THE PAST AS PRESENT: SELECTED THOUGHTS & ESSAYS
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PAUL T. RUXIN

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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One of Paul Ruxin’s talks to the Rowfant Club in Cleveland was a profile of Archibald MacLeish, the poet, professor, and public man of many sorts. In it Paul quotes a letter from 1916 that MacLeish wrote to his father after he had spent a year in law school (p. 76):

My two remaining free summers I intend to devote to the great mass of reading I have yet to do and for the doing of which my mind is so thirsty. Law and literature are, of course, incompatible, but I want to acquire a sufficient background so that if I am ever able to turn to the thing I most love I shall be able to undertake creative work at once.

The struggle among these options—teaching, law, and literature—was in MacLeish’s later life resolved into a single triple-threat identity: now Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard; now Librarian of Congress; and during World War II, Assistant Secretary of State for Public and Cultural Relations. I suspect that much of Paul’s interest in and admiration for MacLeish’s multifarious activities, was his own pull toward both law and literature, the desire to show that, in the story of his own life, they were not incompatible. His passion for books, as demonstrated in the Rowfant talks and elsewhere, was both for reading them, writing about them, and collecting them. In a rash moment he once thanked me for teaching him how to read, and I accepted this over-generous salute even though it drastically simplified the complicated and ongoing story of Paul as a reader.
One of Paul’s law-related articles concerns the Amish and compulsory education. This volume’s editors point out the “very literate ability” of that essay which grew out of his concern for Energy Policy. They praise Paul for his being able “to see the value of multiple perspectives, even as he is clear about his own vision that he brings to the situation.” I am reminded of one of William James’s early essays, “The Sentiment of Rationality,” in which he acknowledges the human need and desire for “simplification,” then puts that desire up against its “sister passion . . . for clearness,” the desire to be “acquainted with the parts rather than comprehend the whole.” But James was clearly on the side of clearness as against simplicity. He is willing to live with “any amount of incoherence, abruptness, and fragmentariness” as long as the separate facts can be “saved,” rather than dissolved into a unitary simplification, however compelling.

In one of the short e-mails to classmates dealing with Supreme Court Justice Scalia’s “originalism” in interpreting the constitution, Paul allied himself with the justice insofar as he felt that his own passion was for the close reading he learned to practice at Amherst, rather than for some recent theory about what the text “should” mean. In another, related e-mail, he notes that at Amherst he was, or was told he was, a conservative; while at law school he was deemed a liberal with respect to the same positions. He rejects such labeling as, in William James’s terms, the urge to simplify rather than to be clear about things. “Labels are unworthy of the education we were privileged to receive,” Paul wrote, and he found it crucial to acknowledge opposition views on a question, each of which has much to be said for it. He notes with regret that certain “demands” made in fall 2015 were unworthy in their fervor to embrace simplification rather than giving the patient consideration of particulars that clarity demands.

One of the best of the literary essays in this volume is “Edith Wharton and her Friends,” delivered as a talk in 2003 to the Caxton Club in Chicago. In the essay Paul gives a sympathetic, pointed account of Edith Newbold Jones’s early life, a brief treatment of her unfortunate marriage to “Teddy” Wharton, then a glimpse into her friendship with
the two great Henrys, Henry James and Henry Adams. In regard to James, with whom Wharton for a time was extremely close, Paul notes that Wharton and James shared an “ironic distance” from which they watched the world. In William James’s terms, such a distance would result from attempting to see the world in its disparate particularity rather than from a single all-embracing attitude. In the cases of both Wharton and James, their ironic detachment and desire to be clear rather than simple about experience issued in “intellectual superiority,” a quality sometimes confused with being a snob. The remarkable thing about Paul’s essays about Wharton, and about Boswell, Johnson, and their circle, is that however much we admire their intellectual substance, any accent of “superiority” on the part of the writer is absent—he is never a snob. Paul’s sense of humor was a guard against snobbery.

It is of course no accident that so many of the pieces here were delivered as talks to literary clubs in Cleveland and Chicago: Rowfant, in Cleveland; the Caxton and Chicago literary clubs in Chicago. In perhaps the most entertaining of these, titled “A Hospitable and Well-Covered Table,” Paul tells the marvelous story of Boswell’s successful attempt to persuade Johnson to attend a dinner at which would be his rival and social enemy, John Wilkes. In the introductory paragraph Ruxin sets out the assumptions behind such a gathering that has assembled to listen to the talk:

When we gather here . . . we bring with us certain expectations—that the atmosphere will be hospitable, the table well-covered—at least with pie—that our conversations will be at least literate if not “literary.” When the evening ends, we all return home sated in our physical, our intellectual and our social appetites.

These words give one a sense of the social aspect of Paul’s pleasure in literary conversation as engaged in with like-minded readers and book collectors.

But it would be a mistake to overstate the clubman aspect of Paul’s literary pursuits. In the most recent issue of the Johnsonian News...
Letter, a contributor, Gordon Turnbull, describes Paul’s support for the Yale Boswell Editions, financially as well as administratively. Speaking of one of the essays collected here, “Lord Auchinleck’s Fingal”—about Boswell’s father and the famous or infamous poem supposedly by one Ossian, discovered by James McPherson but proved to be fraudulent—Turnbull writes “The essay—like all his writings on Boswell, Johnson, and other members of the Johnson circle . . . moved with a deft blend of the lawyer’s sense of clarity and evidence-marshaling, and the energy and affection of the true amateur’s devotion.” There are no better words than energy and affection to characterize the nature of Paul’s endeavors.

Graduates of Amherst will of course be especially interested in a number of recent e-mails to his classmates about the state of things at the college. Paul was a critic of the “open” curriculum, believing in the “old-fashioned” notion that the student was at college to be exposed to certain disciplines and subjects, that exposure to be gained by being experienced at least partly in common with other students. He was a particularly sharp critic of a recent, fashionable habit of speaking about Amherst as a “research college” in which students and faculty would presumably work together on this or that project (Famine in the Ukraine in the 1940s was a suggested example). In words written a couple of years ago, Paul confessed, unhappily, that he didn’t feel part of the “Amherst community,” but he was okay with that “since a common, rigorous intellectual experience isn’t what shapes that community anymore; now it appears to be a commitment to diversity in all its shapes and sizes as an end, not a means, and a shared obsession with undergraduate ‘research,’ faculty publication, and everything except what happens in the classroom and between students who need to be taught and teachers who want to teach, and therefore are unafraid to be demanding, critical, and uncompromising.”

There is some poignancy in this undying effort to imagine what he and his concerned classmates called “An Amherst Curriculum for the 21st Century.” The lack of administrative response to the proposals they put forth, must have saddened him and certainly led to the
pessimism felt when he doubted that rigorous intellectual experience any longer shapes the Amherst community.

The going phrase about Amherst in the early and middle 1960s was that the college’s aim was to turn out the “well-rounded man.” We all made fun, both faculty and students, of this phrase. Just exactly how rounded was rounded enough? Nevertheless, Paul’s belief in the effort of study in the humanities and science to shape a life was undiminished. In March of 2015, late in his too short life, he addressed himself to his own profession, setting out his assumptions in no uncertain terms:

Lawyers are better readers of statutes when they also know how to read poems, and lawyers are better lawyers when their familiarity with literature, psychology, architecture, chemistry enable them to understand their clients and their clients’ concerns, but they are better people, with fuller lives, when familiarity with those things helps them understand their children and their government, and their charitable work and their recreational activities, and the way to live their lives after the law.

He didn’t quote, but could well have, some lines from a poet whose work he knew well, Robert Frost, who once declared

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only when love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future’s sakes.

William H. Pritchard ’53
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PART I

Paul’s Reading Pleasures
This section includes ten extended writings. Here we see Paul reveling in the reading of literature and the background stories that provide a context for particular works. These pieces also capture the joy that owning some of these books brought to Paul. In the first collection of Paul’s writings, Friday Lunch, which grew out of talks he gave to various Book Collecting organizations, the literary topics ranged widely across time and culture. Here the focus is more concentrated on the Johnson-Boswell period. It is, of course, this time frame and social milieu where Paul developed his deepest scholarly knowledge. This included a complete command of texts, their composition, and the author relationships that further animated them. Our joy in sharing Paul’s profound pleasures of reading in part grows out of an appreciation of his concern with style, humor, and the importance of always making his subject accessible to a reading public.
One Thing Leads to Another
*Star-crossed lovers make their way from Mesopotamia to American television*

Our theme here suggests a journey. It may be through time or across distances, it may be from one genre to another, or from one format to another. Or, in my case, all of the above. Ordinarily it would spoil the dramatic tension of a story to disclose at the outset both the beginning and the end, but in this case I doubt even the most brilliant and well-read among you will be able to fill in the blanks and connect the dots, at least for a while, and so here is where we start, and where we will end.

The story begins in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Now we know it all too well as Iraq, but in the second millennium B.C., it was known as Mesopotamia, and that part of it along the Euphrates was Babylonia. Although the Akkadian language of that time and place had a cuneiform written version (the first written laws—the Code of Hammurabi—came down to us in that form), it is largely through archeological finds and oral traditions, only later preserved in written form in other languages, that we know much about Babylonian life. From that oral tradition comes our story, probably dating to the latter second or early first millennium B.C., of a young couple, a beautiful girl and a handsome boy, who fall in love, of their feuding fathers, who try to forbid that love, and of the dusty wall between their gardens, separating them until tragedy strikes.

This ancient legend—surely among the oldest and most familiar tales in all literature—may also, tonight, lead us to one of the most popular network television shows of the turn of the twenty-first cen-
tury. How does a three-thousand-year-old legend lead to a television series? You haven't guessed? Let me lead you along the twisting path.

The Babylonian folk tale—perhaps the first urban legend—was told and re-told by generations of story-tellers in the great bardic tradition. After Babylonia fell to Persia in 539 B.C., the story became popular in Greece, and half a millennium later, around the time of Christ's birth, it was, as far as we know, written down for the first time. It was transcribed by Publius Ovidius Naso, born in 43 B.C., just a year after the assassination of Julius Caesar. Better known as Ovid, by the time he was banished from Rome by Caesar Augustus in 9 A.D., he had included the story in his collection of Greek and Roman folk tales and myths, written, of course, in Latin, in lovely dactylic hexameter, and known as *Metamorphoses*. It begins this way.

Pyramus et Thisbe, juvenum pulcherimus alter,
Altera, quas Oriens habuit, praetla puellis,
Contiguas tenuere domos, ubi dictur altam
Coctilibus muris cinxesse Semiramus urbem.

No more Latin, I promise, but I wanted you to hear the meter—the music—of it.

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* survived many years in Latin manuscript and codex form. Because he was a pagan writer, and often, as in his *Art of Love*, an explicitly sexual one, the popularity of Ovid and the *Metamorphoses* went into a six-century-long decline—or at least went underground—after the Roman Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity in the early fourth century A.D. Interest in Ovid revived, however, in the eleventh century, as poets studying in the cathedral schools learned of him from the monks who had kept the *Metamorphoses* on their illicit reading and copying lists for hundreds of years. This led to the practice of “moralization,” begun perhaps in the fourteenth century, as the way the late medieval and early Renaissance scholarly world legitimimized secular, pagan classical works. *Ovide Moralise*, a French work by Pierre Bersuire completed in 1340, did this for the *Metamorphoses*, and Bersuire’s moralization of Ovid in turn influenced Chaucer, who drew on
many of its stories for his *Canterbury Tales*. During the Renaissance the *Metamorphoses* was translated from the Latin into Dutch, French, German, and finally, in 1567, into English, by Arthur Golding. 1567 was three years after the birth of William Shakespeare. Although his friend, contemporary and rival Ben Jonson said famously that Shakespeare had “small Latin and less Greek,” Jonson himself was an extremely learned man, and his view of what was “small Latin” probably differs greatly from ours. In fact, Shakespeare seems to have attended a grammar school where Latin was the core of the curriculum, and Shakespeare’s plays borrow heavily from the Latin texts taught in such schools. Of these texts, it is to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* that Shakespeare turned most often for plot and character.

Whether Shakespeare drew on Ovid’s Latin text, or on Golding’s 1567 translation, or both, we do not know. We do know that he was fascinated by the ancient Babylonian tale of the star-crossed lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe. Around the year 1595 he wrote two plays which, in profoundly different ways, draw on the story of young lovers who face first the opposition of their families, and then tragic death resulting from confusion and mistake. The first, of course, is *Romeo and Juliet*, too well known to be rehearsed here, but telling of a boy and a girl, forbidden by their fathers to see each other, who communicate secretly and who die because one mistakes the simulated death of the other to be real.

This is in fact exactly the story of Pyramus and Thisbe told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*. Forbidden by their fathers in ancient Babylonia to marry, they communicate through a chink in the wall between their houses, and resolve to meet one night. Thisbe arrives first, but, frightened by a lioness dripping the fresh blood of recently killed cows, Thisbe drops her scarf as she runs to hide. The lioness picks up the scarf and bloodies it before dropping it, mangled, on the ground. Pyramus, arriving later finds the bloody veil and the lion tracks, and concludes that Thisbe herself has been killed. In grief, he stabs himself and dies. Thisbe comes out of hiding, sees her dead lover, his sword, and the bloody scarf, understands all, and kills herself.
But *Romeo and Juliet*'s retelling of this story was neither the only nor the most direct use Shakespeare made of the ancient story of Pyramus and Thisbe. About the same time he also wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a comedy, rather than a tragedy, containing one of Shakespeare’s uses of his famous “play-within-the-play” device. Here, as entertainment at the weddings of Theseus and Hippolyta, Hermia and Lysander, and Helena and Demetrius, a group of crude artisans perform a theatrical version of the Pyramus and Thisbe story, complete with young lovers, angry fathers, wall, and lion. The ending here though, must be happy, and so Shakespeare turns *Romeo and Juliet* inside out, and Pyramus and Thisbe as well, for in a *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the tragic lovers rise from the dead at the end of their unconvincing performance. Although their audience of newlyweds—eager to move on with other nuptial practices—declines to hear an epilogue, they agree to have the “actors” who played Pyramus and Thisbe perform a rustic dance.

After Arthur Golding’s translation of *Metamorphoses* in 1567, and Shakespeare’s use of the story in his twin tellings about 1595, there were many other versions of the Babylonian story of Pyramus and Thisbe, as retold by Ovid, in many languages. The *Metamorphoses* is one of the great resources of classical literature, scholarship and mythology. More than a hundred years after Golding translated it into English, so did John Dryden, among others. However, after the period known as the “long eighteenth century,” about 1680 to 1820, Romanticism flourished, and the *Metamorphoses* and Pyramus and Thisbe became a less prominent feature of the literary-educational-cultural menu. As in all things though, what once was old became new again, and a revival of interest in classical studies—encouraged by or reflected in such things as the Loeb Classical Library series of translations from Harvard University—has kept Ovid, in Latin and English, before us throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

In 1955 the distinguished American poet and translator Rolfe Humphries, unknown, I am afraid, to many of you but well worth knowing, issued the first of what we could call a “modern” English
edition of the *Metamorphoses*. Humphries was the perfect choice. His father, a graduate of Cornell, was the first member of Phi Beta Kappa to play major league professional baseball, for the New York Giants, in the 1880s. Humphries himself was a scholar and an athlete, not unlike Ovid, who was as well something of a rake and libertine. In fact, Ovid’s banishment by Augustus from Rome to a miserable town on the Black Sea coincided with Augustus’ banishment of his own daughter Julia, and legend has it that the two exiles were linked, although we will never know. Humphries too, at least in his youth, was something of a rake, and moved, during the 1920s and 1930s, in a fast crowd, like Ovid’s, consisting of other writers—the “Bohemians”—including Edna St. Vincent Milay and the “beautiful people” of the Jazz Age. This was a society attracted to concepts of relaxed morality, not without its own antecedents in Ovid’s work and life.

Turning to the *Metamorphoses* in 1954 Humphries found that—well, here is what he wrote about its musical lines in hexameter:

. . . there was fun enough in the original, variety and richness enough, for all the metrical sameness, so that to perform feats of virtuosity would have been an intolerable license on the part of the translator, a chopping-up of the texture, an insult. In his different way, Ovid commands as much respect as Virgil does; his dactylic hexameters . . . do not sound at all like Virgil’s, but they are not material to do stunts with, either; the translator had better, I concluded, use the nearest approximation; the loose ten-beat line, unrhymed, seemed the least obtrusive medium.

Of course you remember my Latin reading of Ovid’s first lines about Pyramus and Thisbe—at the beginning of this tale. Here is how Humphries’ translation begins:

Next door to each other, in the brick walled city
Built by Semiramis, lived a boy and a girl,
Pyramus, a handsome fellow, Thisbe,
Loveliest of all those Eastern girls. Their nearness
Made them acquainted, and love grew, in time,
So that they would have married, but their parents
Forbade it. But their parents could not keep them
From being in love: their nods and gestures showed it—
You know how fire suppressed burns all the fiercer.
There was a chink in the wall between the houses,
A flaw the careless builder had never noticed,
Nor anyone else, for many years, detected
But the lovers found it—love is a finder, always—
Used it to talk through, and the loving whispers
Went back and forth in safety. . . .

So there it is, thousands of years and ten thousand miles, and from
an oral legend to a printed page, the lovers, their fathers, the wall. . . .
One thing leads to another.

Let us step back a moment from Humphries’ 1954 translation to
the “Gay ’90s,” the 1890s, that is, when “gay” meant something like
“happy.” In Paris the French dramatist Edmond Rostand decided to
do a spoof of the Pyramus and Thisbe story as told in Romeo and Juliet,
making the fathers conspire to fake a feud in order to bring their chil-
dren together by forbidding them to see each other. Rostand—whom
you may know as the author of Cyrano de Bergerac—called his 1894
version Les Romanesques. This play, in verse like Shakespeare’s version,
was then translated back into English by a woman using the pseudo-
nym George Fleming, and it was produced with a new name—I’ll
give it to you in a minute—in London in 1909. There it was directed
by one B. Iden Payne.

This same Mr. Payne went on to become a professor of drama at
the University of Texas. A few decades later, while teaching there, he
had among his students two, named Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt.
He introduced them to Les Romanesques and its 1909 English version.
Then, in 1960, in a very small theater off-Broadway in New York,
opened a small American musical play. It had book and lyrics by Tom
Jones, with music by Harvey Schmidt. It ran until January of 2002,
a total of 17,162 performances. Nothing else has ever come close. You
one thing leads to another

probably all know it. Schmidt and Jones used the name adopted for the 1909 London version, The Fantasticks.

Pyramus and Thisbe thus lived again, on the stage, in 1909 in London and then in 1960 in New York. While Schmidt and Jones may not have had Pyramus and Thisbe immediately in mind in their off-Broadway telling of the story, it was indeed Rostand’s version that led them to it, and it was Rostand’s version, which, in French, had transferred from tragedy to comedy the Romeo and Juliet take on our old Babylonian story. Two fathers, who forbid the beautiful daughter and the handsome son to see each other, know, in Les Romanesques and in The Fantasticks, just as Rolfe Humphries had put it in his translation of Ovid, that “fire suppressed burns all the fiercer.” In The Fantasticks that notion leads to the song, “Never Say No,” in which, as in many of the lyrics, you can hear the original Ovidian hexameter, or at least the “loose ten-beat line” version of Ovid’s metrical pattern that Rolfe Humphries adopted.

The Fantasticks of course is not the end of the path. Ovid’s Metamorphoses got a fresh new translation from David Slavitt in 1994, and another—although partial—version from Ted Hughes in 1997. Slavitt’s version was the basis for another stage adaptation, by Chicago’s own Mary Zimmerman for the Lookingglass Theater in 1998, a production that subsequently moved to Broadway where it was nominated for Tony Awards in the Best Play and Best Director categories. In fact, it won the director’s award for Northwestern’s Prof. Zimmerman. Unfortunately, for our chain of events, while it retold ten of Ovid’s tales, Prof. Zimmerman’s version did not include the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and so this little step has really taken us slightly off our path. Back to it.

