
performed in the gloom of the evening.
In travelling even thus almost without
light thro' naked solitude, when there
is a guide whose conduct may be trusted,
a mind not naturally too much disposed
to fear, may preserve some degree of
cheerfulness; but what must be the
solicitude of him who should be wan-
dering, among the crags and hollows,
benighted, ignorant, and alone?

(ibid. 77)
Again, Johnson is contrasting his present security with the state of the knight looking for shelter as evening falls on the wilderness or the forest, in danger as he is of assailants of every kind. Johnson's next paragraph puts the connection beyond doubt:

The fictions of the Gothick romances were not so remote from credibility as they are now thought. In the full prevalence of the feudal institution, when violence desolated the world, and every baron lived in a fortress, forests and castles were regularly succeeded by each other, and the adventurer might very suddenly pass from the gloom of woods, or the ruggedness of moors, to seats of plenty, gaiety, and magnificence. Whatever is imaged in the wildest tale, if giants, dragons and enchantment be excepted, would be felt by him, who, wandering in the mountains without a guide, or upon the sea without a pilot, should be carried amidst his terror and uncertainty, to the hospitality and elegance of Raasay and Dunvegan.

(ibid.)

The passage clearly demonstrates that Johnson identifies the feudal period with romance, even though chivalric legend may choose as subject a sixth-century British king, or Charlemagne and his peers. Johnson was now steeped in 'the feudal institution', and had heard numerous accounts of desolating violence;
he had seen the fortresses, and heard how his host's ancestors had lived contemptuous of any law but that of arms. But 'whatever is imaged in the wildest tale' does not normally include the 'terror and uncertainty' of the hero. Here intrudes the identifying reader, who, when perusing Shakespeare 'looks round alarmed and starts to find himself alone' (Yale, VII,63). Since the setting of romance indispensably includes the forest, this may explain why Johnson grew so disproportionately and tediously indignant over the lost Caledonian Forest. The passage shows, moreover, what some commentators have failed to realise. The comforts of civilization which Johnson finds here are not primarily connected in his imagination with eighteenth-century London, but with the luxurious courts of chivalry. He was still to amass a great deal more evidence of 'that peculiar form of life.'

Donald Maclean, the young Laird of Col, was one of the most attractive characters the travellers met. Johnson was delighted with his feudal spirit:

Wherever we roved, we were pleased to see the reverence with which his subjects regarded him...
He has the proper disposition of a chieftain, and seems desirous to continue the customs of his house. The bagpiper played regularly, when dinner was served.  
(ibid.129)

The old castle had been abandoned;
It is built on a rock, as Mr. Boswell remarked, that it might not be mined. It is very strong, and having been not long uninhabited, is yet in repair. (ibid. 133).

There had been a stone in the wall, they were told, with a characteristically romantic inscription:

If any man of the Clan of Maclonich shall appear before this castle, though he came at midnight, with a man's head in his hand, he shall there find safety and protection against all but the King. (ibid.)

Boswell's Journal gives a very lively picture of Johnson's enthusiasm for investigating old castles:

Mr. Johnson examined all this remaining specimen of ancient life with wonderful eagerness, and Boswell goes on to describe the towers, parapets and battlements in some detail, and remarks that Johnson insisted on exploring everything, even though he had to unbutton his waistcoat to squeeze into one narrow passage (Journal, p.266).

Johnson may have been particularly encouraged to play his feudal games at Col by his host's genial high spirits: Boswell reported that at Inchkenneth, Johnson showed so much the spirit of a Highlander that he had won Sir Allan's heart,
indeed, he has shown it during
the whole of our Tour. - One
night, in Col, he strutted about
the room with a broadsword and
target, and made a formidable
appearance: and, another night,
I took the liberty to put a large
blue bonnet on his head. His age,
his size, and his bushy grey wig,
with this covering on it, pre-
- sented the image of a venerable
Senachi: and, however unfavourable
to the Lowland Scots, he seemed
much pleased to assume the appear-
ance of an ancient Caledonian.
(Tour, p.379)

It seems more probable that Johnson saw himself here in some
more gallant and active role than that of a bard, a 'champion of
literature'.

When the weather at last allowed the travellers to leave Col,
they went by way of Ulva to Mull, and so to Inchkenneth. Johnson's
appetite for islands was prodigious: at Dunvegan, Boswell tells
us:

Dr. Johnson was this morning for
going to see as many islands as
we could.... He said to me 'I
have more the spirit of adven-
ture than you.'

