

NOTES ON *LONDON*

Epigraph: 'Who is so willing to put up with the foolish city, who so iron of soul as to contain himself?' – a quotation from Juv. 1.30-31; but Juvenal wrote, not *ineptae* (foolish), but *iniquae* (unjust or wicked) – a much stronger word. Probably just a slip on J's part.

2 Thales: traditionally understood as Thales of Miletus (early 6th cent. B.C.), a pioneer of Greek natural philosophy. If this is right, the name typifies 'the wise man'; and that is all J's reader was expected to know. The further suggestion, in Bloom (1), that J took the name specifically from Juv. 13.184-5, where Thales is spoken of as 'a gentle soul' (*mite ingenium*), is only a remote possibility; for there Thales exemplifies the philosopher who calmly accepts crime and injustice. A more recent proposal, in Bate (2) 172, is that Thales recalls the Greek lyric poet of the 7th cent. B.C. whom Lycurgus is said to have brought from Crete to Sparta (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 4). His odes induced such harmony and obedience that he was thought of as a kind of law-giver. On this view J's Thales has been rejected by the community which he sought to civilize. This is more plausible, for (unlike Juv.'s Umbricius) J's Thales is a poet (260ff.), though not a lyric poet, and Plutarch's *Lives* were familiar to J's readers. But certainty is impossible.

Another question is whether J's picture of Thales was influenced by the case of his friend, the poet Richard Savage, who left London to live in Swansea in July 1739. This was after the publication of *London*, but Savage's departure may have been proposed long enough before to have entered J's mind. Retrospectively, at least, he seems to have associated the two figures; for in the Dict. under sense 2 of 'dissipate' he quoted a sentence from his *Life of Savage* and then under sense 3 quoted v.20 of *London*. All this, however, does not justify the crude equation of Thales with Savage – an equation which J. himself denied and which, even after 1739, would have been quite unnecessary for an understanding of the poem. See on 69-70 and 81 below.

3-4 Oldham had

Though much concern'd to leave my dear old Friend,
I must however his Design commend

(*Poems and Translations*. By the Author of *The Satyrs upon the Jesuits*, London 1683, 180.)

4 The compressed antithesis combines two ideas: 'I praise his decision to become a hermit' and 'I regret the loss of my friend'.

Hermit: here not literally an anchorite, but one who leads a solitary life; cf. 'cell' (49).

5 Who now resolves: strictly speaking Thales had already made his decision. The reading 'Resolved at length' (1787) removes this negligible blemish but involves a less

straightforward syntax, for 'Resolved' must be in the accusative (or objective) case agreeing with 'friend' rather than in the nominative with 'I'.

7-8 **Fix'd**: not 'determined', but 'settled'; cf. Juv.'s *sedem figere* (2). In his *Polyolbion* 5.333-43 (a poem which J admired) Drayton had referred to 'holy David's seat' in 'Cambria'.

True Briton: Thales' withdrawal is a sign of his patriotism. Juv.'s Umbricius leaves 'the Greek metropolis' for Cumae, a Greek colony. If irony was intended by Juv. the point is not obvious.

9-10 **Hibernia's land**: Ireland. The periphrasis carries the idea of 'wintry' (Lat. *hibernus*), which balances 'the rocks of Scotland'.

Strand: there is a play on 'strand' (as opposed to 'rocks') and 'Strand' (the London street). J. has expanded the geography of Oldham:

The Peake, the Fens, the Hundreds, or Lands-end,

I would prefer to Fleetstreet, or the Strand. (181)

When J. first arrived in London, he had lodgings off the Strand 'in an upper room of a house in Exeter St., behind Exeter 'change, inhabited by one Norris a stay-maker', Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*, 57. Boswell was wrong to regard J.'s lines as an example of anti-Scottish prejudice; for the sense is 'Ireland and Scotland are grim, but London is a lot worse'.

13-17 T. S. Eliot criticized these lines as lacking in authenticity. See 'Johnson as Critic and Poet' in *On Poetry and Poets*, London 1957. No doubt there is some overstatement (though less than in Juv.), but the features mentioned can all be abundantly documented. In 1738 many areas of London, especially the older districts, were still highly dangerous. See George 81-4, Plumb 13-22, Weinbrot 166-9.