Now our story has already led us from Babylonia to Rome, from Rome to London, from London to Paris, from Paris back to London, then from London to Texas and on to New York. It has been transformed from a story kept alive in the oral telling, to a codex in Latin, to a printed book, and then to the stage, first in English, then in French, then back to English, both on stage and in print. How and
where does it lead to the airwaves, to that television series mentioned earlier? I admit that this hint of the ultimate step in our journey was a red herring. But it strikes me as an amusing finish for our travels.

The television program—which itself has led to progeny of its own—begins with words you may all recognize:

In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups: the police, who investigate crimes, and the district attorneys, who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories.

Of course, the television program is “Law and Order.” How, you wonder, can I get the Babylonian Pyramus and Thisbe to metamorphose into—excuse me, I mean lead to—“Law and Order”? Remember, I confessed to that step being something of a red herring. Ovid tells his story through a narrator. Even Shakespeare has a narrator introduce the play-within-the-play Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. And a narrator—called The Narrator—tells the story of *The Fantasticks*. “Law and Order” featured a droll and charming portrayal of one of the main characters, Detective Lenny Briscoe. And who played Lenny Briscoe? Jerry Orbach. And who played the droll and charming Narrator in *The Fantasticks* when it opened in New York in 1960, more than 3000 years after Pyramus and Thisbe first fell in love? Jerry Orbach. And that is how, with one giant leap at the end, one thing led to another.
Edith Wharton and Her Friends

Only three minor circumstances prevented Edith Newbold Jones from charter membership in The Fortnightly of Chicago when it was established in 1873. First, she was but eleven years old. Second, she was just returned to her family homes in New York and Newport from a six-year sojourn in England, Italy, Spain and Germany. Finally—and most important—Old New York society vehemently disapproved of the kind of forward-looking intellectual self-improvement for women that Fortnightly represented. Let her explain it to you in her own words, describing the milieu in which—in 1873 and for years thereafter—she was still a captive:

My literary success puzzled and embarrassed my old friends far more than it impressed them, and in my own family it created a kind of constraint which increased with the years. None of my relatives ever spoke to me of my books, either to praise or blame—they simply ignored them; and among the immense tribe of my New York cousins, though it included many with whom I was on terms of affectionate intimacy, the subject was avoided as though it were a kind of family disgrace, which might be condoned, but could not be forgotten.

So it was that after marrying Edward “Teddy” Wharton of Boston in 1885, and, after having visited his family there, she observed “I was a failure in Boston . . . because they thought I was too fashionable to be intelligent, and a failure in New York because they were afraid I was too intelligent to be fashionable.”
But we are getting ahead of ourselves. She was born to Lucretia Stevens Rhinelander and George Frederic Jones in 1862. Those names resonated in New York society—Stevens, Rhinelander, Jones—as did those of their relatives, the Van Rensselears, Schermerhorns, Astors, and Gallatins on both sides. Indeed, New York society had been defined by Ward McAllister as the “four hundred,” the number of people who could fit comfortably in Mrs. Astor’s ballroom, and those always included Mrs. Astor’s cousins, the Joneses. According to one version of its origins, the phrase “keeping up with the Joneses” was originally a reference to Edith’s mother’s stature in Old New York. This was the woman who, when once asked which Mrs. Jones she was, replied “I am the Mrs. Jones.” Teddy Wharton came from a parallel, if equally small, planet in Boston. Once, in Newport, a nouveau riche visitor heard that he had hitched a ride up the main street in a rather lowly conveyance. He quickly warned him “Wharton, I hear you rode up the Avenue in a butcher’s cart. I wouldn’t do that if I were you.” Teddy simply looked at him and said “No, if I were you, I wouldn’t do it either.”

And in this small world, Edith Jones was, from the beginning, destined to be different. By the time she returned from her family’s extended travels in Europe at the age of nine she spoke and read not only English and French, but also Italian and German, both medieval and modern. Taught to read by her father, she recited Tennyson to her grandmother at age six, and by twelve had read extensively in her father’s library (she never attended any school), absorbing Plutarch, Macaulay, Carlyle, Pepys, Cowper, Madam de Sevigne—Ruskin, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and others. No novels—except Scott, Irving and Disraeli. As she said:

. . . my mother’s rule being that I must never read a novel without asking permission. . . . I must add that, having been thus put on my honour, I never once failed to observe the compact & [sic] never read a novel without asking leave until the day of my marriage.

She did, however, since it was not forbidden, write her own first
novel at age fourteen. At twelve she had begun another, but brought the early pages to her mother, who read the first lines:

“Oh, how do you do Mrs. Brown?” said Mrs. Tomkins. “If only I had known you were going to call I should have tidied up the drawing-room.”

Her mother gave it a brief look, and handed it back, saying only, “drawing rooms are always tidy.” Discouraged, Edith turned to poetry, and indeed her mother had privately printed a volume of her early verses in 1878 when she was sixteen. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow saw them, and sent them on to William Dean Howells, who published one in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1879, the year Edith “came-out” in society. Two more poems were published in 1880, four in 1889, and then her first fiction, a short story, in *Scribner’s*, in 1890, beginning a long association with Scribner’s, owners of the magazine and the publishing house, who published her first book—*The Decoration of Houses*—in 1897. More about that in a minute; in between her mother’s rejection of her earliest effort and that book much had happened.

Her debut in society in 1879 was followed by a brief engagement in 1882 to a young man whose mother quickly broke it off, in retaliation for having earlier been slighted by the Joneses, who regarded her as a social-climber—which she unquestionably was, even if a successful one. Her beloved father also died that year, leaving her a substantial trust fund, and in Newport she met a distant cousin, a handsome literary “ladies man,” and promising Harvard lawyer, Walter Van Renssalaer Berry, with whom she began a relationship that—after a gap of fourteen years—became one of her closest. In 1883 she met Teddy Wharton. He was the outdoors type, with not a literary bone in his body and nothing in common with Edith but patrician origins. After their marriage they moved to a small house in Newport, near her mother’s much larger one, and traveled extensively—at least four months each year—in Europe. In 1888 she inherited another large sum from a distant and reclusive cousin, and in 1891 she and Teddy bought
two narrow adjoining houses on Park Avenue in New York (one for the servants), and, in 1993, Land’s End, a magnificent Newport property overlooking the Atlantic. During this time she also intermittently suffered a series of debilitating bouts of exhaustion, nausea and melancholia, but ultimately—helped by the famous rest cure of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia—she became a forceful, strong and independent woman, *sui generis* in her world.

The course of her early years had made her physically active—a swimmer, a sailor—but also keenly attuned to matters of taste, absolutely confident of her judgments in all matters literary and aesthetic. So confident was she that in *The Decoration of Houses*, published when she was thirty-four, and written with the architect/designer Ogden Codman who had helped her design Land’s End, she instructed those with presumably more money than taste how to decorate their homes. She explained, talking about the need to reform then-current decorating theories:

> . . . it must be admitted that such reform can originate only with those whose means permit of any experiments which their taste may suggest. When the rich man demands good architecture his neighbors will get it too. The vulgarity of current decoration has its source in the indifference of the wealthy. . . . It necessarily follows that only the most competent are ready to respond to this unexpected summons. Much has to be relearned, still more to be unlearned. The essence of the great styles lay in proportion and the science of proportion is not to be acquired in a day.

Her own book, she said modestly, would be a “touchstone of taste,” and so it has been, initially a surprise commercial success, it is still in print, and a primary source for designers ever since Elsie de Wolfe (another friend of Mrs. Wharton’s), who want to impose a traditional, elegant look on their clients’ rooms.

It is no wonder then that the Edith Wharton who had literally defined good taste and refinement for America at the age of thirty-four
went on to a life—outwardly—of enormous achievement, built on her sense of her self. Before we turn to the other, more interesting, Edith, we ought to review quickly a few of those achievements. Beginning with a book of short stories published in 1899 she had one literary triumph after another, including *The House of Mirth*, published in 1905 which had over 140,000 copies in print by the end of that year, the most rapid sale of any book published by Scribners to that point. It was followed by others, including *The Age of Innocence*, for which she became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize, in 1921, and *Ethan Frome*, surely one of those books that will be read as long as there are readers. She was the first woman to be awarded an honorary doctorate from Yale, in 1923, and the first woman member of the American Academy of Arts. Seven of her books were made into films between 1918 and 1934—one, before “talkies,” with subtitles by Scott Fitzgerald—and she was one of only a few novelists (Henry James failed at this) to have plays successfully dramatized from her stories. In 1935, *The Old Maid*, dramatized by Zoe Akins, won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, and in 1935 *The Old Maid and Ethan Frome*, running simultaneously, earned her about $130,000 in royalties.

She also built and decorated extraordinary houses, beginning with Lands End in Newport, done with the help of Codman in 1893, and moving to The Mount in Lenox, Massachusetts, in 1901. Named after the home of her Revolutionary War hero great-grandfather Ebenezer Stevens, friend of the Marquis de Lafayette, she started The Mount with Codman, but fired him in a dispute over his fees. The Mount today is a museum open to the public. It was followed by the house she called Pavilion Colombe, outside of Paris in 1918, and in 1926 by Ste. Claire du Vieux Chateau in Hyères in the south of France, which she had rented since 1919. At the last three she developed spectacular gardens, drawing in part on her own extensive study of Italian gardens, published as *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* in 1904, and in part with the help of her niece, Beatrix Jones Farrand, an internationally famous landscape architect who designed, among other things, a White House garden for the Wilsons, the great gardens at Dumbarton Oaks.
in Washington, D.C., the garden courtyards of eight of Yale’s residential colleges, much of the Princeton campus grounds and the garden at Kykuit, the Rockefeller family estate in Pocantico, New York.

Along the way she was the confident of the famous and the powerful, in every walk of life, from Theodore Roosevelt to André Gide. She was one of the first women to own a car, bought in Paris in 1904, and she used it (and its successors) to pursue travel that would otherwise have been impossible. Her love of “motor cruises” ultimately led her into the thick of World War I, often visiting with her friend Walter Berry the front at Argonne Wood and Verdun, and even the forward trenches in the Vosges during the heat of battle. Moved by what she saw, she established the Children of Flanders Rescue Committee, in six homes in France caring for 750 children, many of them tubercular. She also established a workroom in Paris for unemployed women, many made homeless by the war, in which they sewed clothes and uniforms for orphans and soldiers, and an enterprise that became known as the American Hostels for Refugees, ultimately housing and feeding 10,000 refugees in Paris in 1915 alone. Her absorption with the work of aiding the victims of the War was astonishing, and virtually all-consuming. She wrote little during the War years but propaganda and fund-raising pieces for the Allies and their causes. For her war work she was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by France, and a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold by Belgium, the highest honors those countries could award. She died, in 1937, famous, wealthy and accomplished.

What a story. But it gives no clue to her interior life. It suggests nothing of the sources of her greatest happinesses, and her greatest sorrows. For that we will have to go back to a very young girl, who was lonely and who passed the time “making up,” an activity she described as holding a book and walking the floor, “swept off full sail on the sea of dreams,” telling stories to herself. Once her mother invited a playmate to visit, and when she arrived Edith pleaded, “Mamma, you must go and entertain that little girl for me. I’ve got to make up.” She wrote about her childhood spent in part on outdoors play, swimming,
archery, sailing, horseback but, she said:

Unluckily for me, none of my companions had any imagination, or any taste for books or pictures. I lived one side of my life with them . . . , but of the other . . . they never had so much as a guess! I often wonder if any other child possessed of that “other side” was ever so alone in it as I . . . But I never exchanged a word with a really intelligent human being until I was over twenty . . .

Nor was this “other side” purely intellectual. It was, in fact, deeply sensual.

Edith Wharton responded early to beauty—and its opposite. She wrote “My visual sensibility must always have been too keen for middling pleasures . . . for I was always vaguely frightened by ugliness.” More than that she writes of “hating” ugly rooms, and “feeling for ugly people an abhorrence, a kind of cruel hate.” It is no wonder that a never-completed draft of an intimate memoir, begins “Thus I may truly say that my first conscious sensations were produced by the two deepest-seated instincts of my nature—the desire to love & to look pretty.” Her “first conscious recollection” she tells us is walking up Fifth Avenue at the age of three, with “her tall handsome father,” wearing “her new winter bonnet, which was so beautiful (and so becoming) . . . .” And then her cousin, two or three years older, ran up, “. . . kissing me [and I remember] the extremely pleasant sensation [it] produced.”

She was aware early of her responses to beauty and physical sensation. As she remembered it years later:

. . . Life, real Life, was ringing in my ears, humming in my blood, flushing my cheeks & waving in my hair—sending me messages & signals from every beautiful face & musical voice, & running over me in vague tremors when I rode my pony, or swam through the short bright ripples of the bay, or raced & danced & tumbled with “the boys.” And I didn’t know—& if, by chance, I asked my mother “what does it mean?” I was always told “You’re too little to understand,” or else “It’s not nice to ask about such things.”
It is difficult for us to reconcile much of her view of her life with our view of it. Remembering that she read and spoke at least four languages by the age of nine, and devoured her father’s library by her mid-teens, what do we make of her statement that her “childhood & youth were an intellectual desert?” How do we integrate her repeated expressions of “otherness” with the social successes and the warmth she experienced within her large circle of family and friends? How do we reconcile the obvious passion in her fiction with its apparent absence from her life? Fortunately for us her published memoir, *A Backward Glance*, and other memoirs, correspondence and notes help us understand how she wrote what she did, and its sources in her life.

This part of the story must begin with her own description of a day shortly before her marriage:

I was seized with such a dread of the whole dark mystery that I summoned up courage to appeal to my mother, & begged her, with a heart beating to suffocation, to tell me “what being married was like.” Her handsome face at once took on the look of icy disapproval which I most dreaded. “I never heard such a ridiculous question!” she said impatiently; I felt at once how vulgar she thought me.

But in the extremity of my need I persisted. “I’m afraid Mamma—I want to know what will happen to me!”

The coldness of her expression deepened to disgust. She was silent for a dreadful moment; then she said with an effort: “You’ve seen enough pictures & statutes in your life. Haven’t you noticed that men are—made differently from women?”

“Yes.” I followed blankly.

“Well, then—?”

I was silent, from sheer inability to follow, & she brought out sharply “Then for heaven’s sake don’t ask me any more silly questions. You can’t be as stupid as you pretend!”

I record this brief conversation because the training of which it
This was indeed the logical, if not beautiful, conclusion of the earlier warnings that it was “not wise” to talk of certain feelings. Such conversations, she wrote, “effectually kept me from pursuing my investigations...& this was literally all I knew of the process of generation till I had been married for several weeks—” Yes. Several weeks.

It was not, you may surmise, a happy marriage. Having little in common but their backgrounds and a love of travel, Edith and Teddy grew farther apart as she became more famous, and Teddy simply older—he was a success only at hunting and fishing and wines, and could not read her books, or share the life of her mind or her friends. Entrusted with the management of her money, in 1909 he sold some of her holdings, bought a house in Boston where he installed a mistress, and embezzled $50,000. Increasingly, as she prospered, he suffered from physical and psychological ills. They lived mostly apart, and ultimately separated for good in 1912, finally divorced in 1913, an event still scandalous but no longer unthinkable in their world. Their final separation was no doubt a factor in Edith’s growing abandonment of America as other than a source for her fiction. Although she contributed to his support, she never saw Teddy after 1912, and after 1913, when she had sold The Mount, spent only eleven days in America—in 1923—in the last twenty-five years of her life.

For many years the world of readers believed that Edith Wharton’s life, so full in most respects, was lacking in any personal experience with physical passion, that the act of sex itself was largely a mystery to her. Careful readers of her work, however—of her novel Summer, for example—holding to this belief must have attributed solely to genius and imagination the passion so explicit there, just as those preoccupied by Shakespeare’s limited formal education explained the erudition in his writing. However, in the 1960s, serious scholars, led by R.W.B. Lewis, discovered evidence of another explanation.

Morton Fullerton, a Harvard graduate and the Paris correspon-
dent for the *London Times*, was a journalist of some stature. An early Dreyfusard and a confident of Teddy Roosevelt. Fullerton was also a protégé of Henry James, who, based on his letters, himself had an unrequited crush on Fullerton. Whether James’ own repressed sexuality drove his actions or not, after Fullerton and Mrs. Wharton had met at dinner in Paris in 1907 James encouraged their relationship, and urged Fullerton to visit her at The Mount in the fall of that year. That visit was a turning point in her life—three days after her house guests (including Charles McKim, the architect who designed this house [the Bryan Lathrop House, built in 1892, and home of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, purchased in 1922] we are in today) left she began a diary, secretly addressed to Fullerton.

Back in Paris the relationship did not advance in the early months of 1908, although they saw much of each other. She wrote in the diary that she must have been mistaken about what she sensed passing between them at The Mount. Fullerton, she did not know then, had much else to occupy himself. He was secretly married, and he was being blackmailed by a former lover who threatened to disclose not only their relationship, but many of his other affairs, including those with the Ranee of Sarawak, wife of the Rajah, a famous wealthy Anglo-Indian aristocrat, and with Ronald Gower, a notorious homosexual and intimate of Oscar Wilde, among others. More important still, he was deeply involved with a young girl who had been brought up to believe she was his sister, but had recently learned that she was in fact his cousin, giving her the right to express feelings she had long carried in secret, feelings to which he had responded, going so far as to promise to marry her.

Yet in early 1908 his young cousin was at school at Bryn Mawr, and Mrs. Wharton was in Paris with him. They saw more and more of each other, taking day trips around the city and its suburbs. According to her diary, a moment alone in her drawing room early in March seemed to bring them closer, but Fullerton pressed too quickly, and she withdrew. Frightened, she wrote of her confusion in the diary, worried that he wanted something from her she did not have to give.
She was forty-five, sexually inexperienced, feeling desiccated physically and emotionally, and inhibited by the mores of her time and class. However, at the end of March, Teddy left Paris for medical treatment in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

By mid-April Edith had overcome her fears, and she and Fullerton were lovers. Edith Wharton had found what she felt had been missing. So lost was she in the physical side of the relationship that she saw it as “all that I had never known before—the interfusion of spirit and sense, the double nearness, the mingled communion of touch and thought. . . . I have known what happy women feel. For the first time in my life I can't read.” As for Fullerton, many years later he wrote to a friend who was proposing to write a biography of Wharton that she should “. . . seize the event, however delicate the problem, to dispel the myth of your heroine’s frigidity,” going on to describe, extravagantly, what has been characterized as “her adventurousness as an erotic companion.” Edith herself, after a night at the Charing Cross Hotel in 1909, wrote a poem—“Terminus”—that is an extraordinary statement of the passion their union allowed her to realize. It is no wonder that after another such time, sitting with Fullerton on the banks of the Seine in Paris, she wrote in her diary how extraordinary it was to watch “while people walked up and down before us, not knowing—not knowing that it was not worth their while to be alive.”

Of course it could not, did not, last. Fullerton’s intellect was overwhelmed by Mrs. Wharton’s, and his indiscriminate libido left him incapable of fidelity. They grew apart, although without anger or bitterness. While he was never replaced in her life, what he had unlocked in her was never again shut off. Thus it was that years later an elderly Edith Wharton came to pass the ultimate judgment on James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence. Rejecting Joyce’s depiction of women’s erotic nature as “silly,” she embraced instead the novels of Colette as “pornography à la vente,” the real thing, and she wrote her own perhaps just to prove to herself that she could. Sometime—most probably 1934 or 1935, although the date is uncertain—she wrote a fragment of a novel she had outlined to be called “Beatrice Palmato.” The fragment is only
two pages—I have brought a few copies of it, and the poem “Terminus,” if any of you wish to see them—but it is as explicit as this master of the English language could make it, without ever lapsing into the realm of the crude. [See Appendix I.]