(ibid. p.337)

The Island of Inchkenneth particularly pleased him. There
they stayed in the house of Sir Allan Maclean, the chieftain of
the great Clan of Maclean, and here, the romance connection is
again explicit:
Romance does not often exhibit
a scene that strikes the imagina-
tion more than this little desert
in these depths of western obscurity,
occupied not by a gross herdsman, or
amphibious fisherman, but by a gen-
tleman and two ladies, of high birth,
polished manners, and elegant con-
versation, who...practised all the
kindness of hospitality, and refine-
ment of courtesy.

(Yale, IX, 142-3)

Although the house was modest, 'we entered, and wanted little
that palaces afford.' Later, Johnson told Boswell that 'where-
ever we have come, we have been received like princes in their
progress.' In the passages where Johnson makes explicit refer-
ence to romance, it is the contrast between wildness and courtly
civility, between gloom and gaiety, which most impresses him.
The barrenness of the Highlands, undiversified by forest or
flowery meadow, intensified this contrast. We have seen how
much Johnson's sense of Inchkenneth was increased by his reverence
for its sacred ruins; on the Sunday they spent there, Mrs. Maclean
read the evening service, and Johnson, in his description to Mrs.
Thrale, quotes from *Eloisa to Abelard*: 'and paradise was opened
in the wild.'¹ The experience led Johnson to write another latin
ode, in which he celebrates Saint Kenneth and the island's early
sanctity, the ancient house of Maclean, and the two daughters,
'Quas amor undarum fingeret esse deas', (whom love might imagine goddesses
of the waves). The language suggests a classical comparison, but
he goes on to distinguish Inchkenneth from the

¹. You raised these hallowed walls, the desert smiled,
   And paradise was opened in the wild.
cold caves such as the savage dweller
by the Danube has

and praises the soft comforts of life, the book and the lyre. He
praises the piety of the household, and asks

where further do I wander?
What is sought everywhere is
here: here is carefree rest
and here is honourable love.

(Poems, p.152-3)

It is a considerable change of mood from the Ode to Skye that
Johnson had sent to Mrs. Thrale.

From Inchkenneth, Johnson and Boswell travelled to Iona.
There, they were again pleased to see the islanders' devotion
to Sir Allan Maclean, who was their chief. An islander, rated
by Sir Allen for not having brought him some rum, later told
Boswell 'I would cut my bones for him: and if he had sent his
dog for it, he should have had it' (Yale, IX,152; cf. Tour, 387).
Both travellers were evidently struck by this half-comic but
touching protestation of feudal devotion.

Mull, on the way back from Iona, brought them to

a country of such gloomy desolation,
that Mr. Boswell thought no part of
the Highlands equally terrorsick.

(Yale, IX,153)

The end of this journey was the Castle of Lochbuy,

where we found a true Highland
Laird, rough and haughty, and
tenacious of his dignity.

(ibid.)
This is one of four different images of Lochbuy, who had acquired
the stature of a romance figure.

    We had heard much of Lochbuy's
    being a great roaring braggadocio,
    a kind of Sir John Falstaff, both
    in size and manners,

Boswell writes,

    but we found that they had
    swelled him up to a fictitious
    size, and clothed him with
    imaginary qualities.

    (Tour, p.390)

Whatever we may think of this as a description of Falstaff,
Lochbuy clearly had a quality which attracted myth. Boswell
continues:

    Col's idea of him was equally
    extravagant, though very different:
    he told us, he was quite a Don
    Quixote, and said, he would do
    a good deal to see him and Dr.
    Johnson together. 1.

It would be interesting to know whether Col expected
Johnson, the rational public moralist, to provide a striking
contrast to Lochbuy's extravaganza, or whether he hoped that
Johnson, the passionate feudalist and player of romantic games,
would find in Lochbuy a congenial spirit, so that they would en-
courage each other into further Quixotic flights; the latter
seems more probable. Boswell's own account is less respectful than
Johnson's:

1. Ibid. 391. For the eighteenth-century association of Falstaff
    with Quixote as humorists, see Corbyin Morris,'Essay towards
    fixing the True Standards of Wit...' 1744. Augustan Reprint
    Society, No. 4, ed. J.L.Clifford, and Stuart Tave, The Amiable
    Humorist.
Lochbuy proved to be only a bluff, comely, noisy old gentleman, proud of his hereditary consequence, and a very hearty and hospitable landlord.