16 **Fell**: cruel and inhuman.

Attorney: an officer of the Common Law Court. As attorneys were often overzealous in applying the harsh Settlement and Vagrancy laws, they were hated by the poor. Fielding called them 'pests of society'. See Turberville i, 309-11. J.'s 'attorney' may have been prompted by Boileau's *le Sergent*:

Allons du moins chercher quelque antre ou quelque roche,

D'ou jamais ni l'Huissier, ni le Sergent n'approche.

(*Sat.* 1.25-6)

17 **Falling houses**: 'Two things are conspicuous in the London of the eighteenth century.

One, the number of old ruinous houses which frequently collapsed', George 73; see also 74-5.

18 In its bathos this is designed as a parallel to Juv.'s 'poets reciting in the month of August'. The idea of killing may owe something to *paene enecabant* in Schrevelius' note, but it is better to recall Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (624):

Nay, fly to Altars; there they'll talk you dead.

19 **Wherry**: a light river-boat which will take Thales out to his ship. See 255.

20 **Dissipated**: Thales has been unable to bear the exorbitant cost of living in London.

There can hardly be any hint of condemnation here, for Thales is a virtuous man. For the sense cf. 'spent' in 256.

21-4 J. had lodgings in Greenwich for a short period in the summer of 1737. *London*, however, was written at no. 6, Castle St., near Cavendish Square, not at Greenwich.

22 One might have expected a contrast, as in Juv., between squalid present and more attractive past, but the contrast in J. is a *political* contrast. The scene at Greenwich is *not* squalid, and it is a mistake to find overtones of commercial greed in 'the silver flood'.

23 **Struck**: strongly impressed.

Eliza: Queen Elizabeth was born at Greenwich. Nostalgia for the Elizabethan age was widespread among Walpole's critics, especially in the circle of Bolingbroke; see Kramnick's index under *Elizabeth*.

27 **Cross**: the cross of St. George.

Main: the high seas. For the sentiments compare Arne's 'Rule Britannia', which was heard for the first time in the musical drama *The Masque of Alfred* (1740).

29 **Masquerades**: masked balls.

Excise: by the bonded warehouse system imported goods were kept in a warehouse until sold to retailers, when a duty was paid. This was applied to tea, coffee, and a few other commodities in 1723; ten years later Walpole proposed to extend the scheme to cover wine and tobacco, hoping to use the revenue to abolish the land tax. But the opposition played on people's fear of government interference, and the idea was eventually dropped.

30 See on 53-4 below.

33-4 Dryden had:

Then thus Umbricius, with angry frown

And looking back on this degen'rate town. (37-8)

This does not correspond to anything in Juv., but the speaker's anger had already been made explicit by Boileau (*Sat.* 1.19-20) and Oldham (181).

36 In Juv. 1.74 worth is praised – and shivers (*probitas laudatur et alget*); in J. it lacks even this amount of tribute.

37 **Devote**: devoted.

38 **Science**: men engaged in intellectual work.

Unrewarded...in vain: an intentional pleonasm used for emphasis.

39 **But sooths**: soothes but.

40-42 Note the alliteration, which is not merely a decorative device but enforces the sense.

40 **Moment**: the subject of 'leaves'.

42 **Revels**: not 'delights', but 'runs riotously'.

45 **Osiers**: willows.

47 **Harrass'd Briton**: a reference to the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the 5th and 6th centuries. The new invasion turns out to be French.

49 **Cell**: the word, which can mean any small dwelling, does not imply that Thales is actually going to become a solitary monk; but like 'hermit' (4) it has religious overtones.