So. Now we know something of Edith Wharton—her background, her public life, her literary career, her private relationships. But we do not know her yet. To complete this brief picture it will help to expand our view to encompass not only Edith Wharton, but the role of friendship in her life. She had many dear friends—always making new ones, and seldom losing old ones, except to death, for her judgment about people—except perhaps Morton Fullerton—was as exquisite as her taste in furniture and landscape. While her intimate friendships were many, including Sarah Norton, daughter of Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard, Margaret Chanler, her sister-in-law Mary Cadwalader Jones, her niece Beatrix Farrand, Walter Berry, Gaillard Lapsley, Lord Kenneth Clarke, and Bernhard Berenson, I want to focus on two others, because it seems to me that understanding how the three of them related to each other explains more about Edith Wharton and the life that was most real to her than does anything else.

In *The Rambler*, Number 64, Dr. Johnson wrote:

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both. We are often, by superficial accomplishments and accidental endearments, induced to love those whom we cannot esteem; we are sometimes, by great abilities and incontestable evidences of virtue, compelled to esteem those whom we cannot love. But friendship, compounded of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other; and therefore requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgment, but that they should attract the affections; that they should not only be Firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity; not only useful in exigencies, but pleasing in familiar life; their presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the
gloom of fear and of melancholy.

Such friendship was at the center of the lives of Henry James, Henry Adams, and Edith Wharton. Evidence of their “equal virtue,” mutual “esteem and love,” their firmness and gaiety and cheerfulness and courage, is to be found in their correspondence, a few examples of which I want to share with you.

In embarking on this voyage I know I am running a risk Henry James himself described. These three towering figures of literature feel like friends to me after years of reading them and about them, and I want you to like them too. But James wrote:

Everyone has had friends it seemed a happy thought to bring together, and everyone remembers that his happiest thoughts have not been his greatest successes.

With hope for success here, we should begin with Edith Wharton’s description of friendship. She wrote that

The real marriage of true minds is for any two people to possess a sense of humor or irony pitched in exactly the same key, so that their joint glances at any subject cross like interarching searchlights . . . In that sense Henry James was perhaps the most intimate friend I ever had. . . .

Of course it is hardly surprising that James, Adams and Wharton found with each other real marriages of true minds. despite T.S. Eliot’s perhaps jealous observation that Henry James had a mind “so fine no idea could violate it.” Their senses of humor and irony were pitched in the same key, because, in part, they had been tuned to the same fork. It is no exaggeration to say that to the extent America had produced an aristocracy, these three were descended from its highest orders. Mrs. Wharton’s lineage we know. Adams was grandson and great-grandson of Presidents, and James’ grandfather literally owned Syracuse, New York and Union College. All three were wealthy, privileged, highly observant of and fastidious about the rules of their society, yet at once
highly critical of its foibles and hypocrisy. All three, to varying
degrees intensely American, were yet largely ex-patriot. James accepted
British citizenship at the end of his life after years of residence there;
Mrs. Wharton spent her last twenty-five years in France and extensive
travel; Adams, despite his devotion to Washington, spent much of his
time in France too, and much of the rest traveling the known world.
Adams’ marriage, if happy, was brief, although the happiness itself is
a major “if;” James never married; Mrs. Wharton’s marriage, as we
have seen, was an unmitigated disaster.

Each kept the commonplace world at a distance, kept sycophants
at bay, preferring to read, write, and to observe and absorb the known
cultural world. Largely they found that world wanting. They shared
their critical impressions, their judgments, their work; most of all,
I think, they shared the ironic distance from which they watched the
world. The distance was created by a sense, not merely of difference,
not merely of being an outsider, but of intellectual superiority. They
were, each of them, not snobs but what Louis Auchincloss called “ul-
tra-civilized person[s].” “Of course,” he also said, “it is often the fate of
such [people] to be taken for snobs.”

Mrs. Wharton, with particular reference to James, wrote this way
about it:

What is one’s personality, detached from that of the friends
with whom fate happens to have linked me? . . . From
a childhood and youth of complete intellectual isolation—
so complete that it accustomed me never to be lonely except
in company—I passed, in my early thirties, into an atmosphere
of the rarest understanding, the richest and most varied
mental comradeship.

She was twenty years younger than Henry James, and knew and
admired him through his books before she met him at a dinner party
in the home of a mutual friend in Paris. (It was a small circle, after all,
in which they moved around the world.) Once begun, their friendship
was the story of their being, as James wrote to Wharton, “more and
more never apart,” although, of course, they were often separated by an ocean, or at least a channel. Their letters reflect what kept them together. As Mrs. Wharton wrote later,

The truth is that he belonged irrevocably to the old America out of which I also came, and of which—almost—it might paradoxically be said that to follow up its last traces one had to come to Europe.

Their correspondence began in 1900, and James’ early letters to her are marked by the formality of that nearly Victorian time. He addresses her first as “Dear Mrs. Wharton,” and closes “yours, dear Mrs. Wharton, most truly,” or “most cordially,” or “yours very constantly.” Yet the reserve of the form of the letters is betrayed by both the passion and the insight of their contents. As we know, their friendship began with books. By 1900 she had published widely. In 1902 *The Valley of Decision*, an historical novel of eighteenth century Italy appeared.

James responded to the novel and the stories. In October of 1900 he wrote, after reading a story of hers in a magazine:

The subject is really a big one for the canvas—that was really your difficulty. But the thing is done. And I applaud, I mean I value, I egg you on in, your study of the American life that surrounds you. Let yourself go in it & at it—it’s an untouched field really; the folk who try, over there, don’t come within miles of any civilized, however superficially, any “evolved” life. And use to the full your ironic and satiric gifts; they form a most valuable (I hold) & beneficent engine. . . .

Her Italian novel two years later prompted him to remind her again that her natural subject was the American society they both knew and respected but in which neither could live comfortably. In August of 1902 James wrote to her about the book, moving quickly from praising it to telling her she had not yet found her true voice:

In the presence of a book so accomplished, pondered, saturated, so exquisitely studied and so brilliant and interesting from a
literary point of view, I feel that just now heartily to congratu-
late you covers plenty of ground. . . . So, as, after all, to men-
tion it in two words does it no sort of justice, let it suffer the
wrong of being crudely limited as my desire earnestly, tenderly,
intelligently to admonish you, while you are young, free, expert,
exposed (to illumination)—by which I mean while you’re in full
command of the situation—admonish you, I say, in favor of the
*American Subject*. There it’s round you. Don’t pass it by—the
immediate, the real, the ours, the yours, the novelist’s that it
waits for. Take hold of it & keep hold, & let it pull you where
it will. What I would say in a word is: Profit, be warned, by my
awful example of exile and ignorance. . . . DO NEW YORK!

This last James wrote in capital letters with an exclamation point. Of
course, she did do New York—and she did it so well that, as James
foresaw, reading about her Old New York in her books even now can
make it ours too.

As their friendship grew, James’ formality diminished. She became
his “My dear Edith,” then “My dear Edith!” with an exclamation
point, then “Dearest Edith,” and even “Dearly Beloved Edith,” while
he became hers “very faithfully and . . . most constantly,” and “always
and ever,” and “I shall be to the end your devotissimo.” Later, as he felt
his age, he became shamelessly maudlin, closing in French or Italian
for a time, and then lapsing into “your faithfulest old” Henry James,
or “your affectionate old,” or “Fondly faithful and faithfully fond old.”
It got worse at the end, but you get the idea. As always, however, his
letters contained brilliant observations about their world, literature
and life. Nevertheless he was sometimes caught by his own words, and
the tone of the letters often wars with their seriousness.

For example: Perhaps the unhappy conclusion of the Fullerton af-
fair is what led to James’ observation about his lack of success in bring-
ing his friends together. Nevertheless, James had supported, and even
encouraged, the affair by developing a scheme to have the MacMil-
lan publishing house pay Fullerton an “advance” on a book Fullerton
would be asked to write, in order to provide him money with which
to pay off his blackmailing former mistress. On July 26, 1909, James explains the plan to Mrs. Wharton this way:

. . . I have now written [MacMillan] in this sense: that I am aware of matters (I named them a little) in Morton’s situation that make me think a sum of money will be highly convenient to him, and that if M. writes to propose an advance I shall like greatly to send them, the MacMillans, a cheque for £100 that they may remit him the amount as from themselves, I remaining, and wishing to remain, wholly unmentioned in the affair.

In October of that year, still hoping to help Fullerton escape his problems, the seriousness of James’ purpose is somehow betrayed by the florid way he begins his letter in response to several from Mrs. Wharton:

Your letters came into my damp desert here even as the odour of promiscuous spices or the flavor of lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon might be wafted to some compromised oasis from a caravan of the Arabian nights . . . I hang about you in dreams, and you open up vistas to me in letters—never was a happier adjustment.

It is time to turn to Mrs. Wharton’s letters to James, but unhappily James destroyed most of these toward the end of his life and she kept few copies. Her letters to others, however, show how deeply she cared for and admired him. In 1912, using James’ own device, she had her publisher give him an $8,000 “advance” funded by her own royalties, for a new work from him. He never learned of the source of this happy event, but appreciated, more than the money, the request that he write. In 1910 and 1911 she organized an ultimately unsuccessful campaign on behalf of (and unknown to) James to win him the Nobel Prize for Literature. She turned her attention next, in 1913, to a plan to raise money—$5,000—from James’ American friends in honor of his seventieth birthday. James—although never truly lacking for money—never had either the commercial success or the inherited wealth of
Mrs. Wharton or Henry Adams, and they both worried—more than he—about his material well-being, particularly toward the end of his life when illness and the failure of the New York edition of his works limited his earnings. Despite Mrs. Wharton's careful planning, James got wind of the birthday scheme and stopped it immediately, writing “A more reckless and indiscreet undertaking, with no ghost of preliminary leave asked, no hint of a sounding taken, I cannot possible conceive.” He forgave quickly, however, and the surviving letters show no hint of hurt feelings on either side.

She always addressed James as “Dearest Cher Maître,” and usually ends as “your devoted Edith,” although toward the end we find “Je vous embrasse tendrement,” and “Best love.” Her surviving letters are often about her war work. His responses to her letters that did not survive suggest that those were more personal, more reflective of the depth of her feelings for him and about their friendship and what it had meant to her. However, even her largely descriptive surviving letters suggest an intimacy we can still feel. For example, she often wrote to him from her travels to the great houses of France. Her descriptions of interiors and of scenery, as you would expect, demonstrate the novelist’s keen eye for observation and gift for description, but in writing to James she lets down the guard of propriety, and gossips too. She also discloses her “highly civilized,” as Auchincloss put it, tastes. It does sound a little like snobbism as she describes a visit to a villa of their mutual friends, the French writer Paul Bourget and his wife, Minnie:

. . . I left Paris and went for a week to be with the [Bourgets] at Pougues les Euax, a vile place where, in a sinister little mouldy villa, they live (!) as Paul says: “Comme des choportes sous une pierre.” [Like wood lice under a stone] I “mealed” with them, but enjoyed the relative advantages of a clean room & a bathroom at the neighboring hotel.

During the war she often wrote to James from the battlefields with detailed and powerful descriptions of the feel and horror of war, making it real for James, who preferred his experiences to be in his mind.
But even in the midst of her personal war effort, the essential patrician Wharton resonated with her spiritual partner James. The commonplace still offends her, and finding evidence of it at the Ritz hotel in Paris, it seems even worse when manifested in the conduct of a dear friend, in this case Walter Berry. She writes to James from Paris in 1915 about his inquiry over a reported “rift” between Berry and Wharton:

Yes—I suffer as you do from the inability to communicate with people who are not vibrating to tune. They are far fewer here, however, than in London, I imagine. Even Walter vibrated—though he preferred to do it at the Ritz! In fact, it’s not a little rift but a little ritz that’s between us just now—for I can’t stand that scene of khaki and champagne. The British officer here isn’t as sympathetic as in the [battlefield].

As James’ health deteriorated during the War, Mrs. Wharton’s efforts on his behalf increased. When he fell ill at the same time as did the mother of his indispensable housekeeper Minnie, Mrs. Wharton provided a nurse for the ailing mother, keeping James in Minnie’s familiar care. At the very end she was in nearly daily and sometimes hourly communication with James’ devoted secretary Theodora Bosanquet, receiving reports and offering advice, comfort and assistance. After James’ death, Mrs. Wharton, out of her own sense of loss, had the grace to think of the devoted Miss Bosanquet. She wrote:

. . . I was so glad to know the end was quiet and unconscious. You will be feeling a great void now; but you will have happy and dear memories of the long years of your collaboration with one of the wisest and noblest men that ever lived. We who knew him well know how great he would have been if he had never written a line. I send you my deepest sympathy, and, I hope you will now go off quietly to the country to rest and think of your own work. Thank you again for your kindness in always remembering my longing for news.

To another she wrote that for her James had represented the “best I know in human nature,” and to still another, “His friendship has been
the pride & honor of my life.”

Although not as close as their respective relationships with James, Mrs. Wharton and Henry Adams had an affectionate friendship of their own. Adams was deeply involved in the unfortunate 70th birthday gift debacle, and he frequented Paris and Mrs. Wharton’s salon there in the glorious years between 1908 and the beginning of the war. Since the death of his wife more than twenty years earlier, Adams had been passionately devoted to Elizabeth Cameron, wife of a U.S. Senator, who later worked closely with Mrs. Wharton in her efforts on behalf of refugees. They were thus all much together in Paris. In addition, of course, the two of them had literally dozens of acquaintances in common, as well as their senses of themselves, and how they stood in relation to—or rather as unrelated to—so many others.

Adams writes of lunches and dinners with Mrs. Wharton, and of their common view of certain of those people. For example, writing to Mrs. Cameron in 1908, he reports on several social events he attended with Mrs. Wharton, concluding with one shared with the Bourgets, of whose lodgings, you will recall, Mrs. Wharton had written so dismissively:

I sat an hour yesterday with Mrs. Wharton and the Bourgets. . . . Mrs. Wharton really does make a social effort, and I approve it, . . . though rarely do I find it pay in small change. The individuals bring little reward. The Bourgets are Bourgeoises,—very! But in the mass, probably the woman gets something and by reflection I gain.

Later that year, complaining about Mrs. Wharton’s temporary departure from Europe, abandoning him there, he writes to Elizabeth Cameron:

. . . Pussy Wharton—as a few irrelevant contemporaries still call her—sailed yesterday, after spoiling me by planting me in her salon. I told her what fate waited her, and how she was floating into the fauteuil of Mme Récamier before the fire, with Chateaubriand on one side and Barante on the other, both
drivelling; only Chateaubriand would be Henry James and Barante would be Henry Adams.

A year later, bored and depressed, he writes James from Paris that “Even Edith Wharton cannot help me, though she abides among the high-lights and talks only with gens-d’esprit à la Louis Quatorze. chez Ritz.” One subject that often arose among them was their relationship with each other. James, for example, writing to Adams in 1912 of an impending visit of Mrs. Wharton as something he blessed, “because with other reasons, I shall be able to talk of you with her.” This was, indeed, a three-way friendship, one of the joys of which was sharing each other—a sort of intellectual ménage-a-trois.

James, with his Boston background, knew the Hoopers, and especially Marion “Clover” Hooper, even before she had married Henry Adams. Indeed, it was Clover who said of James that the trouble with him was not that he bit off more than he could chew, but that he “chawed more than he bit off.” After Clover’s death the two Henrys became even closer. Their letters are exchanges between people who saw each other, as they did very few others, as intellectual equals, and to whom intellectual equality mattered most. That they also recognized each other as social equals (or nearly so; no one, after all, but an Adams could be an Adams), made the exchanges even easier, and essentially unique. Only Edith Wharton was regarded by both as an intellectual and social equal.

How perfectly they all knew each other is the subject of Adams’ letter to James, after reading William Wetmore Story and His Friends, written in 1903 by James at the urging of the Story family. Adams writes:

Whether you have succeeded or not, I cannot say, because it all spreads itself out as though I had written it, and I feel where you are walking on firm ground, and where you are on thin ice, as though I were in your place. Verily I believe I wrote it. Except your specialty of style, it is me. The painful truth is that all of [us] . . . were in actual fact only one mind and nature.
We knew each other to the last nervous centre, and feared each other’s knowledge. We looked through each other like microscopes. There was absolutely nothing in us that we did not understand merely by looking in the eye. . . . We knew nothing—no! but really nothing! of the world. . . . So you have written not Story’s life, but your own and mine,—pure autobiography,—the more keen what is beneath, implied, intelligible only to me, and a half a dozen other people still living. . . . Improvised Europeans, we were . . . No one else will ever know it.

As the years pass the loss of many of their friends and relatives draws them all closer to each other, and the letters grew shorter, as if silence is enough to communicate all, or enough to communicate all they can bear. Here is Adams writing on death of James’ brother William:

I did not write to you about your brother William, because I fancied that letters were a burden to you. The other reason is that I felt the loss myself rather too closely to talk about it. We all began together, and our lives have made more or less of a unity, which is, as far as I can see, about the only unity that American society in our time had to show. Nearly all are gone . . . and with each, a limb of our own lives cut off. Exactly why we should be expected to talk about it, I don’t know.

Adams suffered a serious stroke in 1912, but made a remarkable recovery with much tender care from Mrs. Wharton in Paris. In 1914 he wrote to James, having read his memoir Notes of a Son and Brother, with typical Adams bitterness and gloom about the pointlessness of their lives, and the worthlessness of reliving their pasts. Here is James’ response, with a message he often delivered to Mrs. Wharton as well:

I have your melancholy outpouring . . . & I know not how to acknowledge it than by the full recognition of its unmitigated blackness. Of course we are lone survivors, of course the past that was our lives is at the bottom of an abyss—if the abyss has any bottom; of course there’s no use talking unless one particularly
wants to. But the purpose, almost, of my printed divagations was to show you that one *can*, strange to say, still want to—or at least can behave as if one did. Behold me therefore so behaving—& apparently capable of continuing to do so. I still find my consciousness interesting—under *cultivation* of the interest. Cultivate it *with* me. . . . You see I still, in the presence of life . . . have reactions—as many as possible. . . . It’s, I suppose, because I am that queer monster the artist, an obstinate finality. an inexhaustible sensibility. Hence the reactions—appearances, memories, many things go on playing upon it with consequences that I note & “enjoy” (grim word!) noting. It all takes doing—& I *do*. I believe I shall do yet again—it is still an act of life. . . .

Mrs. Wharton survived James by twenty-one years and Adams by nineteen. She lived those years with the vitality and enthusiasm James had urged on Adams, because she too was “that queer monster, the artist.” Like James, she continued to cultivate her consciousness to the end.

It was the romantic poet George Gordon, Lord Byron, who wrote, with Cupid in mind, that “Friendship is Love without his wings!” It was, with an irony they would have noted and enjoyed, these three modernists/realists, who proved Byron wrong. But it is Edith Newbold Jones Wharton whose work today is most read, even if she is still, perhaps, the least understood. Let me close with a picture of Mrs. Wharton drawn by the daughter of an old friend during Mrs. Wharton’s brief visit to America in 1923. At a dinner party at the grand Cutting family estate on Long Island the other guests wanted to hear about glamorous current Parisian society, but the guest of honor wanted to talk about the remnants of Old New York. Iris Cutting, later to become the Marchesa de val d’Orcia, tells the story this way:

> The W’s house on 11th Street, had it really been pulled down? Did her hostess remember the night they had dined there before the Colony Club ball? The X’s daughter, the fair one, had she married her young Bostonian? Had Z indeed lost all
his money? For the whole evening this mood continued. At one moment only—as the last guest had gone, she turned half-way up the stairs to wave good night—I caught a glimpse of the other Edith, elegant, formidable, as hard and dry as porcelain. Then, as she looked down on her old friends, the face softened, even the erectness of her spine relaxed a little. She was no longer the trim, hard European hostess, but a nice old American lady. Edith had come home.