(ibid. p.390)

There are certainly Falstaffian elements here, but there is also good reason to describe him as a Quixote. Some years before, he had imprisoned a number of people in his dungeon, for which he had to pay a considerable fine. He was cheerfully unrepentant about his disgrace, and, as Sir Allen told Boswell, 'the laird could not be persuaded that he had lost his heritable jurisdiction.' (ibid. p.391). Boswell takes up the Quixote idea with enjoyment:

We were told much of a war-saddle on which this reputed Don Quixote used to be mounted; but we did not see it, for the young laird had applied it to a less noble purpose, having taken it to Falkirk fair with a drove of black cattle,

(ibid.391)

a highly appropriate juxtaposition of the heroic and the mundane. In Johnson's version of Lochbuy, this mockery is quite absent, and it is followed by Johnson's longest discussion of Scottish Castles, an unromantic, factual commentary on their structure, uses, siting, and means of defence. In his role as judicious observer, Johnson, having told us that Lochbuy has 'like the other insular chieftains, quitted the castle that sheltered his ancestors', remarks that though modern Highland houses are not very spacious or magnificent, they
bear testimony to the progress of arts and civility, as they show that rapine and surprise are no longer dreaded, and are much more commodious than the ancient fortresses.

(Yale, IX,154)

Lady Maclean would have been gratified. Johnson had given much serious study to fortification and siege warfare. Bennet Langton, with whom Johnson spent a week at Warley Camp in 1778, wrote of 'the disposition which...he constantly manifested towards enquiring into subjects of a military kind.' (Life, 1001). Here, he wonders why Scottish castles had so commonly been sited on the coasts, since they were more vulnerable to invaders here than inland,

some convenience, however, whatever it was, their position on the shore afforded; for uniformity of practice seldom continues long without good reason.

The Island castle, he tells us,'is only a single tower of three or four stories.' These are not the palaces or immense strongholds of romance, but their strength is impressive. Under the conditions of clan warfare, where raids, rather than prolonged sieges, were the rule

The walls were always too strong to be shaken by such desultory hostilities; the windows were too narrow to be entered, and the battlements too high to be scaled.

The vulnerable gates were protected by a cavity above them, through which stones and boiling water could be poured, and 'the castle of Lochbuy was secured by double doors, of which the outer was an iron gate.' (ibid. 154-5).
A solitary knight's approach to a castle is always a moment of great dramatic significance, as we have noted in many contexts, and iron gates are a significant part of his ordeal. Highland warfare differed from the set-piece sieges of much romance, and Johnson's description shows an imaginative working-through of the probabilities of this rather different form of attack.

Johnson goes on to describe the dungeons: it would be difficult to underestimate their importance in romance, and in Johnson's imagination. We have seen how tyrannical captivity pervades his metaphor, and noted what elements of romance this reflects. Johnson's description of the Buller of Buchan indicates that the idea is present to his mind there. In every castle, there is

a deep subterraneous cavity, walled on the sides and arched on the top, into which the descent is through a narrow door, by a ladder or a rope, so that it seems impossible to escape, when the rope or ladder is drawn up.

(Yale, IX, 155)

Johnson recounts a dreadful story of captivity from James VI's time. One Hugh Macdonald conspired to kill his chieftain; he was pardoned once, but, persisting in his treason, was imprisoned in the dungeon:

when he was hungry, they let down a plentiful meal of salted meat; and when, after his repast, he called out for drink, conveyed to him a covered cup, which, when he lifted the lid, he found empty. From that time they visited him no more, but left him to perish in solitude and darkness.

(ibid. p.74)
There can be few people to whom the idea of that death would appear more terrible than to Johnson, who would use any means to shorten the tormented hours of solitude and darkness, and for whom the idea of stagnating 'in vacuity' held such horrors.

The whole tone of Johnson's commentary on the Scottish castles is rationally historical and un-romantic. Here, he is not imposing chivalric fiction on what he sees, as Pennant sometimes does, but behaving as a responsible scientific traveller. So much the more convincing, then, is the passage that follows, very close to the reflection made at Talisker:

> These castles afford another evidence that the fictions of romantick chivalry had for their basis the real manners of the feudal times, when every lord of a seignory lived in his hold lawless and unaccountable, with all the licentiousness and insolence of uncontested superiority and unprincipled power. The traveller, whoever he might be, coming to the fortified habitation of a chieftain, would, probably, have been interrogated from the battlements, admitted with caution at the gate, introduced to a petty monarch, fierce with habitual hostility, and vigilant with ignorant suspicion; who according to his general temper, or accidental humour, would have seated a stranger as his guest at the table, or as a spy confined him in the dungeon. (ibid. p.155-6)

We see again how essential are the elements of unaccountability and unpredictability to both historical and fictional feudal worlds, and how this contributes to the tension of the knight's arrival. Johnson's progress from architectural and military observations to this conclusion is clear evidence of the significance of the Scottish journey.
In the four accounts of this journey, Johnson's letters to the Thrales, and his published Journey, and Boswell's Journal and Tour, it is possible to discover two narratives. One concerns the public figure, the didactic essayist, critic and lexicographer, who travels, improbably, to the Western Isles of Scotland, at the age of sixtythree. His contemporary public image could approach that of a Quixotic humorist, idiosyncratic, combative, physically unwieldy. He is essentially urban and 'national' and encounters lacks and hardships in Scotland that confirm these prejudices.