- 50** The monosyllabic name was never supplied. X has adapted to London as a worm adapts to dirt. J. may have had in mind
Que George vive ici, puisque George y sait vivre
(Boileau, *Sat.* 1.34)
in which case the shaft is aimed at George II.
- 51 Pensions**: J. was indignant at the allowances dispensed by Walpole, but many years later (1762) he accepted a pension himself.
- 52 Patriot**: at this time the name belonged to a heterogeneous group of Whigs and Tories, led by Pulteney and Bolingbroke. (For a fuller list see Grant Robertson, 53.) These men, who included some very able writers, attacked Walpole in plays, pamphlets, ballads, and especially in *The Craftsman*. They found an ally in the Prince of Wales, who was on bad terms with the king and had set up a separate court at Leicester House in 1736.
- 53-4 Dear-bought rights**: Probably J. means commercial rights. Since 1713 England was entitled to supply Spanish colonies with negro slaves and to send one ship a year to trade at Cartagena or Vera Cruz. When these rights were illegally extended by British merchants the Spaniards retaliated by conducting searches in mid ocean, often with considerable violence. This and other causes led to a crisis. Walpole, who was anxious to settle the differences by negotiation, was vilified as an appeaser. J. himself notes sarcastically 'The invasions of the Spaniards were defended in the houses of Parliament'. Newcastle, Pitt, and the rest of the opposition were bent on war, which finally came in 1739 (the War of Jenkins' Ear). See Williams 207-10, Grant Robertson 77-80 and Appendix 3.
In the face of day: in broad daylight.
- 55** 'It is impossible to taint a body already poisoned.' This objection was made by William Mudford in 1802 and by William Shaw before him. In fact J. has used a Latin construction whereby the adjective 'poison'd' is proleptic – i.e. taken before its time. The sense is 'taint our youth so that it becomes poisoned'.
- 58 Farm a lottery**: 'Even the Government exploited the universal craze for gambling by raising state lotteries, which were patronized by all classes in society' (Turberville i, 355).
- 59 Warbling eunuchs**: the *castrati* of Italian opera, which was then in fashion.
A licens'd stage: Walpole's Licensing Act (1737) was a response to repeated attacks on the government over the previous decade by Gay, Fielding, and others. It limited the number of theatres, and required that all plays and operas should be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain at least a fortnight before they were due to open. See P. J. Crean, 'The Stage Licensing Act of 1737', *Modern Philology* 35 (1937-8) 239-55. The original reading was 'our silenc'd stage', which involved a contradiction after 'warbling'. In any case, by 1748, with Walpole dead and Garrick manager at Drury Lane, the idea of 'silenc'd' was inappropriate. Yet the reading was restored in 1787.
- 60 Thoughtless**: too stupid to care.
- 61 Pride**: objective case.
- 65 A groaning nation's spoils**: spoils taken from a groaning nation. The 1st ed., and that of 1787, had 'the plunder of a land is given' – a lighter and less tightly packed expression.

- 66 Public crimes**: crimes against the people.
- 69-70** 'I can hardly refrain from showing up a poet as second-rate and derivative, even though he has a title and writes in praise of the court.' In Horace, *Epist.* 1.3.18-20 Celsus is advised to rely more on his own resources – otherwise the birds may come to reclaim their plumage and the poor crow will become an object of ridicule. This is an adaptation of the Aesopic fable found in Babrius 72 and Phaedrus 1.3. J. may well be referring to Cibber, who became poet laureate in 1730; cf. the ironical passage in J.'s *Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage* (1739), where the writer imagines 'those Halcyon-days in which no politicks shall be read but those of the Gazetteer [cf. v.72] nor any poetry but that of the Laureat'. This, however, does not prove the equation Thales = Savage, even though the latter resented Cibber's appointment and set himself up as 'Volunteer Laureate'. All it means is that Thales shares Savage's (and others') dislike of Cibber and is sorely tempted to expose his inadequacies.
- 72 Gazetteer**: *The Daily Gazetteer*, founded in 1735, was the official newspaper of Walpole's government.
- 73** One who spends half his allowance on clothes.
- 74 H——y's**: traditionally identified as John, Lord Hervey (1696-1743), Walpole's supporter and confidant of the queen, known to Pope's readers as 'Sporus' and 'Lord Fanny'. But Greene (307-8) argues strongly for John, 'Orator' Henley (1692-1756). Preacher, exhibitionist and wit, Henley was employed by Walpole in 1730 to ridicule *The Craftsman* in a periodical called *The Hyp Doctor*. For a full study see G. Midgeley, *The Life of Orator Henley*, Oxford 1973.
'Clodio's' was substituted in the 1787 edition, by which time Hervey and Henley were both long dead. As 'Clodio' was derived from the Lat. *claudus* (lame) it suited a feeble wit, and it was in line with other 'significant' names like 'Orgilio' and 'Balbo'. It is not clear, however, that Hawkins had J.'s authority for the change.
- 79 Rustick**: used here, not without irony, to suggest the simple, wholesome country as opposed to the false, over-sophisticated city. Cf. Boileau: *Je suis rustique et fier, et j'ai l'ame grossiere* (*Sat.* 1.50).
- 80 Puzzle**: to complicate and so obscure.
- 81 Spy**: Savage was accused of spying for Pope (*Lives of the Poets* ii, 362, ed. Hill); but where there are factions there are always informers (cf. 252 below), and so here, too, it is best to see Thales as a figure who shares certain views and experiences with Savage.
- 83** Here, for variety, the antithesis is presented in chiasmic order – ABBA.
- 83-4** Friendship of this kind is based on complicity and the mutual fear of exposure. 'Social', from Lat. *socialis*, means 'pertaining to companionship', hence 'shared'; but the phrase 'social guilt' looks like an original stroke of wit.
Orgilio: a name implying arrogance (Italian *orgoglio*, French *orgeuil*). The obsolete 'orgillous' is given in the Dict. See on 208.
- 86** See Marlborough and Villiers (2) in list.
- 89 Self-approving**: having a good conscience. Smugness is not implied; cf. *se probare* in, e.g., Horace, *Sat.* 1.1.109.