Perhaps so, but only briefly, and not in the sense of returning to the land where she was born. She had returned home instead to her past, “another country” one writer has called it, but the only one from which Edith Wharton was never truly in exile.
Science teaches that there are three biologic imperatives: nourishment, sleep, and sex. More nuanced scientists themselves no doubt sense there is a fourth, perhaps not biologically driven, but imperative nonetheless: friendship. It is what brings us together here at Rowfant, and it has been the impetus behind an enormous range of voluntary associations at least since classical times. There have been religious sodalities for more than a millennium, and labor organizations, guilds, musical organizations, benefit societies, and myriad others, more than a year’s worth of Rowfant talks. Tonight though I want to focus on a particular association, called “The Club” by its members. It was established in 1764, but by that year “clubs” had existed in England at least since the Society of Antiquaries began its regular meetings in 1586. One scholar has estimated that at least 2,000 voluntary associations existed in the English-speaking world by 1764.

Is there something essentially English about clubs? I don’t know. The word itself comes from *clifian*, Anglo-Saxon for “cleft” and referring to the notion that members of a club divide its expenses among themselves. And there is that very old joke that if any three Englishmen were deserted on an island two of them would form a club in order to exclude the other. In any event, the story of The Club is an Anglophile’s dream. According to one version, sometime, perhaps in 1762, Lord Charlemont, an Irish politician, proposed the idea to Sir Joshua Reynolds, probably to provide Samuel Johnson with an outlet for his love of company and conversation. Reynolds proposed the
idea to Johnson, and according to legend suggested Lord Charlemont be an original member. Johnson demurred, saying, “No, we should be called Charlemont’s Club, let him come in afterwards.” The Club began to meet in 1763 or 1764; it was nine years before Lord Charlemont was finally admitted.

What was its function? In his great 1755 Dictionary of the English Language Johnson had defined a club as “an assembly of good fellows meeting under certain conditions. . . .” He did not then specify the conditions, but as early as 1749 he had formed a club to meet weekly at a tavern called the King’s Head, in Ivy Lane. This “Ivy Lane” club gave Johnson a place “to pass those hours in a free and unrestrained interchange of sentiments, which otherwise had been spent at home in painful reflection,” reported Sir John Hawkins, Johnson’s first full biographer, one of the executors of his will, and one of the original members of The Club, as well as of its Ivy Lane predecessor.

Perhaps we get a better feel for what The Club meant to Johnson by comparing Sir John Hawkins with Boswell in terms of their suitability for membership. Johnson, we know, feared only two things in life—madness and solitude. Thus he tells us that “whoever thinks of going to bed before twelve o’clock is a scoundrel.” And he loved conversation—he talked “as often for victory as for truth,” and he told Hawkins how much he loved the fact that at his club, meeting in a tavern, he had

... free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight.

Boswell, on the other hand, tells us Oliver Goldsmith, also a member of The Club, reported that “there is no arguing with Johnson; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it.” In any event, Johnson the lexicographer created two new words to describe the kind of “good fellows” he wanted to converse with at his clubs. The first is Sir John Hawkins, who, depending on whose version you believe either “seceded” (his word) from The Club because
he objected to its late hours, or was “sent to Coventry,” because at one meeting he was so rude to Edmund Burke that the other members made him thereafter unwelcome. Johnson observed, after Hawkins declined to pay his share of the cost for a club dinner on the grounds he had eaten at home, that “Sir John, Sir, is a very unclubable man.” “Boswell,” on the other hand, Johnson said when proposing him for membership in his proposed Essex Head club in 1783, “is a very clubable man.”

Thus we have the very essence of The Club—a group of extraordinarily distinguished men, who meet for conversation. Who were they? On their trip to the Hebrides, about which each wrote a remarkable book, Boswell and Johnson agreed that the members in the year 1773 could form the faculty of a great university—Boswell teaching law, Edmund Burke politics and eloquence, David Garrick “public speaking,” Joshua Reynolds painting and the arts, Goldsmith poetry, and others of equal stature teaching the subjects in which they were “first in their profession,” in Johnson’s words. It is often remarked that the eighteenth century was the last time an educated person could be reasonably familiar with all branches of knowledge—not expert, but, in Johnson terms, able to converse intelligently about virtually anything. Thus it was with The Club. Originally there were nine members; by the time of Johnson’s death there were thirty-five living, and a total of forty-five had been anointed. In this original group we find Johnson, Boswell, Reynolds, Burke, Goldsmith, David Garrick, William Jones, the great orientalist, master of twenty-eight languages, Charles James Fox, the influential politician, Adam Smith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Joseph Banks, the great naturalist, Earl Spencer of Althorp, and others, almost all of whom were of nearly equal distinction in their day.

Of course there were some outliers. Agmondesham Vesey, MP, for example, was second husband to the famous Bluestocking hostess Elizabeth Vesey. Once she spoke quite harshly of a widow who had remarried, and her companion reminded her of her own Agmondesham Vesey, to which she replied, “Bless me, my dear, I had quite forgotten it.” In 1774, The Club elected Dr. George Fordyce, a successful
physician. So the story goes he slept little and drank much. According to legend, at least, after a typical dinner including a tankard of ale, a bottle of port, and four ounces of brandy he was called to see a society woman patient, but found himself too drunk to take her pulse. “Drunk, by God,” he said aloud to himself, and went home. He was relieved no doubt when the lady’s footman showed up next morning with a note that said, “I know from what you said last night that you have discovered my unfortunate condition. I entreat you to keep the matter a secret between us. . . .” And there was William Locke. The Club’s records report only that his father was a famous connoisseur, and his son an amateur artist, and about William himself, merely that he sold his estate in 1819 and lived thereafter in London and Paris. Even Johnson sometimes thought that some of the members were not all that he wished for—“I should be sorry if any of our Club were hanged,” he said, “I will not say but some of them deserve it.”

In general, though, standards for admission were high and remained that way. By 1905, for example, there had been 233 members, all but eight of whom had significant write-ups in the Dictionary of National Biography. But when Adam Smith was elected in 1775 Boswell wrote to his friend William Temple that “Smith is now of our Club. It has lost its select merit.” Nor could one too actively seek admission. Boswell (who did, of course, promote himself and of which more later) claims that soon after The Club was founded in 1763, David Garrick, the greatest actor of the age, and after Johnson, the most famous “celebrity” of his day, and, more important, Johnson’s beloved friend since he had been a boy in Johnson’s failed school in Edial, said to Sir Joshua Reynolds of The Club, “I like it much . . . I think I shall be of you.” When Reynolds reported this to Johnson his reply was “He’ll be of us[?] How does he know we will permit him? The first Duke in England has no right to such language.” It was not until 1773—with Johnson’s support—that Garrick was elected.

There are no doubt many reasons for this selectivity. First, as reported by Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore and author of the ground-breaking Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, “It was intended that if
only two . . . chanced to meet for the evening, they should be able to entertain each other.” Dr. Percy clearly did not contemplate the night in 1825 when one member—Robert Jenkinson, then the Prime Minister, the Earl of Liverpool—was the only one to show up, and dined alone (consuming, the records show, a single bottle of wine). Another clue is in the expectation most members had that whatever they had achieved to date, more was to be accomplished. Although the precise conversation is reported in multiple versions, Boswell tells us that once Dr. Thomas Barnard, Bishop of Killaloe and Limerick, and a very learned man, elected to The Club in 1775, suggested that a man could not improve after age forty-five, Johnson disagreed and responded—perhaps—“I do not say that there are not some exceptions: pray, Sir, how old are you?” Dr. Barnard next day wrote a delightful poem about the exchange, and about what he might learn from the members of The Club, concluding with this stanza:

Let fairest Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrowed grace,
From him I’ll learn to write;
Copy his clear and easy style.
And from the roughness of his file,
Grow, as himself,—polite.

Next day, Johnson apologized profusely. And, finally, perhaps the limitations on membership—first nine, then ten, then raised at various times to twelve, twenty, twenty-six, then thirty, and finally to forty, where, I believe, it still remains—tell us something. When Oliver Goldsmith once suggested raising the limit, he said, “to give it an agreeable variety; for there can now be nothing new amongst us. We have travelled over one another’s minds,” Johnson replied, “Sir, you have not travelled over my mind, I promise you.” During his lifetime Johnson generally objected to expansion of the membership, once suggesting that it had become like a “public dinner.”

Before we leave The Club in the Age of Johnson, we ought to pause and consider briefly how deep were the friendships nurtured there.
There is of course the Boswell-Johnson relationship. Although Boswell was famous throughout Europe for his book on Corsica, written shortly after he met Johnson in the founding year of The Club, 1763, he was not admitted until 1773. During their trip to the Hebrides later that year Johnson told Boswell that several members had wished to keep him out, then said, “Sir, they knew that if they refused you, they’d probably never have got another in.” One blackball, it should be said, was enough to keep someone out. (In fact, among others who were kept out was Boswell’s son James, in 1795 shortly after his father’s death.) Johnson told Boswell, “Sir, you got into our Club by doing what a man can do.” An example of what could be done is found in a letter Boswell wrote to Bishop Percy before the night of his election. In it Boswell writes:

I hope you will remember me at the Club tonight, Sir Joshua, Mr. Johnson, Dr Goldsmith have obligingly engaged to be for me. . . .

Self-promoter though he was, the relationship between Boswell and Johnson was extraordinarily close, and The Club brought them closer. After 1773 Johnson’s attendance at the monthly dinners and weekly suppers of the enlarged club when Parliament was in session was more regular when Boswell was in town.

Other examples abound. For instance, upon the death of Goldsmith it was Johnson who wrote an epitaph for him to be inscribed in Westminster Abbey, sending it to The Club for approval through Reynolds in a letter referring to “the poor dear Doctor.” The epitaph, in Latin, is a loving tribute, and one Johnson agreed to alter in accordance with The Club’s wishes, except that, Johnson wrote, he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription.

When David Garrick died, Johnson proposed a period of one year’s “widow-hood” for The Club, during which no new member could be elected to fill the vacancy, and he was reported to have been seen at the grave-side during the funeral, “bathed in tears.” Garrick’s death, said
Johnson, was “a loss which the world cannot repair,” and one which “eclipsed the gaiety of nations.”

And, finally, let us look at Dr. Nugent. Elected in 1764 as a charter member, Dr. Nugent was a physician, and father-in-law of Edmund Burke. Nugent was a Roman Catholic, and as was the custom, did not eat meat on Fridays, when The Club met for its weekly suppers. Thus Dr. Nugent often dined on an omelet. After Nugent’s death, Johnson was on another occasion served an omelet, which brought tears to his eyes, and prompted him to say, “Ah, dear friend, I shall never eat an omelet with thee again.”

Friendship and conversation. Before we move on to The Club in the years after Johnson’s death it is worth reviewing Boswell’s most lengthy report of a Club meeting, Friday, 3 April 1778. Among others present in addition to Boswell and Johnson were Edmund Burke, the Earl of Upper Ossory, Joshua Reynolds, Edward Gibbon, and Richard Sheridan. It was more like a Rowfantian Saturday lunch with table-talk than a Wednesday or Friday. Among the subjects discussed were the story of Alcibiades’ dog from Plutarch, the art of sculpture, as evidence that it is how well something is done rather than the thing itself that matters, emigration policy and its effect on population and the economy, political speeches in Parliament, self-interest in politicians, travel books and tourists’ morals, the linguistic basis of the Irish language, goodness and evil as existing in all men, temptation, and last, but not least, and reminiscent of past Rowfant practice, whether a member could be induced to donate another hogshead of wine for future gatherings. Johnson volunteered to try. Not a bad evening.

But it is time to move on. Johnson died in 1784, and in 2012 The Club still thrives. Let me divide the rest of the story into two parts—from 1784 to 1914 and from 1914 to the present. My reason for doing this is that in 1905 Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, MP and former Governor of Madras in the Raj, and later President of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Historical Society, a member since 1889, wrote a history of The Club. Whether he was a relation of Mountstuart Elphinstone, eleventh Baron Elphinstone
and a member of The Club from 1830–1859, I have not been able to determine. In any event, Grant Duff did not write his history of The Club for The Club, but rather for the Roxburghe Club, the oldest and most distinguished bibliophilic society in the world. Each member is, still, required to create a book for presentation to the Roxburghe membership, which itself is limited to forty. Most of these books are, at least in my experience, exquisite and fascinating. *The Club 1764–1905*, however, was not Roxburghe’s finest work. It is disorganized, incomplete, and omits much that could have been told.

Thus in 1914 The Club itself appointed a committee to prepare a new, complete, and “conservative account of The Club’s transactions.” Although drawing on Grant Duff’s earlier work, the *Annals of The Club, 1764–1914* is a very different book indeed. I have brought a copy, one of 100 printed at the Oxford University Press, for you to consider. Beautifully designed and executed, it has the virtues of superb paper, typography, and format, and is an excellent source for what happened after Johnson’s death until the days before World War I. Of course changes in the times, frequency, and places of meetings were common, and these facts and others are faithfully reported. More interesting are the stories. For instance, in 1789 before Joshua Reynolds—the “Romulus” of The Club—died, the members pledged five guineas each at his instigation, and finally subscribed £1,100, for a statue of Johnson to be created for installation in Westminster Abbey. It was executed but installed at St. Paul’s, where it can be seen today. The Club’s history points out, however, that there was a “backwardness of some members in paying the sums promised.” *The Annals* records some wonderful moments—for example in 1793, it gives us the report of the musicologist Charles Burney to his daughter, the novelist Frances Burney, of a meeting of The Club after the French Revolution had beheaded Louis XVI. There in attendance, awkwardly, were both Charles James Fox, defender of the Revolution, and Edmund Burke’s son. Burke himself of course was the great critic of the Revolution, most famously in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Dr. Burney reported that “. . . though the company was chiefly composed of the most elo-
quent and loquacious men in the kingdom, the conversation was the
dullest and most uninteresting I ever remember . . . ,” as the members
struggled to avoid any mention of monarchies or politics. The records
also reflect frequent increases in the cost of the clifian, or cost sharing,
by members for their meals. Attendance rose and fell, although never
below that time in 1825 when Lord Liverpool dined alone. From 1849
to 1859 there are detailed reports of conversations at dinner, taken from
the diaries of the seventh earl of Carlisle, MP and cabinet member,
who clearly had a Boswellian talent for anecdote. Then beginning in
1890 Sir Grant Duff’s diaries—the author of the 1905 history—are
often quoted, until 1900. While interesting and informative, they are
hardly Boswellian.

Changes in location and times and prices of meals and supplies
of wine are well enough—and provide interesting parallels for Row-
fant—but of greater importance and interest is the changing member-
ship. From the death of Johnson in 1784 to the publication of the only
official history of The Club, the Annals, in 1914, we must be astonished
by the quality of a membership which scarcely ever reached forty un-
til 1914 and seldom exceeded thirty-five. By 1914, 150 years after its
founding, The Club had already had nine members who were prime
minister, in addition to archbishops of Canterbury and leading figures
from literature, art, science, medicine, and other fields.

Here is a list of some prominent post-Johnson members before World
War I, and then a look at some other members. Consider what din-
ner conversation—table-talk—would be like with them at our sides:
George John Spencer, the second earl of Althorp, ancestor of Princess
Diana, and one of the great bibliophiles of all time, he was the first
president of the Roxburghe Club and builder of the great Althorp
Library; Edmund Malone, Boswell’s editor, authority on Shakespeare
and Dryden; Charles Burney, the musicologist; George Canning,
Prime Minister; Sir Humphrey Davy, scientist and inventor; Rich-
ard Heber, bibliophile, MP, and possessor at his death of eight large
houses full of books, about 150,000 volumes, the sale of which took
216 days at auction; Sir Walter Scott, the novelist; Sir Thomas Lawrence, the painter; Thomas Babington Macaulay, historian, critic, MP, and secretary of war; William Gladstone, of whom the Annals mysteriously conclude his biographical sketch, after reporting his election as prime minister, with “to carry history further in this book would be very undesirable. The fires lie a great deal too near the surface”; Henri D’Orleans, Duc D’Aumale, fourth son of King Louis Philippe of France, who among other things, spent £200,000 restoring the palace at Chantilly; Alfred, Lord Tennyson; Richard Monckton Milnes, MP, man of Society, poet—the Annals reports that “like most poets he wrote too much . . . His chief fault was that his passion for paradox was such that he really did not know at last what he did, and did not, think”; Sir Henry Maine, great jurist and legal scholar; Mathew Arnold; Lord Kelvin, the physicist; Lord Balfour, prime minister and author of the Balfour Declaration, the foundational document of an independent Jewish state in Israel; and Rudyard Kipling.

As impressive as this list is, it may be more fun to explore excerpts from The Club’s own records about some of the lesser known members between 1784 and World War I. For example, there was Thomas Warton, Oxford professor who became poet laureate of England, despite the fact that an outstanding critic of the day observed that “the gods had made him poetical, but not a poet.” Or Edmund Burke’s son Richard, of whom the Annals report his father “. . . believed him to have abilities of the highest order, and through his father’s influence, no doubt, he was elected . . . no one seems to have shared the elder Burke’s opinion of the young man.” Of Dr. Richard Warren, physician, The Club’s records report, “He made a larger annual income than any of his brethren had ever been known to do in England.” John Courtenay, MP, was elected in 1788, but the records show that “He was a voluminous author both in verse and prose; but produced little of much importance.” Francis Osborne, the Fifth Duke of Leeds, elected to The Club in 1792, “. . . spoke for the last time in the House of Lords in May 1797, and expressed his opinion that Parliamentary Reform was a most dangerous remedy to resort to.” Then we have Richard Farmer,
elected in 1795. The *Annals* report that “. . . he loved above all three things, old port, old clothes, and old books; also that there were three things which nobody would persuade him to do—namely, to rise in the mornings, to go to bed at night, or to settle an account.”

Although I want to move ahead to the almost full century since publication of the *Annals* there are a few more nineteenth-century nuggets worth picking up. Sir Vicary Gibbs, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, who was “In politics . . . a Tory of the Tories, a despotic Law Officer, but a learned and conscientious judge,” or Henry Hallam, father of Arthur, the subject of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam.” Perhaps some of us can relate to Sir David Dundas, bibliophile. When a fellow collector complained to him of the long delay of a famous bookbinder, Dundas replied, “Ah! Yes, a very careful man, a good careful man; he has got a great many books of mine which I never expect to see again.” There was the famous historian, Lord Acton, remembered now chiefly for “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” And Sir Frances Doyle, who in 1886 at age 76 published “a volume of Reminiscences, which would have been more interesting if they had been put together earlier.” Henry Cowper—“A man of very considerable ability, great knowledge, and infinite charm, he would have done much more in Public life, if Private life had not done so much for him.” Perhaps we might close this selection of mostly nineteenth-century members with a brief nod to George Boyle, the very Reverend Dean of Salisbury. His election was 20 March 1901. The *Annals* report, “The letter announcing his election reached him the morning of 21 March, and gave him profound satisfaction, more than any similar honor could possibly have done; but in the evening a failure of the heart quite suddenly declared itself, and he died about eleven o’clock.” Oddly enough, he is not the only member never to have attended a meeting. Viscount Peel, elected 1896, died 1912, without ever having appeared.