Beneath the external and superficial narrative which concerns this popular Johnson, lies Johnson's own interior narrative of a romance quest, in whose light every experience is evaluated or added to. One version of this quest is intimated by Boswell: it appears that he cherished a number of romantic images of Johnson which achieved their confirmation in Scotland. First, Johnson's deep piety and his strong emotional response to the idea of mediaeval sanctity, particularly in opposition to reforming iconoclasm, satisfied Boswell's own romantic attachment to the idea of Catholic piety. This image was reinforced by Johnson's response to Elgin and Aberbrothick and to the many ruined chapels on the Islands, and completed when Boswell saw his 'great and pious friend' on Iona.
Secondly, Boswell saw Johnson as editor and expositor of the 'romantic' Shakespeare, and the letters to and from Garrick imply a particular emotional charge in Boswell's 'romantick satisfaction' in seeing Johnson at Macbeth's castle, the 'classic ground' of the most romantic of the major plays. Thirdly, Boswell is delighted by the idea of Johnson as a Jacobite, and again, he describes the sight of Johnson with Flora Macdonald as 'romantick'. Finally, he is 'elated' to find Johnson at Auchinleck: he 'cannot imagine a more romantick scene', and it gives him particular pleasure that Johnson should be there. In each case, Boswell seems to feel some peculiar appropriateness which is not altogether explained in the text.

For Johnson himself, although contemporary Scotland furnished him with remarkable evidence of the historical truth of romance, as I have indicated, he constantly supplies what is missing, in order to create a full romance situation. So, in his response to 'the remains of religious magnificence' all through the journey, it is clear that his imagination supplies the saintly monks and hermits of the mediaeval church and of romance, and that the idea of devotion inspires in him feelings of intense veneration and 'mournful pleasure.'

Johnson's additions to landscape also illustrate most vividly his romance model: at Slains, the castle on its precipitous rock requires a storm at sea to complete the romance image. The Fall of Fiers requires a furious cataract to elevate
the 'horrid chasm' to violent sublimity. The green valley near Anoch, already 'such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign', lacks the forest which should contrast with the pleasant clearing: to these scenes, further solitudes of still greater wildness are added by ideas of Siberia, Taurus, and 'the desarts of America.' But both there and on Skye, a still more significant element is added, the solitary and errant traveller, 'wandering in the mountains without a guide', benighted in the desert, haunted by 'phantoms', and dependent on 'the chances of general hospitality.' This is not the invincible knight errant, but a contemporary traveller, capable of being frightened when he finds himself enacting a romance role.

The relinquished feudal castles of the Macdonalds, Col and Lochbuy, and the skeletons of the castles at Dunvegan and Auchinleck, as well as the ruined cathedrals and chapels, were continual reminders of this underlying narrative. The travellers' half-serious urging that their hosts should resume their feudal dwellings and functions makes clear how insistently it is present to both. Romantic projections impose on the journey fantasies of the discovery of untrodden ground, and the ownership of islands. These are more or less elaborated for St. Kilda, Inchkeith, and, above all, Isay, and include the mock-romantic trip to Sandiland; there is an insistent and recurring sense that Johnson is conscious of himself as appearing in a narrative.
Many romantic additions to this narrative are, of course, supplied by the accounts of earlier historians and travellers, and by stories of clan violence, gallant single-handed defence of caves, and pipers disappearing for ever, and of these, the figure of Rorie More is the most satisfying, and provokes Johnson to add physical participation, by dressing up in targe, broad-sword and bonnet, and by imagining a combat with that 'giant'.

In Johnson's overt affirmations of the truth of romance there are two degrees of distancing, the first to 'romantic' history, in 'the full prevalence of the feudal institutions,' and the second to romance itself, with the missing 'giants, dragons and enchantments.'

The combination of these two narratives in which Johnson himself enacted the adventurer's role, triumphantly vindicated a life of romance reading; the claims of his mediaevalist friends were justified, the 'manners' of romance, in the widest historical sense, were validated, and Johnson's imagination was fed with uniquely satisfying material.
Any attempt to summarise Johnson's response to the romance of chivalry and to the 'romantic' in literature and in lived experience confronts us with paradox. His comment that the belief in the supernatural machinery of romance 'infected the imagination of those that had more advantage in education, though their reason set them free of it' (Life, 1077), may approach a self-diagnosis, in the context of his praise of romance for its 'fertility of invention', 'beauty of style and expression,' and for the historical insight it gives into the 'age and country' from which it originated. As I have noted, this is rather different from Rambler 4, where the power of romance to influence even its youthful readers is discounted, with no approving counter to 'this wild strain of imagination' beyond its capacity to 'amuse'.