91 The favourites who prosper, thanks to the nation which they cheat. Partly Italians, but mainly French.

92 The antecedent of 'who' is 'the great'.

94 **Shore**: Oldham had

the Common-shore

Where France does all her Filth and Ordure pour (185).

It seems that J. came to regard 'sewer' as the more correct form (see Dict. under 'shore'); in any case 'sewer' was substituted in editions after 1758. The later reading also avoided the ambiguity of 'shore'. Cf. Dryden (110-11):

Obscene Orontes, diving under ground,
Conveys his wealth to Tyber's hungry shores.

98 As in more recent times, French elegance was regarded with a mixture of admiration and suspicion. In this respect the French provided a suitable counterpart to Juv.'s Greeks. Greece, however, did not present any military threat to Rome, whereas French power under Cardinal Fleury had been allowed to develop as a result of Walpole's foreign policy. Anti-French feeling was widespread. 'The London populace still continued its traditional hostility to foreigners, who were generally classed indiscriminately as French' (George, 133). Yet the fascination remained. For an illustration of the popularity of French fashions see the passage quoted by J. H. Plumb in *Sir Robert Walpole: the Making of a Statesman*, London 1956, 28-9.

99 **Edward**: see list.

Realms of day: heaven, earth being a dark vale of sin and woe.

102 **Surly grace**: here, as in 'surly virtue' (145), 'surly' is best understood as 'rough'.

103 'Lost' agrees with 'warrior' (104). For 'thoughtless' see on 60.

104 The warrior has dwindled to a beau, who (sense, freedom, and piety having been refined away) is the mimic of France etc. 'Refined away' is ironical, since the expression is normally used of impurities. Dryden had
Your herdsman primitive, your homely clown
Is turn'd a beau in a loose tawdry gown. (119-20)

108 **Gibbet**: gallows.

Wheel: a method of execution used in France before the revolution, when it was replaced by the guillotine. The victim was spreadeagled, and then as the wheel revolved his bones were broken with an iron bar. Sometimes the executioner was ordered to finish the prisoner off; the blows were then called *coups de grâce*.

112 **Fond**: foolishly well disposed.

114: **Clean shoes**: cf. Oldham (186):

Foot-boys at first, till they, from wiping Shoes,
Grow by degrees the Masters of the House.

Clap: gonorrhoea, 'the French disease'. Note the descending order of accomplishments.

115 **Fasting Monsieur**: Oldham (186) had 'A needy Monsieur'.

116 **Go to hell**: by putting *in caelum . . . ibit* (78), 'he will mount to the skies', Juv. had in mind simply a physical absurdity. Dryden (141) wrote 'And bid him go to heav'n, to heav'n he goes', which implied instead a religious injunction. J. saw that this could be improved, for no Englishman ever told anyone to 'go to heaven'.