Before moving on to the last one hundred years of The Club, a few miscellaneous items: reading the brief biographies in the *Annals*, the reports of meetings taken from Boswell, member diaries, and other
sources, two things are obvious. First, that extraordinary, wide-ranging conversations among churchmen and painters, politicians, and authors, scientists, and men of leisure remained a hallmark of the meetings, no matter where held or how frequently, or beginning at 4:30, or, as later, 5:30, or 7:30, or 8:00. Second, that membership in The Club brought together men who were close friends; the brief biographies refer again and again to the wit and conversational skills of the members, and to relationships that were long and deep among them. Another point that is obvious—selectivity and high standards continued, although, as you have heard, there were a few whose worldly accomplishments were little, although even those are noted often for their charm, erudition, and conversational power. The members of The Club were, as someone else has observed, “a constellation of eminent men,” or as another put it, “. . . a brilliant manifestation of [the] triumph of the aristocracy of the mind.” Here, one measure: in 1911 two men of accomplishment, one of whom had been an MP, home secretary and first lord of the admiralty, sought membership but were denied it. In a fit of pique they founded their own club, called it “The Other Club,” and left it thriving, as it still does today. They were F. E. Smith and Winston Churchill.

The fact is that after World War I The Club became more private. No history has been written since then, no list of members published, and I could find few published references to it by members. The Club has had its imitators though. For example in 1942 in Chicago a group of men organized something they called “The Boswell Club.” It met, at least in the early years, monthly to “Bite, Burp and Bibble,” or eat, drink, and talk. Each member was identified as someone of Johnson’s acquaintance, and could only refer to himself by that historical name at meetings of the Boswell Club or in reference to it. I do have the names of many of the early members, but recognize none. One of them put together a book about the Boswell Club, a hodge-podge of essays, history, and biography, in 1946. In 1948 a Washington lawyer and Johnson aficionado, with a nod to the Chicago Club, published a book called Anecdotes of the Literary Club, full of passages lifted from the DNB and
Duff Stuart’s 1905 history, and full of mistakes, such as the remark that The Club was generally known as The Literary Club after Reynold’s death. In fact, Boswell started referring to it that way after Garrick’s death, but the name never stuck, as The Club’s official records and sole publication demonstrate. Yet the existence of the Boswell Club in Chicago (it seems to have disappeared in the late 1970s) and others like it elsewhere suggests how influential and powerful a symbol and model it remained into the twentieth century.

Much of what we know, or what at least I know, about the post-World War I history comes from only a few sources. I was fortunate to have had a few actual and virtual conversations with knowledgeable Londoners who provided some anecdotal material. And I was lucky enough to find on-line a paper given in 2004 about Dr. Johnson and University College, Oxford, by Lord Butler of Brockwell, then master of University College, who there tipped that “every month I am entitled to dine as a member of The Club founded by Johnson and Reynolds…” Lord Butler graciously responded to my inquiries, supplied some additional information, but, after consultation with Lord Lloyd of Berwick, former lord of appeal in ordinary, and another member, determined that it would not be appropriate to disclose the present membership. They did confirm that The Club continues to meet for dinner and conversation at Brooks’s once each month when Parliament is in session. Brooks’s, one of London’s fine private clubs, coincidentally, was originally Almack’s, a gambling club established in 1764 where at least one early member of The Club—Charles James Fox—routinely gambled enormous sums of money.

As luck would have it though, there is a wealth of information in an essay by another recent member, Thomas Bingham, baron Bingham of Cornhill and former chief justice. In 2000 he had delivered the presidential address to the Johnson Society of Litchfield, which was never published. However, shortly before his death in 2010, Baron Bingham agreed to the publication of “Clubs and Celebrity” in a small volume published by Dr. Johnson’s House Trust, of which I happen to be a governor—what follows is thus mostly courtesy of Baron Bingham.
He relates that in 1965 The Club began to meet at the Café Royal before moving to Brooks’s. What he tells of members since 1905 is encouraging. You will recall that the 1914 Annals reports that nine members had been prime minister by that date. Baron Bingham reports two more since then, Harold Macmillan and Alec Douglas-Home. And although Tennyson, Sir Walter Scott, and Rudyard Kipling no longer attended meetings much into the twentieth century, it is a sign that standards have held up to know that T. S. Eliot and John Betjeman did. The arts side of the membership has scarcely suffered too, with the memberships of Sir Gerald Kelly, the painter, Sir Kenneth Clark, Basil Spence, the architect, and Sir Arthur Bliss, the musician, along with lord.chancellors, chief justices, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the dean of Westminster.

Johnson loved taverns, where The Club originally met, and it moved from tavern to tavern, and then hotels, over the years. As Sir John (“unclubable”) Hawkins reports, Johnson asserted

... That a tavern-chair [is] the throne of felicity. As soon, said he, “as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants . . .

Among the wants supplied was often apple pie, as it was at Johnson’s direction the night the Ivy Lane club met to celebrate the publication of Charlotte Lennox’s first novel. Sir John Hawkins reports:

... Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pye should make part of it, and this he would have stuck with bay-leaves, because forsooth, Mrs. Lennox was an authoress, and had written verses; and further, he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not until he had invoked the Muses . . . he encircled her brow.

Mrs. Lenox was, of course, a guest, not a member, that night in 1751 in the Ivy-Lane at the King’s Head tavern.
Baron Bingham observes that The Club no longer meets at taverns and goes on to say:

Johnson might not think that a change for the better. But he would surely be gratified that the club which Reynolds and he founded still meets, on a regular monthly basis, after more than two and a quarter centuries within a few hundred yards of where he last attended, still attracting some at least of the first men in their professions. He would surely see that as evidence that the members are, on the whole, clubable, like Boswell, and not the reverse, like poor Sir John. And he would, we may feel sure, nurture a faint hope that there might be apple pie on the menu.

As there was tonight. The only way to conclude this talk is with the motto devised for The Club, to which its members drank, and which a multitude of Johnson-related societies have since adopted. I suggest Rowfant do so too.

*Esto Perpetua*

*May it last forever.*

**NOTES**

1 Quoted from the manuscript in the collection of the author.
Dorando and the Douglas Cause

Looking out at tonight’s audience I feel confident that the vast majority know the name James Boswell; perhaps a slightly smaller number have even read his magisterial (a favorite word of reviewers) biography, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. A still smaller number may be familiar with *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*; a much diminished minority will have read Boswell’s *London Journal*. None, I will guess, without meaning to condescend to such a distinguished gathering of readers, will know *Dorando, A Spanish Tale*, or its origins in the Douglas Cause. At least, I hope not, for the sake of telling you something you did not already know.

Why Boswell at all? Why bother with the work or life of an eighteenth century Scots lawyer and author who was as dissolute as he was prolific, as debauched as he was engaged in the wide world of culture and politics and law in England and the rest of Europe? And who, now, seldom appears in the syllabus listings of even the largest English departments? The reason was best stated by the late Prof. Frederick Pottle of Yale, known to afficionados as “Boswellianissimus.” Prof. Pottle wrote:

> There is nothing painful in the autobiography either of a saint or of a complacent libertine. John Wesley’s Journal is not painful, nor does one suffer as he reads the Memoirs of Casanova. We can stand apart from such men and judge their lives as we would works of pure fiction. But Boswell’s Journal is painful to read, because, while we are laughing with him and at him,
while we are being shocked at him and disgusted with him, the scales fall from our eyes and we come suddenly to see that he is ourselves. He is the articulate honest expression of that state of being which nearly all of us experience: of piety that seldom issues in righteousness; of primordial indecencies mocking our boast of civilization; of ambitions misdirected beyond our strength; of warring motives which can never be reconciled; of childish dreams carried over into mature life. Like him we do our best work half-heartedly while we pursue phantoms; we spend our lives in turmoil and heartache, lacking the power to shape our destinies.

Born in 1740 Boswell was admitted to the Scots Bar as Advocate in 1766. He practiced law until his death in 1795, and was surely among the first lawyers anywhere to do “pro bono” criminal defense work. In 1768 his published account of his visit to Corsica became an intentional best-seller, translated into five languages immediately after publication, making him famous at twenty-eight. He was a friend to the celebrities of his world and time, and he was an accomplished writer and lawyer. But it is on none of these aspects of this multi-faceted man that we will focus tonight. Instead, I want to talk to you about Boswell the “spin doctor.” He was, among his other accomplishments, one of the early practitioners of “public relations,” or “media management.” As with his unrenumerative defense of criminal defendants, Boswell invented this role for himself out of his own personal passions and needs.

James Boswell was a proud—even vain—man in many respects. Among the most deep-seated sources of his pride was his lineage. His father, Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, was a distinguished member of the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary, respectively the highest civil and criminal courts in Scotland. For many generations the Boswells had been proud lairds in Ayrshire. King James IV had presented the original Auchinleck lands to Thomas Boswell in 1504, whose wife was a descendant of the original Auchinlecks, who had held it since at least 1300. Through his mother’s line, the
Erskines, Boswell was related to both the Stuart Pretender, James, and George III. When he talked about his ancient lineage, as he often did, Boswell was merely claiming his truthful ancestry, linking him to the brightest names in Scots and English history. In a brief autobiographical sketch he wrote in 1764 to introduce himself to Jean Jacques Rousseau, he closed with his most fervent hope for himself—“If I can be a worthy Scots laird.”

Given his concern with family and lineage and hereditary property, it is no surprise that Boswell was attracted to what was known as the Douglas Cause—perhaps the most famous litigation in Scotland—even all of Britain—in the eighteenth century. Although the litigation began in 1762, about a year after the death of the Duke of Douglas in 1761, its roots went back to the relationship between Archibald Douglas and his sister Lady Jane. The Douglas clan was among the oldest and wealthiest in Britain, with enormous landholdings, and it was the proudest name in Scotland. The Duke himself, however, was described as “a man of weak intellect, violent, unsocial, and unforgiving.” His sister, on the other hand, by one contemporary account “was universally acknowledged to be one of the most accomplished women of her age or country, remarkably handsome in her person, liberal in her mind, and engaging in her manners.” Lady Jane however suffered an unhappy end to “a most advantageous” courtship in 1721, and then withdrew from the social scene. She lived with her brother the Duke, also single, and as the years passed it was assumed they would both die unmarried and childless.

As might be expected the siblings had their occasional spats; during one of those fallings-out, Lady Jane, then forty-eight, fell in love with Col. John Stewart, age fifty-nine. The Colonel, although of good family, was unfortunately the second son, and penniless. The Duke of Douglas found John Stewart unacceptable for this and other reasons, and since Lady Jane depended on her brother for her living, the not-so-young couple deliberately and secretly eloped in 1746, leaving immediately for the continent. Now the story gets interesting. According to one version, the Stewarts traveled anonymously, with Lady Jane’s
companion, Mrs. Hewit, and two maids, in Holland and France, until, *mirabile dictu*, in 1748 Lady Jane’s pregnancy at the age of fifty necessitated disclosure of the marriage. By this version of the story, in July of 1748, Lady Jane gave birth in Paris to twin sons, Archibald, named for his uncle, and Sholto. The happy but impoverished family returned to England in 1749, but the angry Duke withdrew the allowance he had previously given to his sister. The Colonel himself was then sent to jail for debt, but through the intervention of friends his generous highness King George II restored to Lady Jane the sum of 300 pounds per annum. It was, however, merely a subsistence amount for aristocrats like the poor Stewarts.

Thus, in 1752 Lady Jane went from London to Scotland to seek a reconciliation with her brother. She was literally turned away at the castle door, with a child in each hand. It was said that when she appeared the Duke’s chief servant—a man with close connections to the Hamiltons—locked him in his apartments to be sure he didn’t give in to sentiment and forgive her her unfortunate marriage. Crushed, Lady Jane returned to London, where, increasingly despondent after the death of Sholto later that year, and another rejection by her brother, she herself died, destitute, in 1753.

The Duke, in 1754, and at urging of interested parties, executed a settlement of his whole estate on the Duke of Hamilton, failing the existence of heirs of his own. In 1757 he executed a second deed, confirming the first, and adding explicitly that the surviving son of his sister should in no event succeed to his estate and title. Let us turn to a contemporary account for what happened next:

The Duke of Douglas had, during the greater part of his life, so entirely withdrawn himself from the world, and had
of young Archibald Douglas. In fact it was widely thought that she had married the old Duke, in part at least, to foil the Hamiltons. In 1759, John Stewart’s brother died, and the formerly impecunious Colonel became Sir John of Grandtully—not rich, but at least now respectable. The new Duchess began to make progress too—in 1759 the Duke revised his estate, settling it on his own nearest heirs, without any exception against his nephew. In January of 1760 he took the next step, and cancelled his prior settlements on the Duke of Hamilton. Then, in 1761, falling ill, the Duke executed his last deed, settling all he had on Archibald Douglas, son of his deceased sister Lady Jane. Ten days later he died. His death was followed immediately by a sort of will contest, with Hamilton and Douglas each seeking to be “served heir” to the Douglas estates. Douglas won. And the great Douglas Cause was under way.

Rather than appeal, the Hamilton side brought a new suit, in 1762, an action known as Partes Suppositio. The litigation was intended to oust Archibald Douglas of his inherited estate, and its basis was the claim that he was a “supposititious” child; that is, not the child of Lady Jane at all, but instead the kidnapped child of a Parisian glass-worker named Mignon. Moreover, it was alleged, the late lamented Sholto, his brother, had also been supposititious, Sholto alleged to have been stolen from a French acrobat named Sanry. It was incredible, the Hamiltons claimed, to think that Lady Jane had given birth for the first time at age fifty-one, to twins, in Paris.

Immediately after the decision in 1761 serving Archibald Douglas as heir to the Duke, the Hamilton side had sent a representative—rather like a private investigator—to Paris to track down the truth. He reported back that the whole history of Lady Jane’s alleged pregnancy and delivery was a fraud, that the travels of the Stewarts around the time of the alleged pregnancy, the Stewart’s finances, affidavits and records, were lies and forgeries. The Stewarts did not stay where they claimed, the deliveries had not taken place where or as described, the witnesses for the Stewarts had either lied or could not be found, and, in general, every aspect of the Douglas/Stewart claim and story
was asserted by the Hamiltons’ investigators to be false, and countered
by contradictory witnesses and records found and developed by the
Hamiltons’ agents.

Although James Boswell had first met Archibald Douglas in 1762,
they were merely casual acquaintances, young new men-around-town.
A great deal had happened in the course of the litigation before Bos-
swell’s interest was aroused. A Condescendence of Facts . . . was printed
by the “Pursuers,” that is, the Hamilton side, in 1763. This summary
of the case against Douglas was followed by printed pleadings—or
“Proofs”—submitted to the Court of Session by each side, at substan-
tial length, in response to demands by two of the judges in 1765 and
1766. Then, in 1766 and 1767 two massive Memorials, one for each side,
were printed and bound. Each of these volumes is over a thousand
pages in length, and contains numerous letters, documents, records,
arguments and affidavits, as well as legal briefs, and citations to French
and English law and other material. It was at about the time of the
publication of these massive Memorials that Boswell seems to have
become interested in the Douglas Cause, perhaps because in July of
1766 he had “passed Advocate,” and become a practicing lawyer. The
Cause was, of course, the talk of all the members of the Scottish bar.

Since by this time the case had been pending for four years, and
Boswell was merely a newly admitted practitioner, he could not have
expected to be engaged to participate as counsel, although his father,
Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, was one of the judges on the
Court of Session before which the case was pending. Under rules
slightly different from today’s, much of Boswell’s early work came
to him precisely because it involved appearing before his father. In
fact, writing to his friend Temple in June of 1767 about how heavy
his load was, he observed, “for you must know that the absurdity of
mankind makes nineteen out of twenty employ the son of the judge
before whom their cause is heard.” Such supplicants, however, sorely
misjudged both Lord Auchinleck’s integrity and his relationship with
his son.

Nevertheless, the Douglas Cause was too important for James Bo-
swell to remain only an observer, and too close to his heart for him to be dispassionate. Although the Douglas version was a tangle of inconsistencies, unlikely events, bizarre twists, contradictions, likely forgeries and biologically suspect wonders, and the leading intellectuals of the day, including David Hume and Adam Smith and even Boswell’s great hero and mentor Samuel Johnson all absolutely sided with Hamilton, Boswell had no doubts. Such was his passion for it, in fact, that one close observer remarked on it and on his mother’s Dutch ancestors, that “His behavior on that occasion savored so much of insanity, that it was generally imputed to his Dutch blood.”

To James Boswell this was a case of law, not fact, and the principle of law at stake was—well, here is how he himself described it:

Filiation or birthright is of all things the most valuable to mankind; for all the blessings and comforts of life, the succession of property and of honors, all the rights and all the affections of blood flow from it: therefore it is that the wisdom of law hath been particularly careful that the birthright of the subject should be inviolably protected.

This is Boswell, the man who had written, you will recall, that his most fervent hope was “to be a worthy Scots laird.” If the claim of a man’s parents to be his parents could be easily overturned, then, he said “you are taking the very pavement from under this feet. You are depriving him of half his cause.” Boswell went on with a telling example:

I asked my father where I was born. He mentioned a house. I asked an old woman who was in the house at the birth, and she said another house. . . . [I]f my birth had been scrutinized, my father and this old woman would have been declared perjured, as contradicting one another.

Boswell and his father had, in fact, a very difficult relationship. Lord Auchinleck more than once—and with cause—threatened his son with disinheritance, and James lived in fear that the lairdship he
so valued, his heritage, his own “filiation,” would be taken from him. Little wonder he was passionate for Lord Douglas.

Boswell was also a man of imagination, and of action. And so, in 1767, he became a self-appointed shill for Lord Archibald Douglas, the Defender, against the Pursuers, the Hamiltons. He began, after reading the Pursuers’ voluminous *Memorial*, by composing a song. The *Memorial* had been compiled by Sir Adam Ferguson, a distinguished lawyer and an amateur mathematician. In one section Sir Adam had calculated the odds against the infants Archibald and Sholto being other than the kidnapped children of Paris, and determined them to be 11,533,394,545,594,599 to 1. The poem/song itself is actually quite funny. Here are the first two verses of *The Hamilton Cause*, addressed to his fellow lawyers:

Alas! My poor brethren, poor sons of the laws,
You’re all knock’d o’ the head by the Hamilton Cause;
No more can you live by your noisy vocation,
The plan now is silent and slow calculation.

You may e’en make a bonfire of Bankton and Stair,
And betake you to Sherwin, to Cocker and Mair;
The Roman Twelve Tables exploded shall be,
The table of *Multiplication* for me.

“Bankton and Stair”—to be burned—are law books; “Sherwin, Cocker and Mair,” mathematicians. Subsequent verses all include arithmetic puns and word play.

Warned by one of his advisors to burn the poem, rather than antagonize important Hamiltonions, Boswell instead showed it to its intended target, Sir Adam Ferguson himself, and to David Hume. Both of these distinguished men assured him that since everyone knew that he personally was a man without malice or venom, neither would be attributed to him as a result of circulating this example of his wit. Thus encouraged, Boswell performed the song—in his wig and his gown—to the amusement of his peers around the courthouse, and
even published it in the “Scots Magazine.” A few months later another ballad came from his pen, a companion piece called *The Douglas Cause*. This he had published as a broadside in May. Yet another song, probably the best of three, was also written in May, but circulated only in a letter to Boswell’s friend John Johnston. So began nearly two years of Boswell-written and -directed propaganda for Douglas.

Boswell was nothing if not prolific. His efforts on behalf of Archibald Douglas illustrate this tendency. His involvement in the Cause occurred during a period early in his legal career when he was extremely busy building his practice, seeing to his many social obligations, seeking a suitable wife in both Scotland and England, and writing his first long book, *An Account of Corsica*. Despite these competing commitments, in the twenty-one months beginning just before the original decision in the Court of Session in July of 1767, and ending with the subsequent decision on appeal in the House of Lords in February of 1769, Boswell wrote and published, without the promise of any compensation, more than twenty-five articles in eight newspapers, and three books, all promoting the Douglas Cause.