It is in Johnson's response to the romantic elements in Shakespeare that the greatest inconsistencies remain. Shakespeare is the universal genius, whose innocent primitive eye, like Homer's, takes its 'sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge', unmediated by literary preconception and prescription, but who nevertheless concurs so happily with the romance-corrupted temper of his age that he is indebted to it for the 'licentious variety by which he has made his plays more entertaining than those of any other author.' Shakespeare, who 'holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life', is also 'under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions', producing 'that incredibility by which mature knowledge is offended', and yet, 'such is the power of the marvellous even over those who
despise it, that every man feels his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than by any other writer'. (Preface to Shakespeare, *Yale* VII: see chapter five).

This unwilling captivity to the marvellous and the sensational in Shakespeare, and to the rapid changes of his action, which succeed in 'securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity', remains a constant criterion in Johnson's literary criticism, and manifests itself most strikingly sixteen years later, in his commentary on Dryden, especially on *The Conquest of Granada*, and the 'illustrious depravity' of its scenes. I have noted a similar disparity between Johnson's pronouncements on Spenser's style, and his use of *The Faerie Queene* in the *Dictionary*, and in his disparagement of old ballads for their 'lifeless imbecillity', and his 'importunity' that the Folio Manuscript should be published.

Outside the field of literary criticism, similar ambivalences exist in Johnson's pronouncements on religious retirement and the Catholic Church, and, closely connected to this, his enthusiastic response to the Stuarts and the Jacobite cause. The journey to Scotland also illustrates his strong attraction to the idea of heroic feudalism, and his sober qualifications of this attraction.

These few examples illustrate the ambivalence of Johnson's responses, in both word and action, to the romantic, and I have noted his bias towards the romantic or Quixotic alternative, even
in the many cases where wild temerity, source of both vices and virtues in youth, is balanced against the prudential alternative dictated by mature reason.

Johnson's consistent use of quest metaphors, his images of siege, seduction, assailants, and imprisonment, and his frequent application of these to 'the heroes of literature', support my contention that he sees himself as errant, whether as a 'northern adventurer' and a 'general challenger', or as 'a lonely wanderer in the wilds of life', who is abandoned to the stream of chance. Still more powerful, perhaps, in Johnson's sense of the human condition, is the obverse of this vision, in which Everyman is Quixote, deluded by splendid or ludicrous dreams, and doomed to bathetic reversal, while yet persistently travelling from hope to hope.
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<td><strong>Yale IX</strong></td>
<td><em>A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland</em>, ed. Mary Lascelles (1971).</td>
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Johnson attributed to his 'immoderate fondness' for reading romances of chivalry 'that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession'. I have given evidence for his acquaintance with 'all our English romances', with Iberian romances like *Amadis de Gaule* and *Palmerin of England*, and with a wide range of romance-linked literature, including the heroic romances of Tasso, Ariosto, and Spenser.

This reading influenced Johnson both biographically and in his writing and criticism. He saw himself as a 'general challenger', one of the 'heroes of literature'. Much of his metaphor is drawn from romance: the *Dictionary* illustrations show an interesting proportion of romance associations, and the definitions give networks of meaning connecting significant words. I have illustrated the most influential elements of construction and vocabulary from the romances Johnson read.

The mock-romantic Quixote pattern of enthusiasm followed by reversal dominates *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *Rasselas*, and many Essays, but Johnson's sympathy is nearly always for youth and temerity, as against 'frigorifick wisdom'. Quixote, the Astronomer and Johnson are closely and sympathetically linked. All men are victims of 'the dance of airy images' conjured up by errant imagination.

Johnson was drawn to romantic excess in literature, the 'illustrious depravity' of Dryden's heroic drama, Pope's gothic *Eloisa to Abelard*, and especially to 'the power of the marvellous' and the 'licentious variety' of Shakespeare, to the 'enchantresses of the soul' which 'enchain the heart' in defiance of criticism.

The Scottish and Welsh journeys gave evidence that 'the fictions of the gothick romances had for their basis the real manners of feudal times', and allowed Johnson to enact the role of adventurer, among ruined abbeys, castles, wild landscapes, with supporters of the 'romantic' Stuarts.