117-8 Cf. Oldham (187)

Then, pray, what mighty Privilege is there
For me, that at my Birth drew English Air?

119 **Right**: object of 'to prize'. Britons have forfeited their birthright (i.e. liberty) by surrendering to the flattery of the French.

120 **Henry's victories**: Agincourt (1415) and other victories over the French, leading to the Treaty of Troyes (1420). For Henry see list. J. may have in mind the patriotic recollection of St. Crispin's day as foreseen by the king in Shakespeare's *Henry V* 4.3.51ff., especially v. 56: 'This story shall the good man teach his son.'

121 A satirical version of Horace's famous words

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit (*Epist.* 2.1.156)

Greece, on being captured, took her rough conqueror captive.

122 Early editions read

And what their armies lost, their cringes gain?

This was a little untidy in that one had to apply 'their' to the French after understanding 'conqueror' of the English. Hence, presumably, the alteration. Later, in 1787, Hawkins (on whose authority?) read 'prevails' instead of 'subdues', perhaps because it gave a more exact balance to 'are vain'.

124 **Supple**: easily assuming any posture, especially one of deference.

Parasite: 'one that frequents rich tables, and earns his welcome by flattery', Dict.

125-6 'True' agrees with 'tongue'. Some editions, on the false but excusable assumption that it agreed with 'Gaul', put a full stop after 'goes'.

126-8 J. exploits the ambiguity of 'bestow', which can mean 'attribute' or, literally, 'confer'. In 127f. he assumes the second sense, as if people's looks and speech had *actually* been transformed.

129-31 The only triplet in J.'s mature verse (Nichol Smith). Unlike Juv.'s Umbricius (92), Thales does not include himself among the hypocrites.

130 **With diffidence**: without confidence.

131 **Gain**: Hawkins (on whose authority?) changed this to 'get', perhaps on account of the sequence 'vain', 'strain', 'gain'. Yet the internal rhymes are defensible in a triplet.

140 J. concentrates Oldham's couplet (188)

Do you but smile, immediately the Beast
Laughs out aloud, tho he ne'er heard the jest.

142-3 The indispensable rhyme 'heat'/'sweat' was used by Oldham (188) and Dryden (177-8).

Hints: mentions.

- 143 Dog-days**: the period when the Dogstar Sirius rises and sets with the sun (3 July to 11 August); a time of oppressive heat, at least in Mediterranean countries.
- 145 Surly**: see on 102.
Fix a friend: make a firm friend.
- 146 Slaves**: in apposition to 'competitors' (144).
Serious impudence: shamelessness with a serious expression.
- 149** The line should be enclosed, at least mentally, in parentheses, for 'taste' exemplifies 'trifle', and 'judgment' exemplifies 'vice'.
- 150** In his original draft J. had written
Who dwell on Balbo's courtly mien [i.e. looks].
But since Balbo comes from the Lat. *balbus* (stammering), the change to 'eloquence' was clearly an improvement. No individual can be identified.
- 151** Writing of James I, Sir Anthony Weldon said 'His walk was ever circular, his fingers ever in that walke fidling about his cod-piece', quoted in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. Robert Ashton, London 1969, 12.
- 153** 'Invade' has a literal (though extended) sense with 'table', a figurative sense with 'breast'; an instance of zeugma.
- 155** Reading the absurd *aulam* in Juv. 112, and accepting the probably spurious 113, Barten Holyday translated:
They'll ransack House and Heart and thence be fear'd.
His note explains: 'He will turn his friend's house and all in it, as it were, upside down, so to discover his secrets and keep him in awe.' This was taken over and condensed by J. in 154-5.
- 157 Commence**: 'to take a new character', Dict. Hence 'to turn into' or 'become'.
- 158 By numbers**: on account of their large numbers.
- 160 Rigid**: severe, cf. 16 above.
- 161 Snarling muse**: satire. In classical times the satirist was sometimes referred to as a vicious cur by his opponents and as a trusty watch-dog by his supporters. See, e.g., Horace, *Epodes* 6, *Sat.* 2.1.85; Diogenes Laertius 6.60.
- 162 Sober**: solemn, with overtones of 'humourless'.
- 163 Dream**: i.e. of riches, cf. 184.
Labours for a joke: struggles to make a joke.
- 164 Brisker**: more lively and alert.
- 168 Gen'rous**: noble.
- 169 Blockhead's insult**: i.e. an insulting blockhead.
Points: 'directs' rather than 'sharpen', for sharpening would imply wit.
- 170-75** These lines are based on Horace's sixteenth epode, where the poet calls on those who are disgusted with civil war to set forth on 'the encircling ocean' and to seek 'the happy land' and 'the rich islands' which Jupiter has 'reserved' (*secrevit*) (the righteous). The association was prompted by Juv.'s *debuerant migrasse* . . . *Quirites*