While we examine this outpouring of propaganda in greater detail, we also must recognize them for what they were. Boswell’s efforts were remarkable attempts to influence the fifteen judges, including his father, before whom the case was pending, or, at the least, to bring public opinion to bear on those judges. The litigation had been ongoing between the “Pursuer” and the “Defender” since 1762, and by the spring of 1767, the judges had thousands of printed pages of material before them. Boswell knew, perhaps from his father, that a decision would soon be announced. He did not wish to antagonize his father or risk a certain finding of contempt of court by publishing explicit materials obviously intended to influence the outcome while the case was awaiting resolution. Thus he came up with the inspired notion of a fiction, an allegory.

And so, in two days of dictation to his secretary in May of 1767, Boswell produced his only novel—or at least novella—fifty pages entitled *Dorando, A Spanish Tale*. A blatant attempt to influence the decision, it
DORANDO AND THE DOUGLAS CAUSE

tells the story of Don Carlos of Dorando, an amiable recluse obviously patterned after the Duke of Douglas; Donna Eleanor appears as the Duchess, and Lady Maria, obviously intended to be Lady Jane. Hamilton becomes Arvidoso, a greedy young man. Lady Jane’s pathetic wanderings are retold and embellished; pathos for young Dorando—the stand-in for Archibald Douglas—reigns, and Boswell projects victory in the Senate of Seville, his version of the Court of Session, even putting words in the mouth of the stand-in for Lord Dundas, President of the Court of Session, making him a passionate supporter of the Dorando/Douglas side. Boswell took the case another step and had the judgment unanimously affirmed in the Spanish equivalent of the House of Lords. There he has his spokesman call the cause “A daring attempt to render our children uncertain. . . . I shudder at the consequences. . . . No signors! While my blood is warm, I hope Spain shall never adopt such unjustifiable measures.” Dorando was an enormous success; the first edition, published June 15, 1767, quickly sold out, followed by a second, printed June 20, and a third, printed June 29, all in Scotland. Later in the year (after the decision in the Court of Session in July) a fourth edition was printed in London. On no edition did the author’s name appear, and Boswell did not publicly claim authorship of the book, but it was commonly known to be his.

The Lord President of the Court, Robert Dundas was outraged, but he did not attempt to suppress it—recognizing the difficulty of proving that it was an allegory (since it told a story that stood alone, without reference to secondary meanings). Boswell himself wrote a series of anonymous reviews, each quoting extensively, and praising even more lavishly, his own little book. The review of his work which he wrote for The London Chronicle called it “the production of no ordinary genius.” In his articles and reviews the parallels to the Douglas Cause were explicitly recognized. Nor did he stop there. Prof. Pottle of Yale called his next series of capers “the most impudent act of a life not unremarkable for impudent actions.”

Boswell began his newspaper campaign in May of 1767, after finishing Dorando. An anonymous article—but written by Boswell—
appeared in the London paper announcing that the Court of Session would soon meet to hear and decide the case, in the largest room in Edinburgh; that special seating would be constructed for the public, and that admission would be charged. In the same paper Boswell separately—and again anonymously—reported that five accomplished court shorthand experts (he even gave them names) would attend, from London, and provide word-for-word reports. Since it would have been illegal for them to transcribe and publish the proceedings, they might even, he suggested, be disguised as women, and could not be detected and prevented from telling the public what really went on. This was followed by frequent articles about the progress of these five court reporters on their way to Edinburgh, their great skill at shorthand, their personal histories, even the injured thumb suffered by one of them.

Lord Dundas finally had enough, and cited the newspaper publishers for contempt, demanding that they appear before his court. Astonishingly, none other than Boswell himself defended them, for publishing what most knew he himself had written. Attributing his articles to harmless good humor and public interest, he succeeded in getting the publishers—and himself—off the hook with only a stern rebuke from Lord Dundas. Boswell did not stop with this victory, of course; instead he followed up with another lengthy piece, this time questioning Lord Dundas’ efforts to pursue the publishers at all. And when there was no answer from Lord Dundas or his supporters, Boswell wrote one himself, under another assumed name.

It is impossible to say whether the judges were influenced by either Dorando or Boswell’s enthusiastic reviews emphasizing its allegorical connection to the Douglas Cause, or even by his incessant series of articles drawing attention to it. But the public was moved. One commentator—in this case not Boswell himself—wrote:

... it is amazing how great an effect this pamphlet, and other such arts used by the favourers of the defendant, have had....

The writing and publishing [of] that pamphlet was a manifest
To that extent it worked. The public had been aroused to the degree that threatening letters were sent to the judges, graffiti was painted on walls, and mobs in Edinburgh threw rocks, breaking windows.

On July 7 the Court began the delivery of its opinions. Four of the fifteen judges had been counsel for either Hamilton or Douglas before being named to the Court, and rather than recusing themselves, they voted, two each, for their former client’s positions. The remaining eleven were split, five for Douglas and five for Hamilton. Boswell’s father voted for Douglas, not because of his son’s by now notorious extra-legal efforts, but despite them. Nevertheless, Lord Auchinleck’s opinion, one of the shortest of the fifteen, sounds the same note played by his son. Let me give you a taste of what he said. He began with a few “general observations,” not with the evidence. And what are those “general observations”?

In all questions about filiation, skeptical people may have opportunities of raising abundance of doubts; as it is possible that wives may be unfaithful, nurses false to their charge, and that they may both conspire to bring in false children. Yet, though such things may happen in almost every possible case, yet the law will determine such questions upon general principles, requiring a legal certainty of filiation, not certainty in the abstract. Of this daily instances occur in this Court. And, in the case of alleged bastardy particularly, the law will take its course, and hold the child to be lawful, except there be an absolute impossibility of its being the child of the husband. Indeed, if we had not these rules, everything would run into absolute confusion. I would observe further, that if a person is acknowledged by a married couple to be their child, this is legal evidence of it; and such a train of acknowledgment must be held to be a probatio probata, or pro veritate, till the contrary be proved by clear and undoubted evidence.
Lord Auchinleck went on to review the evidence, recognizing that it is contradictory and confusing, that it may contain false or mistaken representations on both sides, wishing it more clear, and concluding that the very uncertainty of it compels him, consistent with his “general observations,” to find for Douglas.

It was not enough. If the Court was equally divided, the Lord President, Robert Dundas, would cast the tie-breaking vote, and only then would he vote. No doubt having counted noses before-hand, the Lord President spoke first on 7 July, saying that since there might be a tie, he wanted to give his fellow judges his opinion at the beginning of their deliberations. And his opinion began with a very lawyerly poke at the way an argument had been advanced in the Douglas side’s pleadings. The Defender’s counsel had conceded that while the parents’ acknowledgment of a child is “good presumptive evidence,” it could indeed be challenged and overcome. This unnecessary concession, given Lord Auchinleck’s much stronger statement of the need for “clear and undoubted evidence” to overcome the presumption, was all the opening Lord Dundas needed. He then reviewed the evidence, and found that the conduct of Lady Jane and Col. Stewart, by now both dead, and unavailable to the Court for examination, was “upon the supposition of a true birth, improbable to the last degree.” We should remember that in Dorando Boswell had gone so far as to put words into the mouth of the President of the Senate of Seville—his stand-in for Dundas—firmly supporting Douglas/Dorando. Perhaps this had been just too much for the real Lord President. When the opinions had all been delivered, on July 14, 1767, he cast the tie-breaking vote, and awarded victory to Hamilton.

The Douglas side immediately appealed to the House of Lords in London, which would have the last word. Boswell turned up the P. R. campaign a few notches. Buried in the thousands of pages of the Proofs submitted by the Douglas side had been a package of letters written by Lady Jane to her husband while he was imprisoned for debt. She was no doubt the most sympathetic character in all of this, and Boswell, recognizing her appeal, had the inspired notion
of publishing a condensed version of her letters. Their genuineness was unchallenged, and they had been written at a time when no ulterior motive could have existed—the Duke of Douglas was still alive, no challenge had yet been raised to the legitimacy of her children, and the letters were obviously not intended for the eyes of any but her then wretched husband. In them she writes tenderly of their little boys and her happy, if poverty-stricken, family. Boswell carefully selected and edited these letters, and published them in a small book, *Letters of the Right Honorable Lady Jane Douglas*, to which he appended the “dying declarations” of Lady Jane, Col. Stewart, and Mrs. Hewit, as well as a commentary, by Boswell, the title of which says it all—a “Cool and Candid inquiry how far such Declarations should weigh with the rational Part of Mankind.” Obviously, observed the cool and candid Boswell, with the fear of impending death, no one would lie while facing the imminent prospect of the last judgment. Boswell also had the audacity to put two epigrams on the title page, quoting from the opinions of two of the Judges who had voted against Douglas, one on the importance of the character of the parties, and one on judging the judges. The little book is a masterpiece of spin.

Nor was it Boswell’s only other book-length effort. His most sophisticated work on behalf of Douglas was his third book—*The Essence of the Douglas Cause*. This eighty-page effort is truly a brilliant distillation of the arguments and evidence spread through the massive records. It clearly sets out law and fact and motive, and answers every important Hamiltonian argument. Boswell’s own assessment of it years later reflects his usual modesty. He wrote, in the third person:

> With a labor of which few are capable, he compressed the substance of the immense volumes of proofs and arguments into an octavo pamphlet... and as it was thus made intelligible without a tedious study, we may ascribe to this pamphlet a great share of the popularity on Mr. Douglas’ side, which was of infinite consequence when a division of the House of Lords upon an appeal was apprehended; not to mention that its effect was said to be considerable in a certain important quarter. He
also took care to keep the newspapers and other publications incessantly warm with various writings, both in prose and verses all tending to touch the heart and rouse the parental and sympathetic feelings.

One last arrow remained in his quiver, after the publication of his three books and all his newspaper articles, poems, and letters. It had to do with the “certain important quarter” just mentioned.

William Murray, a Scot and friend of his father, was Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, one of the most towering figures in the history of English jurisprudence, and then the most powerful judge in Britain. He would preside over the appeal to the House of Lords, and what he said would greatly influence how the Lords voted. And so, in London on 20 May 1768, Boswell paid a call on Lord Mansfield. He was warmly received, and after an exchange of pleasantries, Boswell, a young lawyer with about two years’ experience, began to manipulate the conversation and one of the greatest legal intelligences of all time. Gradually moving the conversation to the appeal of the Douglas Cause then pending in the House of Lords, Boswell managed to undermine the written opinions of the pro-Hamilton judges below, and then opine on how unfortunate it was that Lord Dundas’ own opinion had shaken the confidence of the people in their judges, it being so lacking in foundation. Mansfield was thoroughly engaged, so much that although his carriage was waiting to take him to another appointment, he had it wait longer, and asked Boswell to stay, and listened to his further arguments for Douglas, and about “that great principle of law—filiation—on which we all depend.”

On 19 January 1769 the House of Lords began consideration of the appeal. The Douglas side’s printed case was so harsh concerning the conduct of the French investigation by Hamilton’s private detective that the detective challenged Douglas’ lawyer to a duel, which was actually fought—bloodlessly—while the case was still being heard. Finally, on 27 February, judgment came. Lord Mansfield spoke passionately for Douglas, as did Lord Camden, then the Lord Chancel-
The Lords voted unanimously to reverse the Court of Session, and restore Archibald Douglas to his title and estates. The news reached Edinburgh on the evening of 2 March. Boswell was there. Here is the last chapter of our story.

The people of Edinburgh had been anticipating a decision, and the vast majority—inflamed by Boswell—favored the Douglas side. The news was thus met with great joy. Boswell rushed to tell his father, whose muted reaction disappointed him, and so he went out in the street where massive crowds were gathering. Victory celebrations were planned, with Boswell in charge. Bonfires were lit in the streets, and it was determined that Douglas’ supporters would illuminate their windows with candles to signal their rejoicing. Dark windows were to be broken. Robert Dundas’ own windows were broken, and the mob even attempted to break down his door, terrifying his family. His sedan chair was attacked the next day, although he was not harmed. The apartment of the Duke of Hamilton was also attacked, as were the windows of other Hamiltonians, including those of the now infamous private detective. Finally, the dragoons were called in, and the riot was quelled, but not until even Lord Auchinleck’s dark windows had been broken by the mob, with Boswell in the lead. His noble father had refused to “illuminate,” even though he had voted for Douglas, choosing instead to support the dignity of the Court, and to stand by Dundas and his fellow judges. Lord Auchinleck demonstrated how much he differed from his son in temperament, even when they agreed in principle.

A reward was offered by the magistrates for the apprehension of the leaders of the mob. Attention turned immediately to Boswell. He himself had boasted of his role, even of the rock thrown through his father’s window. His father, reportedly with tears in his eyes, had asked Dundas to have him jailed. Dundas—who truly admired Lord Auchinleck, would not have him subjected to such humiliation, but he did have young James questioned by the sheriff. It was, however, not easy to identify rioters—no home video being available—and Boswell wriggled free, often thereafter bragging about his
role in the riotous celebrations and vandalism.

James Boswell would thus forever be linked with the Douglas Cause, and the linkage brought him both fame and infamy. From it he had recognition in Scotland and England as an imaginative, bold and creative advocate, as well as the gratitude and, for a while, even the affection, of Archibald Douglas. And from it he suffered the reputation of a less than scrupulous and almost ungentlemanly radical. Worse still was the permanent damage to his always fragile relationship with his father, never to be healed. But that is another story.
Lord Auchinleck’s *Fingal*

*Association copy with a point of view*

There are many ways to categorize book collectors; one way is to divide them into the “books-are-sacred-objects” camp, those who would never deface a book, even with a personal bookplate on the end-papers. The others regard books as an invitation to fill in the white space with the owner’s comments and reactions to the text. There have been famous owner-annotators, for example, Hester Thrale Piozzi, whose “marginalia” in her copies of Johnson, Boswell, the Bible, and virtually every book she owned often give us a deeper insight to her world and her place in it than did the books themselves.

One pleasure provided by “association” copies is the revelations often disclosed by similar marginal notes or comments from the owner with whom a particular copy is associated. For me nothing illustrates this better than a book from the library of Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, the father of James Boswell and a man proud of his Scots heritage. The context that makes this volume interesting is one of the most controversial literary issues in the lively 18th century, when literature had a broad significance in the world of culture and ideas it now must share with movies and television and other diversions.

The remains of James Macpherson (1736–96) lie in Westminster Abbey, perpetrating on the casual visitor the last hoax of a life now remembered—at least among Johnsonians—only for a greater one. The presence of his bones near those of the great literary figures in the Poets’ Corner was not the result, as in the case of his now-eternal neighbors, of popular recognition of his literary immortality, but came
instead at his own request, and was achieved at his own expense.

Born in rural Inverness-shire, Macpherson became a schoolmaster and then worked as a private tutor. Ambitious to write, he recognized the growing taste in Britain for ancient poetry, later to reach its peak with Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. In Scotland interest in ancient or bardic verse was heightened by post-1745 nostalgic romanticization of all things relating to the Highlands, and in 1758 Macpherson took advantage of it to publish an “epic” poem, *The Highlander*. Attracting the attention and encouragement of such notables as the distinguished Edinburgh scholar and rector of the High Church of St. Giles, Hugh Blair, Macpherson next published, in 1760, scraps of Gaelic or Erse poetry, titled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Col-*
lected in the Highlands of Scotland, with an introduction by Blair. Blair suggested there that the fragments presented might be “episodes” of a larger work relating to the legendary third century Celtic hero Fingal:

It is believed that by a careful inquiry, many more remains of ancient genius . . . might be found in the same country where these have been collected. In particular there is reason to hope that one work of considerable length, and which deserves to be styled an heroic poem, might be recovered and translated if encouragement were given to such an undertaking.

Blair, John Home (the author of Douglas), and others organized a dinner for Macpherson in 1760 and raised some £60 from 40 or so subscribers, including the young James Boswell, in order to provide just such encouragement. That same year the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh joined the subscribers and commissioned Macpherson to tour the Highlands and search for more “remains” of ancient genius. Claiming to have found them, Macpherson published Fingal, An Ancient Epic Poem, in 1762. According to its title page, the work was “composed” by “Ossian, the son of Fingal,” and “translated” from the “Galic” language by James Macpherson. Hailed by many in Scotland as the Scottish equivalent and near-contemporary of Virgil, in time Ossian was much imitated and admired by as diverse a group as Goethe, Coleridge, Byron, and even Napoleon and Thomas Jefferson. Enthusiasm in Scotland, on the continent, and in the colonies, however, was matched by skepticism in England. The self-identified translator’s “Advertisement” at the front of Fingal itself raised suspicion, at least for readers predisposed to be skeptical. In it Macpherson apologized for departing from his original scheme of either simply publishing by subscription the whole of the original manuscripts, or depositing them in a public library for examination. He had found, however, that there were no subscribers, or any present necessity for a public display. He therefore offered his translation, with the promise that “there is a design on foot to print the Originals, as soon as the translator shall have time to transcribe them for the press. . . .” If this
did not happen, he assured the reader, he would then deposit copies in a public library. It might be noted that, by the time of his death thirty-four years later in 1796, he had neither published the originals, nor displayed them in a library, or anywhere else, even to his most fervent Scottish supporters, with one disputed exception.

Samuel Johnson—a sensitive reader if ever there was one—was suspicious from the start. Johnson loved truth as much as he did literature, if not more, and he detected not only the 18th century in what was represented as the third, but fantasy in what paraded as history. Asked by Blair if “any man of a modern age could have written such poems,” Johnson replied, “Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children.” Yet Johnson was always open to evidence, and when he and Boswell took their celebrated trip to the Hebrides in 1773, Johnson made a point of looking for old Erse or Gaelic manuscripts or text to settle the dispute. Because Macpherson had failed earlier to produce the so-called “Originals” of Ossian’s poems, Johnson wrote, in his 1775 *Journey to the Western Islands*, of the confirmation of his suspicions:

I suppose my opinion of the poems of Ossian is already discovered. I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could shew the original; nor can it be shewn by any other; to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence, with which the world is not yet acquainted: and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt.

Macpherson learned of this passage before its publication and wrote to Johnson demanding that it be deleted, asking an apology, and threatening him with harm. Some accounts suggest he even challenged Johnson to a duel. In 1775 Macpherson was a young man 39 years old, and Johnson 66. But Johnson, like Macpherson, large and powerful, was also a former boxer, still a strong swimmer, and not to be intimidated. His reply is famous, and worth repeating:

Mr. James Macpherson—I received your foolish and impudent
note. Whatever insult is offered me I will do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law will do for me. I will not desist from detecting what I think a cheat, from any fear of the menaces of a Ruffian.

You want me to retract. What shall I retract? I thought your book an imposture from the beginning, I think it upon yet surer reasons an imposture still. For this opinion I give the publick my reasons which I here dare you to refute.

But however I may despise you, I reverence truth and if you can prove the genuineness of the work I will confess it. Your rage I defy, your abilities . . . are not so formidable, and what I have heard of your morals disposes me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you can prove.

You may print this if you will.

Sam: Johnson

Boswell had known of Johnson’s thinking about Ossian for many years. The controversy was one in which Boswell, an early supporter of Macpherson’s efforts, was never free from the tension that always held him taut between the views of his hero Johnson, and his father, Alexander Boswell, the eighth laird of Auchinleck. The Boswells’ pride in their aristocratic and ancient Scots heritage was no less strong in Alexander the father than it was in James the son. Remember too that Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, was one of the judges of the highest courts in Scotland. He was a man accustomed to sifting through evidence, separating objective indicia of facts from subjective wishes. Small details were not likely to be missed in his scrupulous review of any circumstances.