- (163). Cf. Bolingbroke's letter to Swift, *Correspondence*, ed. F. E. Ball, London 1910-14, iii, 259.
- 173** During these years Georgia was claimed by the Spaniards, who had settled in Florida. For details see Kenneth Coleman (ed.) *A History of Georgia*, Athens, Georgia 1977, chap. 3 and Phinizy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America*, Chicago 1977, chap. 7.
- 174 Seats**: a place to settle; Lat. *sedes*.
Explore: search out.
- 176-8**: Line 177 is justly admired for its massive weight. It must be granted, however, that the logic of the verses is untidy. The sense should be 'worth rises slowly everywhere, but more slowly here'; but in J.'s syntax 'ev'ry where' goes with 'confess'd', not with 'rises'.
- 179-81** If you want a great man to notice you, you must bribe his servant; cf. Juv. 184-9.
Retails: retail: 'to sell at second hand', Dict.
- 182ff.** Juv.'s mention of Ucalegon (199), a figure taken from *Aeneid* 2.312, led J. to Virgil's description of burning Troy. As the cries of the crowd woke Aeneas in his palace, so J.'s sleeper is roused from his dream of a palace. Dryden's translation of the passage begins thus:
Now peals of shouts came thundering from afar,
Cries, threats, and loud laments, and mingled war:
The noise approaches, though our palace stood
Aloof from streets, encompassed with a wood.
Louder, and yet more loud, I hear the alarms
Of human cries, distinct, and clashing arms.
Fear broke my slumbers. (397-403)
- 187 Tremendous**: terrifying.
- 189 Little ALL**: an abridgement of Juv. 208-9.
- 190** Another epic expansion of Juv., recalling the fate of Aeneas after the fall of Troy.
- 192-3** These lines show how J. could use scholars' lumber to construct a fine couplet. 'In vain' comes from *frustra*, which was wrongly admitted into the text of Juv. 210 by certain editors and was mentioned as a variant by others. J. rightly read *frusta* (scraps); *frustra*, being a spondee, is metrically impossible.
- 194 Orgilio**: see on 208 below.
- 197 Pacify**: appease.
- 198 Servile**: 'venal', the reading of the 1st ed., appeared again in 1787.
- 199** The line parodies the false rhetoric of the laureate tribe.
- 201** They give him the equivalent of the wealth he has lost – wealth which he had acquired by exploiting the country's poor.
- 203 Dome**: building.
- 204** Certain small boroughs ('pocket boroughs') were virtually the property, for electoral purposes of wealthy aristocrats who could sell or give the representation to men of

their choice. In addition, the ownership of a manor often carried with it the right (called 'advowson') to appoint a clergyman to the local church. 'Restoring the price' means giving back to the landowner enough money to purchase new estates. So the line as a whole refers to the corrupt use of land ownership to influence parliament and church.

206 Bauble: 'a thing of more show than use', Dict.

208 Orgilio: the draft had 'Sejano'. In the mind of the reading public there was a chain of association connecting Verres (the evil governor of Sicily), Sejanus (the powerful favourite of Tiberius whose fall is described in Juv. 10), Wolsey (see list), and Walpole. The evidence from *The Craftsman* and elsewhere is presented by C.B. Ricks, *Modern Language Notes* 73 (1958) 563-8. So it is fair to think of Orgilio, who in v.84 is the counterpart of Juv.'s Verres, as 'a man like Walpole' and of his palace as 'a mansion like Houghton'. For the meaning of Orgilio see note on 84.
Aspire: 'to rise, to tower', Dict. sense 3.

209 Juv., as often, is more sharp and cynical. The rich man, he says, is now suspected with good reason of having set fire to his own house (221-2). According to Fleeman, fire insurance became possible in 1739 – the year after the publication of *London*.

210 Park: e.g. St James's Park and Hyde Park, and fashionable pleasure-gardens like Vauxhall and Ranelagh.

211 Thales is travelling to Wales, beyond the Severn; J. was born in Lichfield near the Trent. Oldham (199) had
An handsom Dwelling might be had in Kent.

212 Elegant retreat: this does not contradict 'secret cell' (49), for Thales does not say that he intends to acquire such an 'elegant retreat' for himself.

213 The M.P. is living in London, where he votes as his patron tells him.

214 Prospects: views.

Smiling: *OED* gives 'cheerful', 'agreeable to the sight'; but here it seems to have the added connotation of 'fertile'; in fact the draft had 'fruitful'. Cf. the Lat. *laetus* in the first line of Virgil's *Georgics*: *quid faciat laetas segetes*.

215 Dungeons: basements; see George 89-90.

216-23 This elevated, and yet tender, way of writing about rural life owes something to Milton; see, e.g., his description of Eve in *Paradise Lost* 9.427-30:

... oft stooping to support
Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd.

One must also bear in mind the Georgic tradition, which, though it started earlier, received its main impetus from Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*. (See J. Chalker, *The English Georgic*, London, 1969.)

Here Thales *wants* us to see the country in these idealized terms. Rural delights are needed as a contrast to urban horrors. And this may well have been a contrast which J. wished to draw at this point in his career. His *general* view of country life was much more complex. His appreciation of it was based on a thorough knowledge of practical details, and he was by no means blind to its harshness. (See R. W.

Ketton-Cremer, 'Johnson and the Countryside' in *Johnson, Boswell and their Circle*: Essays Presented to L. F. Powell, Oxford 1965, 65-75.)

217 Bower: 'an arbour; a sheltered place covered with green trees, twined and bent', Dict.

218 Beds: Hawkins (on J.'s authority?) changed this to 'grounds' in 1787, perhaps because 'beds' was thought to be too low. Yet 'beds' is more precise.

222 Security: freedom from both danger and worry.

226-9 Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.500-502:

And when the night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

Fop: 'a man of small understanding and much ostentation', Dict.

New commission: he has just been made an officer.

228 Frolick: 'gay, full of levity, full of pranks', Dict.

230 Mischievously: in a way involving harm, wickedly. The Dict. does not give the lighter, more playful, meaning, which seems to be a later development.

233 They prudently confine their insults to the poor. The adverbial idea of 'prudently' is rendered by an adjective, which is then transferred from 'they' to 'insults'. Both processes are common in Latin poetry.

234 Flambeau: a lighted torch.

235 Train: retinue.

232-5 Cf. Oldham (202):

Yet heated, as they are, with Youth, and Wine,
If they discern a train of Flamboes shine,
If a Great Man with his gilt Coach appear,
And a strong Guard of Foot boys in the rere,
The Rascals sneak, and shrink their Heads for fear.

237 Balmy: mild, soothing.

239 Midnight murderer: cf. Oldham (204) 'midnight Padders'.

Faithless: the opposite of 'trusty'.

241 Plants: it may be argued that the variant 'leaves', adopted in 1787, rounds off the scene with the murderer's departure; but the reader has to adjust his construction on finding that 'leaves' is a transitive verb. 'Plants', moreover, is a stronger word.

242 Tyburn: the place of public execution until 1783, near the present site of the Marble Arch. Hanging-days, which occurred eight times a year, were observed as public holidays. Oldham (205) had

Then fatal Carts thro Holborn seldom went,
And Tyburn with few Pilgrims was content.

243-7 J. could have said 'so many are hanged that the executioner is running out of rope', or 'so many are hanged that the fleet is running out of rope', or 'so many are hanged that there won't be enough rope for the king's convoy'. The draft, which did

not originally include 244-5, suggests that J. may have intended to choose the third, and strongest, possibility, or at least to combine the first and third. In the end he tried to include all three and so blurred the effect. Juv. (310-11) did not make the same mistake.