In the spring of 1761 James, then studying law under his father’s personal direction, had accompanied his father on the Northern Circuit, where Lord Auchinleck not only heard cases but indulged his interest in Scottish history, visiting historic sites and meeting equally distinguished Scots. James had accompanied his father earlier on the
Northern Circuit, in 1758, when he kept his first known journal (now lost). He also kept a journal of the 1761 trip. It tells us that on Wednesday 13 May 1761, the Boswells arrived at Dalwhinnie, near Aviemore, both in Inverness-shire, the ancestral home of the Macphersons.

Dalwhinnie, on the Truim, which feeds into the Spey, had been the home of Ewen Macpherson of Cluny, often called Cluny Macpherson, the hereditary chief of the Macpherson clan. He was a hero, leading the Jacobite forces with success at Falkirk, before the ultimate disaster at Culloden. After the defeat of the Young Pretender’s forces, the humiliation heaped on the Highlanders included not only banning the kilt and the bagpipe, but the destruction of the Macpherson seat at Cluny. James Boswell wrote in his journal for that same day in 1761 that they rode on “to the burnt house of Cluny—it made my heart sore to see it.”

With the Boswells that day was another Macpherson, Macpherson of Benchar. It was surely known to both James and his father that their guide was related to Cluny Macpherson, and it is clear that by that date in 1761, James, and probably his father also, knew of another cousin, the schoolmaster and poet, James Macpherson. We know that
Lord Auchinleck made later tours of the Northern Circuit, stopping in many of the same places, and no doubt seeing many of the same people. In 1764, for example, his itinerary again took him to Inverness-shire, and perhaps again to Macpherson of Benchar.

On one of these Northern Circuit tours (we do not know which) Macpherson of Benchar, an early amateur archaeologist, told Lord Auchinleck that between Dalwhinnie and Aviemore to the northwest there were tumuli, or grave mounds, several of which he had opened, thereby discovering two important facts: first, that the remains had been buried lying on a north/south axis, and second, that at right angles to, and above, each body was the horn of a red deer. The first suggests that the graves antedated the arrival of Christianity in the Highlands, and dated therefore to the Ossian era, because thereafter bodies were buried on the east/west axis, facing the Holy Land. And, according to Lord Auchinleck, the heroes in the Ossian poems, when they are going to die, commonly say “make ready my Deers horn.”

Lord Auchinleck might have had in mind at least two passages, one each in *Fingal* and *Temora* published first in 1762. In *Fingal*, Book IV, we find:

> Raise, Oscar, rather raise my tomb. I will not yield the war to thee. The first and bloodiest in the strife, my arm shall teach thee how to fight. But remember, my son, to place this sword, this bow, the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow house, whose mark is one grey stone!

In a fragment from *Temora*, included in *Fingal*, we find:

> Ossian, carry me to my hills! Raise the stones of my fame. Place the horn of the deer, and my sword within my narrow dwelling.

That Lord Auchinleck remembered lines such as these is clear from his brief account of a conversation with Macpherson of Benchar, written in his hand on the blank recto leaf after the free front fly leaf—which itself has his signature, “Alex. Boswel”—in a book from his own
library. This volume contains, bound together: *Fingal*, published in 1762; *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*, published in 1763 (unattributed, but by Hugh Blair); and *Temora An Ancient Epic Poem*, published in 1763. *Fingal* and *Temora* are identified as having been “translated from the Galic language” by James Macpherson. *Temora* also contains “A Dissertation,” by Macpherson, and “A Specimen of the Original of Temora,” in Gaelic. This last was offered “for the satisfaction of those who doubt the authenticity of Ossian’s poems,” according to Macpherson’s explanatory note in *Temora*, to which he added: “To print any part of the former collection was unnecessary, as a copy of the originals lay, for many months, in the bookseller’s hands, for the inspection of the curious.” Note, the claim is that “a copy of the originals” had been in the bookseller’s hands.

*Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck’s essay in the front of his copy of Fingal.*
We do not know when Lord Auchinleck acquired these books, whether he acquired them separately and had them bound together, or whether he bought the combined volume in its current form. The binding itself is distinctly mid-18th century. Nor, unfortunately, do we know when he wrote his essay.

In January 1775, twelve years after the appearance of *Temora*, some curious support for Macpherson’s claim that “a copy of the originals” had been on display appeared in a notice printed by the publisher of *Fingal* in the *London Chronicle* and the *St. James Chronicle*. The notice read:

To the Public. Doctor Johnson having asserted in his late publication [*A Journey to the Western Islands*], that the Translator of Ossian’s Poems “never could show the Original, nor can it be shown by any other,” I hereby declare, that the Originals of *Fingal* and other Poems of Ossian, lay in my shop for many months in the year 1762, for the inspection of the curious. The Public were not only apprized of their lying there, for inspection, but even proposals for publishing the Originals of the Poems of Ossian were dispersed through the kingdom, and advertized in the news-papers. Upon finding that a number of Subscribers, sufficient to bear the expences, were not likely to appear, I returned the manuscripts to the Proprietor, in whose hands they still remain.


Note here the inconsistency between Becket’s 1775 claim that he had displayed the “Originals” for many months in 1762, and Macpherson’s own claim in the Advertisement to the 1762 printing of *Fingal* that there was no “present necessity” for a public display, but that he might consider one later, if he had not yet transcribed them for the press. Furthermore, with the printing of *Temora* in 1763, he claimed only that a copy of the originals had in fact been at the booksellers. Yet, in 1775, Becket claimed that he had displayed “the Originals” themselves in early 1762. Nor was Becket either a disinterested neu-
tral in the question of the existence of the “Originals,” or particularly qualified to make a judgment about their authenticity. In fact, in a letter to David Garrick on 4 February 1775, after reading Becket’s notices, Boswell asked:

How could you let Honest Tom Becket put an Advertisment into the Newspapers gravely asserting that the originals of Fingal and other Poems of Ossian lay in his shop for the inspection of the curious, when for any thing that he knows those papers may have been muster rolls of the highland regiment, or receipts for brewing heathbeer, distilling whiskey, or baking oatmeal cakes; for, not a word of erse does he understand.

Becket was Garrick’s—as well as Macpherson’s—publisher.

Boswell had asked Johnson, in an earlier letter of 27 January 1775, what Becket had meant by the “Originals” of Fingal. Although Johnson seems never to have replied directly to that inquiry, he did respond, testily, to an inquiry from Boswell dated 2 February 1775, relating current gossip in Edinburgh that Macpherson had offered to let Johnson see the “originals in his possession.” Denying the existence of any Erse documents, Johnson wrote:

I am surprized that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other, you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. . . . Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown.

Whether or not they had been offered to Johnson for his review, Hugh Blair, referring in 1797 to Becket’s notice, stated that Becket had “found no one person had ever called to look at the originals.”

Lord Auchinleck’s essay begins: “As some confirmation of the Authenticity of Ossian’s Poems, I must here note that in sundry places of Ossian when a Hero or great man is going to die, He commonly says make ready my Deers horn, The meaning of which I never understood

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till on going the North Circuit. . . .” He had learned from Macpherson of Benchar of the pre-Christian era graves with deer horns. What are we to make of this? Has Lord Auchinleck’s memory and his legal training marshaled evidence supporting Macpherson’s claims of authenticity, a cause in which he, like many Scots, wanted to believe?

Lord Auchinleck’s essay, as we can observe, is undated. He lived until 1782, and we cannot connect with certainty the composition of the essay to any particular Northern Circuit trip. The chronology of Macpherson’s publications made clear that Lord Auchinleck wrote it sometime after the publication of *Fingal* and *Temora* in 1762 and 1763, and probably after his 1764 Northern Circuit. It appears that it was during that visit that Macpherson of Benchar told Lord Auchinleck of the contents of the tumuli. This must be so, since the purported poems of Ossian were not published until more than a year after the spring of 1761 Northern Circuit visit and meeting with Macpherson of Benchar memorialized by James Boswell. The 1762 and 1763 “translations” do, in fact, as we have noted, “in sundry places” mention dying heroes asking for their deer horns. It is hardly a criticism of Lord Auchinleck that he appears to have forgotten a footnote near the very beginning of *Fingal*, and well before the references to deers horns, explaining that in “the manner of burial among ancient Scots . . . above [the body] they placed the horn of a deer, the symbol of hunting.” It is instead a tribute to his memory that he remembered the lines themselves.

Lord Auchinleck’s curiosity about the references to deer horns likely did not come from a reading of the Ossianic materials in their earliest form. The 1760 Macpherson *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* contains fragments (fifteen in the first edition of 1760, sixteen in a subsequent edition of the same year), some of which were alleged to have been written by Ossian, and to be part of a larger work. But there is no mention of entombed deer horns there, although there are references indeed to dying heroes, deer hunters and tombs.

Does Alexander Boswell’s brief argument indeed provide support for the “Authenticity of Ossian’s Poems” as he claims? In the first place, it is not obvious if he is suggesting that the references to deer
horns merely confirm that the Ossian poems contain “authentic” ancient detail supported by archeological data, or whether he means to say that such data actually confirm the “authenticity” of the poems as “translations” of ancient Gaelic or Erse. Nor, of course, does he appear to consider the fact that the source of his information about the deer horns in the tombs, Macpherson of Benchar, could also have provided the same information to his cousin, James Macpherson, or that James Macpherson could have learned of their existence from others during his research journeys in the North.

In fairness to both sides it should be said that the arguments over “authenticity” and “originals” may be ships passing in the night. Johnson focused on (and ultimately was incensed by) Macpherson’s literal claim to be, and insistence on being recognized as, “translator,” rather than as transcriber or recreator or compiler of works from an ancient narrative tradition. While that tradition was originally, of course, oral rather than written, Johnson, holding Macpherson to his own words, demanded to see documents, written words, from which the “translations” were made. Even Johnson, of course, did not believe Macpherson had original manuscripts from the 3rd century A.D., in no small part because there was never any claim that a written Gaelic or Erse existed in the third century, let alone some form of manuscript in which it could have survived.

Macpherson’s supporters, on the other hand, then and now, can be seen as arguing more for the existence of an historic line of epic Gaelic narrative, originally orally transmitted, and only much later, perhaps, transcribed. Johnson himself, in his Journey, recognizes that tradition of bards and senachies, or “men of talk,” and would not have denied the possibility of ancient legends handed down orally.

Macpherson may well have drawn on transcriptions of those legends into Gaelic manuscripts, a few centuries old at most, as he did on other sources such as interviews with locals (including perhaps Macpherson of Benchar). But Johnson and Macpherson were both stubborn, proud men, and Macpherson’s refusal to characterize his work in a way that would have permitted Johnson to accept his sources
collided with Johnson's insistence that what was offered as “translation,” not recreation or transcription, should be tested against its alleged sources. If Macpherson may have claimed more than he needed, Johnson may have insisted on more than really mattered. Modern scholarship grants Macpherson credit for passing on and preserving remnants of the Highlands that might otherwise have been lost. Johnson just as certainly established that *Fingal* was something other than represented by Macpherson. While Lord Auchinleck's essay can be seen as reframing the question of the authenticity of *Fingal*, it surely does not discredit Johnson's better known, but entirely different point.

No matter, for our purposes. Lord Auchinleck's copy of *Fingal* is more than just scarce first editions of several of the famous and controversial works of Macpherson. It is proof that Macpherson's work mattered, intensely, and personally, to a great man of Scottish jurisprudence, and the father of the remarkable author of both remarkable books and a remarkable life. We can feel that life, and the life of its progenitor, when we hold that book ourselves, and read thoughts written only for the owner's satisfaction, in his own hand.

This volume, with Lord Auchinleck's essay, provides more than its text alone could reveal. It gives us not only a contemporary comment on the famous debate the text initiated, but also a tangible connection of our own, the only physical connection possible, to those people, and their times, and places. We could not otherwise touch them, but we can, and do, through their books.

*This chapter was published as a handsome keepsake volume by The Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell. It was also part of a presentation to the Aldus Society of Columbus, Ohio in May of 2004.*
An Hospitable and Well-Covered Table

When we gather here at the Cliff Dwellers, we bring with us certain expectations—that the atmosphere will be “hospitable,” that our table will be “well-covered”—at least with pie—that our conversations will be at least literate, if not “literary.” When the evening ends, we all return home sated in our physical, our intellectual, and our social appetites. And in all of this we recreate and relive similar occasions by similar companies, hundreds of years ago. My affection for such events corresponds to, and is satisfied by, both my own visits in Chicago to the Literary Club and Caxton evenings, in Cleveland to the Rowfant Club, in New York to Grolier, but also by my visits, through my books, to the eighteenth century. Tonight I want to share with you, after our own fine dinner and conversation, another such evening, and another such dinner, in this instance 15 May 1776, two-hundred and thirty-one years ago, give or take a few months.

The place was No. 22, the Poultry, London, the home of the brothers Charles and Edward Dilly, booksellers—which, in those days, also meant publishers. Also present were the American Arthur Lee, a physician and later the United States ambassador to Spain, his brother, Alderman William Lee of London, John Miller, a member of Parliament, once described as “a dilettanti man [who] keeps a weekly day for the Litterati,” Dr. John Lettsom, a Quaker physician, Philip Slater, a druggist, and, most important for our story, John Wilkes, James Boswell and Samuel Johnson. A diverse crowd of business, professional, legal, medical, and literary people, much like those here tonight. The
menu included some “fine veal,” gravy, stuffing, butter, oranges and lemons and cheese. All-in-all, very much, from the feast to the feasters, like our dinner tonight.

And yet, of course, it was different. Different not only because tonight we lack Johnson and Boswell and Wilkes, but different because the real point of that long-ago evening was a set-up, a scene carefully planned and orchestrated by Boswell. It was a scene now among the most famous in his *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, and one for which he was proud to take credit for his own “pars magna fui,” “no small part.” Johnson and Wilkes had never met, were political opponents, and, as Boswell wrote, “Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind.” It was Boswell’s conceit, successful this time, to bring them together, face to face, one the author of a pamphlet attacking the other, whose response had been equally vituperative and insulting. You know Boswell, of course. A Scots lawyer and laird, an author, a man capable of both extreme piety and extreme debauchery, a pursuer of celebrity and celebrities. He wrote himself that his “desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description” had made him want to bring Johnson and Wilkes together. “They had,” he said:

... even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chymistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Johnson, of course, was the great man of English letters, author of the *Dictionary of the English Language*, and other works, he was a famous wit, who saw conversation as a contest, and “talked for victory,” as we learn from Boswell. He was also a Tory, a firm believer in the monarchy and in an ordered, disciplined society. Not least, he was a moralist, author of *The Rambler* essays, a man of profound religious principles, scrupulous about his own behavior—he was celibate before and after his marriage, and—although not by choice—even during
much of it. The author of prayers and sermons for himself and others, Johnson was himself a man of celebrated virtue.

Yet, after all, he lived at a time which is often thought of as the “Age of the Libertine,” when men, particularly young aristocratic men, indulged their every whim, without much fear of censure. At least among the educated and wealthy, drunkenness, gambling, and sexual promiscuity were an accepted fact of life, particularly for men. Even Johnson himself, devout Tory and Anglican that he was, accepted the existence of a double standard for judging sexual activity. Here though, perhaps Johnson’s code of personal morality was affected by his equally great respect for property and order, something he also saw as a moral issue. As he put it in discussing the need for chastity and fidelity in women:

\[\ldots \text{confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime; and therefore a woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is criminal in the sight of GOD; but he does not do his wife a very material injury if he does not insult her; if, for instance, from mere wantonness of appetite, he steals privately to her chambermaid. Sir, a wife ought not greatly to resent this.} \ldots \]

A wife should study to reclaim her husband by more attention to please him.

Indeed such a husband was Boswell. Beginning early, young, wealthy and privileged, he seduced women of every rank, and paid others. He was deterred in his pursuits neither by his own friendships with their husbands, lovers, or fathers, nor, later, by his own marriage. Although only one part of the character of this complex man, it is no exaggeration to say that to win Dr. Johnson’s affection, Boswell had to work to overcome his well-earned reputation for often uncontrolled sexual escapades. Boswell in fact never abandoned this particular activity, despite the repeated bouts of venereal disease it brought him, leading, ultimately, to his death.

Yet even Boswell, as we shall see, was relatively discreet about this
(other than in his private journals and with a few intimate friends), and the rest of his life was marked by a more circumspect effort to appear to be a proper Scottish laird, a man of property and propriety. Boswell and Wilkes had first met in 1763, when Boswell was a young man, already a social climber, and womanizer. Wilkes was by then a leading London wit, a member of Parliament, one of the best-known poets of the day, and a notorious rake. Together again in Italy in 1765, Boswell on the Grand Tour following the conclusion of his legal studies, and Wilkes in exile as a fugitive felon (of which more in a moment), Wilkes entertained Boswell with his bawdy stories of wine, women and the dissolute life. Boswell, always something of an hypocritical prig, enjoyed Wilkes’ company enormously, but thought him “deeply unprincipled and immoral,” in Prof. Pottle’s words. Wilkes saw through Boswell even then. Referring to their mutual and unquenchable thirst for women, Wilkes told Boswell “You too like the thing almost as well as I do, but you dislike the talk and laugh about it, of which I am perhaps too fond.” Well—you know about Johnson and Boswell; who was Wilkes?

John Wilkes had been born in London in 1725, the son of a comfortably well-off distiller. He was well educated, both at Lincoln’s Inn and Leiden University. Wilkes married a woman of significant property, but with significant psychological problems. They had a daughter, with whom Wilkes had a profound and satisfying relationship all his life, but he and his unsociable and perhaps mentally unbalanced wife separated after nine years. Wilkes was a famously ugly man. In the many caricatures of him printed in mid-eighteenth century—including the well-known portrayal by Hogarth—his pronounced squint and distorted jaw emphasize how physically unattractive he was, and suggest why he had difficulty reading, and was a notoriously poor speaker. All of these shortcomings he overcame. With women he claimed he needed “only half an hour to talk away my face.” He also said that “... a month’s start of my rival on account of my face ...” would guarantee him the conquest of any woman. As a politician, he was enormously effective, despite his difficulties as a speaker. As a visionary, he saw
things others of his period missed, with a clarity obscured only by his ego, his pride, and his intellectual integrity.

John Wilkes was first elected to Parliament in 1757 as a Whig. He was originally a supporter of Lord Chatham, William Pitt the Elder, but Wilkes’ radical tendencies grew as John Stuart, Lord Bute, became the Tory Prime Minister. Wilkes and his friend Charles Churchill published a radical weekly called *The North Briton*, regularly attacking Bute and, through him, the King. The attacks culminated in No. 45, for which Wilkes was arrested, charged with seditious libel against George III, and expelled from the House of Commons in 1763. He was convicted *in absentia*, having fled to Paris. When he finally returned in 1768, despite failing to win the pardon he expected, he was re-elected to Parliament three times, and expelled each time by the House. The fourth time his stubborn Middlesex constituency elected him, the House, rather than expelling Wilkes, disqualified him, claiming that as a convicted felon, he could not stand for office. His opponent was declared the winner, and seated, in 1769.

This set the stage for Wilkes’ first major confrontation with Johnson. They had clashed before, as when early editions of *The North Briton* criticized several of Johnson’s definitions in his great *Dictionary of the English Language*. Wilkes had caught Johnson in a mistake, where Johnson had oddly asserted in the famous “Preface” to the *Dictionary* that the letter “H” never begins a syllable after the first. Wilkes gleefully pointed out that “the author . . . must be a man of quick *appre-hension*, and of a most *compre-hensive* genius.” Another minor skirmish had occurred because Johnson, Tory that he was in 1763, had accepted a pension of £300 year from George III granted at Bute’s urging, relieving Johnson of poverty for the first time in his life. Wilkes then used *The North Briton* to attack Johnson, based on his 1755 *Dictionary* definition of “Pensioner,” as “A slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his master,” Wilkes asking whether Johnson now, post-pension, had become simply a mouthpiece for the administration.