Schemes: 'The words "project" and "scheme" were anathema to Walpole's Tory critics', Kramnick 194.

245 Ways and Means: a parliamentary term for methods of raising money.

246-7 Another political shaft. 'Tempting' makes it clear that J. is referring to the eight months which George II spent in Hanover with his mistress Mme de Wallmoden from May 1736 to January 1737. This and other visits to Hanover were greatly resented; see Williams, 40-42. (It is perhaps over-ingenious, however, to see a verbal play in 'rig' which would connect it with 'riggish' = wanton.)

248 Alfred: see list.

250 Without constraint: the absence of greed and violence made penal laws unnecessary. J.'s contemporaries read about the golden age of Alfred in Sir John Spelman's *Life of Alfred the Great*, translated and edited by Thomas Hearne, Oxford 1709.

251 Deep'd the sword: the meaning should be 'lowered the sword', which provides a suitable contrast to 'held high the . . . scale'. If this is right, J. must have not only revived an obsolete verb but also given it a new sense. (The previous sense was 'to plunge or immerse deeply', *OED* 4.) Of other suggestions 'dipp'd' is at first sight attractive, but those who have studied J.'s handwriting maintain that his 'dipp'd' would hardly have been corrupted into 'deep'd' by the printer. 'Drop'd' could have been misread and would have provided the right sense. ('Drop' = 'lower' was used in fencing; cf. 'to drop one's guard' in boxing.) In that case, however, we have to exclude the more common sense, viz. 'to let fall'. If 'deep'd' was wrong, it was allowed to stand uncorrected for a very long time. 'Sheath'd', the alteration printed by Hawkins in 1787, gives an inferior antithesis and is iconographically inept.

252 Spies: Walpole had an extensive network of spies to counteract Jacobitism. See J. H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole; the King's Minister*, London 1960, index under 'Spies'. Harley also had his sources of information.

Special juries: under Walpole such juries, chosen from a panel of rich landowners, were used to secure convictions in cases of seditious libel. See Greene, 307, n.17.

257 Wilds of Kent: J. must surely have considered 'banks of Trent' as a parallel to Juv.'s reference to his native Aquinum (319). But that would have meant altering v.211, where he had substituted 'Trent' for Oldham's 'Kent'. So he followed the other course and put 'Kent' here. Since we are dealing with such a strongly explicit poet, it seems improbable that 'the wilds of Kent' was meant to suggest either Canterbury cathedral or the family home of J.'s friend Elizabeth Carter. Nor, I think, does it refer to the fact that Kent was 'deconverted' by the Danes and thus became the last bastion of paganism. The more superficial explanation, based on rhyme and on the hint from Oldham, is more likely to be true.

260 Aid: J.'s text of Juv. (322) had *adjutor* (helper). Modern editors rightly prefer *auditor* (listener). Juv. is not thought of as *composing* his satires at Aquinum; if

he goes there he will be on holiday. Also, it is amusing to suggest that Juv.'s lady-satires (*saturae*) might be embarrassed if a man in heavy boots showed up at their recital. But once the satires have been personified, it makes no sense to talk of them being helped. (What are they being helped to do?) Umbricius, therefore, imagines himself as a listener, not as a co-author of satiric poems.

261 Foe to vice: Prateus' note on Juv.'s *caligatus* (322) reads: 'equipped like an energetic soldier, certainly a keen foe of vice (*acer vitiorem hostis*)'. For the satirist as a foe to vice and a friend of virtue cf. Horace, *Sat.* 2.1.70 and Pope's Imitation 119-22:

Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the World, in credit, to his grave.
To VIRTUE ONLY and HER FRIENDS A FRIEND,
The World beside may murmur, or commend.

Shade: a place of seclusion. Juv.'s 'Umbricius' might possibly suggest 'the man in search of seclusion (*umbra*)'. Certainly he has nothing to do with the haruspex mentioned by Pliny the Elder (10.6) and Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.27) and referred to by some of the older commentaries.

262 Rage: in view of 'virtue's cause' and 'exert' it probably means 'zeal' or 'ardour' rather than 'anger'. Fleeman understands it in the more specialized sense of *furor poeticus* or inspiration.