However, as much as these earlier gibes had stung, their mutual antipathy became a greater issue a few years later, because the real
disagreements between Johnson and Wilkes were over politics and morality, not semantics. A defender of the established order, Johnson in 1770 published one of his four famous political essays, *The False Alarm*. In it Johnson entered the fray over the House’s repeated refusal to seat Wilkes. Although *The False Alarm* purported to deal only with the issue of Parliament’s right to determine who could stand for election, not to attack Wilkes himself, who was often the target of caricatures and gossip, Johnson observed “Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill of him of whom no man speaks well.” The rest of *The False Alarm*, despite Johnson’s disclaimer, went on to attack Wilkes’ character and conduct as much as it defended the House’s right to set criteria for membership.

Wilkes, of course, hardly took this attack in silence. Instead he published, anonymously, *A Letter to Samuel Johnson, L.L.D*, although it was no secret that Wilkes was the author. His famous wit was immediately apparent, as he began by making fun of the famous Latinate Johnsonian style, calling him “an Orator of Polysyllables,” and suggesting that “ordinary freeholders’ . . . undisciplined taste is apt to be nauseated by the reduplicated *evomition* of unknown idioms. If you would adapt yourself to our faculties, you must sink into language of a lower stature from *hendecasyllables.*” Wilkes went on to make a serious reply to Johnson, distinguishing carefully between the right of the House to eject a member—as it had done three times previously in his case—and the right of the people to nominate and elect whomsoever they chose. Both essays, however, while demonstrating the vast chasm between their political positions, also demonstrate that they had in common erudition, wit, and a profound grasp of persuasive English prose.

Their other differences can be more entertainingly illustrated. For example, while Johnson was a member of The Club, sometimes known as The Literary Club, which included Boswell, Joshua Reynolds, Edward Gibbon, Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith and distinguished others, and met for high-toned literary and political conversation, John Wilkes was a member of the Knights of St. Francis of Wycombe,
one of the “Hellfire” clubs of those libertine days. Organized by John Montagu and Francis Dashwood, the Knights were also known as the Medmenham Monks, after the thirteenth-century abbey ruins that Dashwood and the others had restored and converted into their Gothic style “Clubhouse,” the scene of drunken feasts and orgies. Montagu, the famous Earl of Sandwich (whose unwillingness to leave off gambling to eat gave us his eponymous delicacy), Dashwood, and Wilkes were libertines in the eighteenth century sense; that is, they were not only debauched rakes, they were also scholars and gentlemen who happened to be just as seriously engaged with drinking, gambling and whoring as they were with literature. Sometimes they combined their interests. For example, one of Wilkes’ poetic compositions for his fellow Monks was the notorious “Essay on Woman,” a take-off on Pope’s “Essay on Man.” Wilkes’ poem includes his timeless couplet “Life can little else supply/But a few good fucks and then we die.”

In later years, after Wilkes and the Earl of Sandwich had diverged politically, Sandwich asked him “Pon my soul, Wilkes, I don’t know whether you’ll die upon the gallows or of the pox.” Wilkes’ famous answer, of course, was “that depends, my Lord, whether I first embrace your Lordship’s principles, or your Lordship’s mistresses.”

Thus we have Wilkes, radical Whig, supporter of the American colonists, general all-around rake, and promoter of liberty and freedom, and Johnson, devout Anglican Tory, supporter of tradition, upright citizen. Although Wilkes, in later years after his troubles with Parliament, was elected an alderman of London, Sheriff of London and then Lord Mayor of London, and then again re-elected to Parliament where he was finally considered rehabilitated and seated, he and Johnson remained on the opposite sides of almost everything. Apart from Johnson’s disapproving acceptance of Boswell’s own sexual conduct, there seemed to be little reason for Boswell to have believed bringing Johnson and Wilkes together would be successful. Having them together at an intimate dinner was the equivalent of seating Pope John Paul with Joseph Stalin, or perhaps that combination enhanced by also seating Hilary Clinton with Monica Lewinsky. Yet Boswell, who
noted, as we have seen, that “Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind,” also recognized that they:

. . . had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been forever at a distance from each other.

Thus in 1776 the great dinner plot was hatched in Boswell’s fertile brain.

Boswell recognized that “How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.” When his friends the Dilly brothers invited him for dinner with Wilkes and others, Boswell at last saw his opportunity. He himself enjoyed the “hospitable and well-covered table” he always found at the Dillys’, and knew that “Johnson owned that he always found a good dinner there.” As Boswell observed, “No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate.” Thus Boswell asked Edward Dilly if Dr. Johnson might be invited too. Dilly replied “What, with Mr. Wilkes? Not for the world. . . . Dr. Johnson would never forgive me.” Not put off by the Dillys’ reluctance, Boswell proposed to “let me negociate for you. . . .” The Dilly brothers were pleased to agree, for, as Edward said, “I am sure I will be very happy to see them both here.”

Boswell tells us next that, notwithstanding his veneration of Johnson, “I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction,” and thus Boswell sought to use this understanding of Johnson’s personality and his knowledge of Johnson’s love of a good dinner at the Dillys’, to secure Johnson’s consent to dine with Wilkes. There follows in the *Life of Samuel Johnson* one of the most masterful examples of Boswellian reconstruction. Permit me to read it to you:

“Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland.” JOHNSON. “Sir I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will
wait upon him—” BOSWELL. “Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the Company which he is to have is agreeable to you.” JOHNSON. “What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?” BOSWELL. “I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his *patriotick friends* with him.” JOHNSON. “Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotick friends*? Poh!” BOSWELL. “I *should* not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there.” JOHNSON. “And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally.” BOSWELL. “Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me.” Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

When the evening arrived, there was an unexpected glitch. Johnson had forgotten the engagement, and had told his housekeeper, the imperious, if blind, Mrs. Williams, that he would be dining in. Johnson would not consider hurting Mrs. Williams feelings; as Boswell observed, “He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him.” Thus Boswell went to talk to the obstinate and possessive Mrs. Williams, and, persuasive as always, secured her agreement that Johnson should indeed attend, rather than disappoint, the Dillys, which would also have put Boswell in a bad light for having promised his attendance. Johnson, delighted at the thought of an excellent dinner out at the Dillys’, and perhaps forgetting who else was to be present, “roared to his servant for a clean shirt.” Boswell then tells us, “when I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna-Green.”
On arriving and learning that “the gentlemen in lace” was none other than the despised John Wilkes, Johnson was, according to Boswell, “confounded,” and to settle himself took up a book and read, or at least pretended to read, in the window-seat, until he had regained his composure. Boswell surmises that despite feeling “awkward,” Johnson remembered his assurance to Boswell that he could not be “disconcerted by any company,” and that “he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.” Then came the call “Dinner is upon the table.” Wilkes seated himself next to Johnson, and, Boswell continues,

. . . behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. . . . Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. “Pray give me leave, Sir:—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest.”—“Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir,” cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of “surly virtue,” but, in a short while, of complacency.

The conversation went on, with Wilkes and Johnson exchanging amusing stories about people they knew, and their famous, or infamous, qualities. Then the table-talk turned to literary and political matters. Wilkes skillfully referred to Johnson’s reference in his book about his tour of the Hebrides with Boswell, to Scotland being a barren place, and to his own political vulnerability to men of power.

Next Wilkes and Johnson engaged in a learned discussion about a passage in Horace’s “Ars Poetica,” a discussion to which, it is fair to say, few among us tonight could have contributed much. Then a subject always sure to amuse returned—making fun of Scotland (and—the real point—of Boswell too). Let me again simply quote from Boswell’s great reconstruction of the dinner party. It began with the observation
by the American Arthur Lee, that some Scotsmen had emigrated to America, and his surprise that they had chosen a quite “barren part.”

JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The Scotch would not know it to be barren.” BOSWELL. “Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there.” JOHNSON. “Why yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.” All of these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgement is obtained, can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is in meditazione fugae. WILKES. “That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation.” JOHNSON. (to Mr. Wilkes) “You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Litchfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London.” WILKES. “Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me.” JOHNSON. (smiling) “And we ashamed of him.”

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macauley to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, “You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced.” Wilkes talked
with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolous Regis*; adding, “I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel.” Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, indeed, “a good-humoured fellow.”

And so it went. After dinner Wilkes held a candle to a print on the wall of a beautiful woman, “and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom, with the finger of an arch connoisseur.” Later, he told Boswell he thought Johnson “shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms” of Mrs. Knowles, who had stopped by after dinner to join the conversation.

The evening now was a triumph. Here is Boswell’s own summary of both the experience and his reportage:

> This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men.

> Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, that “there was nothing to equal it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*.”

The next day Boswell wrote to Johnson’s dear friend Hester Thrale, of the dinner. He told her that while she had been sitting soberly with her family and friends, Johnson “. . . [had been] breaking jokes with Jack Wilkes upon the Scots. Such, Madam, are the vicissitudes of things.”

We might pause for a moment and wonder why Wilkes and Johnson got along so well. Was it simply, as Boswell suggests, Johnson’s desire to prove that he was indeed a gentleman of manners, who could behave appropriately with anyone? Was it their common learning,
their mutual appreciation of good food and witty conversation? I think it was something more. In the later part of the 18th century many of the more sophisticated intellectuals had found a common enemy, and they called it “cant.” Lord Byron denounced “Cant political, cant po-etical, cant religious, cant moral.” Johnson’s own Dictionary defined it as a “whining pretension to goodness, in formal and affected terms.” It was hypocrisy in every form.

Boswell and Johnson had once had their own discussion of “cant,” precipitated by Boswell’s claiming that if he were in Parliament, “I would never sell my vote, and I should be vexed if things went wrong.” Johnson responded:

JOHNSON. “That’s cant, Sir. It would not vex you more in the house, than in the gallery: publick affairs vex no man.”

BOSWELL. “Have not they vexed yourself a little, Sir? Have not you been vexed by all the turbulence of this reign. . . .”

JOHNSON. “Sir, I have never slept an hour less, nor eat an ounce less meat. I would have knocked the factious dogs on the head, to be sure; but I was not vexed.”

BOSWELL. “I declare, Sir, upon my honour, I did imagine I was vexed, and took a pride in it; but it was, perhaps, cant; for I own I neither ate less, nor slept less.”

JOHNSON. “My dear friend, clear your mind of cant. You may talk as other people do: you may say to a man, ‘Sir, I am your most humble servant.’ You may say, ‘These are sad times; it is a melancholy thing to be reserved to such times.’ You don’t mind the times. You tell a man, ‘I am sorry you had such bad weather the last day of your journey, and were so much wet.’ You don’t care six-pence whether he was wet or dry. You may talk in this manner; it is a mode of talking in Society: but don’t think foolishly.”

But in fact neither Johnson nor Wilkes either thought or spoke in
cant. They were many things, and many different things, but neither of them were hypocrites. Wilkes, devotee of liberty and champion of the common Englishman and the American patriot became a popular hero precisely because he was so free of cant, so direct, and so faithful to his principles in word and deed. So was Johnson. In fact Dr. Lettsom, one of those present at the 1776 Wilkes-Johnson dinner, described Johnson’s conversation this way:

Dr. Johnson was a pious man; attached, I confess, to established system, but it was from principle. In company I neither found him austere nor dogmatical; he was certainly not polite, but he was not rude . . . when he spoke it was like lightning out of a dark cloud. In social company, when he unbended from critical austerity, he afforded the finest dessert to a rational repast.

In many ways, Johnson and Wilkes were ultimately bound to respect each other for their honesty, for their freedom from cant.

15 May 1776 was not the last time they met. Although they did not become fast friends, they dined again, and once more at Boswell’s urging, in 1781. This was after the famous anti-Catholic Gordon riots of 1780, which Wilkes—then an Alderman of London and an MP—had personally helped quell, and in which Johnson saw his friend Henry Thrale’s brewery threatened by crowds who mistakenly believed him to be Catholic. While Wilkes had, earlier, supported the mobs who cried “Wilkes and Liberty” after The North Briton No. 45, and while Johnson never reconciled himself to his friend Mrs. Thrale’s affection for the Catholic music master Gabriel Piozzi, who became her second husband, Johnson and Wilkes moved closer over the years, united in such things as their dislike of bigotry and mob violence. Toward the end of Johnson’s life, at their second dinner, also at the Dillys’, Wilkes said to Boswell, loud enough for Johnson to hear, “Dr. Johnson should make me a present of his Lives of the Poets, as I am a poor patriot, who cannot afford to buy them.” Johnson pretended not to hear, but quietly told Mr. Dilly, one of the publishers, to send a set to Wilkes, with his compliments. Later, Johnson reported that when he was ill “Wilkes
... with whom I had a very rough bout, called upon me & was very amusing."

Perhaps the last word though ought to belong to Boswell. Describing that second dinner in 1781, he tells us:

The company gradually dropped away... I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq. literally tête-à-tête; for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture when the lion shall lie down with the kid.

So it is here at the Literary Club. Brought together despite our differences by our common interests, we enjoy our dinners, our conversations, our sociability. We rise, as Wilkes and Johnson did, above pettiness, and celebrate our common humanity. It is an honor to be with you. Thank you for your company.
Soft-Hearted Sam

“I am a man and think that there is no human problem which does not concern me.”

Samuel Johnson. The “Great Cham of Literature,” according to Tobias Smollett. In eighteenth century Britain, Johnson was the equivalent of a media superstar, and more. Author or compiler of the monumental *Dictionary of the English Language*, essayist, poet, critic, playwright, journalist; he was the most famous man in England, after the King. The image we have of him today is of an intimidating presence, a large, physically uncouth man of enormous intellect and strong Tory leanings, a political conservative who suffered fools not at all. His great chronicler James Boswell tells us that “he talked for victory,” and “all his life habituded himself to consider conversation as a trial of intellectual vigor and skill.” The Johnson we know best is opinionated, argumentative, unyielding in his insistence on intellectual and moral integrity and demanding of the same in his friends.

But this is about another facet of this complex and difficult man. We might admire the Samuel Johnson whose morality and logic we follow in *The Rambler* essays, whose poetic gifts overwhelm us in his *London: A Poem* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, whose critical and analytical skills dazzle us in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare. However, we must love the Sam Johnson who filled his days not merely with writing and blustering, but with acts of kindness, generosity, even selflessness, that remind us that our own shortcomings are not merely intellectual.

Let me refresh your recollection of Johnson’s story. He was born in Lichfield, in 1709, the son of a bookseller, respectable, but poor.
A small bequest to his mother and some charity allowed him to enroll at Pembroke College, Oxford, but his stay was cut short after only thirteen months for want of money. Following a few failed efforts to work as a teacher, he set off for London to try his luck as a writer in 1737, leaving his new wife behind. He was desperately poor. His wife, a widow before their marriage, had brought some money with her, but it had been lost in a failed effort to establish a school. Until 1762, when his powerful friends arranged for the by-then famous Johnson to receive a pension of 300 pounds annually from the King, he lived in near poverty. Although the rich and famous formed his circle of acquaintances, Johnson knew what it was to have nothing—once, in 1756, he was even arrested for debt.

Johnson was highly critical of others for failings of every sort, and was cynical or at least skeptical enough to observe that some sentiments ought always be suspect—for example, he warned that “patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel,” and that second marriages represent “the triumph of hope over experience.” He was also most highly critical of himself, and his private thoughts, reflected in prayers and other writings, show a man struggling to find some inner peace, and recognizing in himself habits of sloth, indolence and lack of application and piety that he found intolerable. “Human life is everywhere,” he told us, “a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.”

The public Johnson was a celebrity; London society vied for his favor; leading hostesses sought him out, and from Edmund Burke to Sir Joshua Reynolds he moved in a rarified atmosphere. And yet he did not. Let me tell you now about the opposite end of London’s social, intellectual, and moral spectrum. Let me tell you about the blind beggar, the prostitute, the impoverished widow, the quack, the criminal, the freed slave, the charlatan, the enemies of the King, that Sam Johnson supported, protected, and defended, and why he did, and what he got in return.

We begin with Zachariah Williams, a penniless Welshman and sometime physician, who pursued learning and science all his life in
an unsuccessful quest to strike it rich. In 1713 Parliament had offered a prize to anyone who could invent a way to determine longitude at sea, and winning the prize became Williams’ obsession. Widowed, he brought his daughter Anna to London with him in 1727 to seek the help of sponsors in perfecting and submitting his prize proposals, and interested on his behalf such eminent people as Edmund Halley, of Halley’s Comet, and even Sir Isaac Newton. His efforts came to naught however, and with the recommendation of friends he was admitted as a pensioner of the Charterhouse in Clerkenwell—the poorhouse. Increasingly without resources, he languished in filth and cold, as his daughter Anna sought to make some small money with her needlework. Unfortunately, as a result of cataracts, she became totally blind by 1740, with substantially diminished earning potential as a seamstress. Their situation deteriorated, and in 1748 Williams, and Anna, who, in violation of the rules, had been living in the poorhouse caring for him, were evicted from Clerkenwell. 

Through mutual friends the Williams met the Johnsons, probably around 1749. Johnson was always interested in mechanical and scientific projects. and found Williams intriguing. Anna Williams, now blind, but well educated, intelligent and particularly pious, became a companion to Johnson’s wife Elizabeth, or Tetty. Three years older than Johnson, Anna Williams was interested in literature, and extraordinarily organized and efficient, gifts no doubt necessarily enhanced by her blindness. Let’s leave the Williams for a minute, desperately poor, living hand to mouth, but supported emotionally, and even financially, by the only slightly less poor Johnsons.

When Tetty Johnson’s health failed she tried taking a room in Hampstead, in the country, for the cleaner air. There she often had a companion, Elizabeth Swynfen, a friend from her younger days in the Midlands. In fact Miss Swynfen’s father had been Johnson’s godfather, and it was through the Swynfens that Johnson had met the widow Tetty Porter. As Tetty’s health deteriorated Elizabeth Swynfen was a constant comfort to both husband and wife. Tetty, Johnson’s senior by twenty years, had long denied him access to her bed and her
body. As Tetty’s companion, part of Miss Swynfen’s duty was to warm Johnson’s bed at night when he visited his wife in the country. When Miss Swynfen had finished with the warming pan Johnson would quickly get into bed, and have her sit with him. Many years later Boswell interviewed her about those chores, and pressed her about what else might have happened. Although she acknowledged that Johnson had stroked and kissed her—“something different from a father’s kiss” she admitted—responding to Boswell’s question about whether Johnson always “conquered his violent inclination,” Elizabeth Swynfen reported that he had, that in those moments suddenly, “He’d push me from him and cry ‘Get you gone.’” Remember Miss Swynfen. She will return, with Anna Williams, who also was a frequent visitor to the failing Tetty in the country.

Slavery was not abolished in England until 1833. During the earlier years of empire, Englishmen owned slaves around the globe, and often brought them back to England. In Jamaica, in 1742, a slave of the plantation owner Richard Bathurst gave birth to a son. When Bathurst returned to England in 1750 to live with his own son, he brought the boy with him. The two Bathursts sent the boy, now ten, to school, with a new name, Francis Barber. When Tetty Johnson died in March of 1752 it was a devastating blow to the Bathursts’ friend Samuel Johnson. He had loved his wife truly and deeply, to the dismay of his sophisticated friends, who saw in her only an older woman, wearing excessive make-up, and given to opium, liquors, and a taste for the high life far beyond her husband’s modest means. Yet his friends understood that for Johnson, who feared solitude and madness, and nothing else in life, Tetty’s loss would be excruciating. So it was.

Johnson was unable to sleep or work, and wandered through the streets most nights. The Bathursts revered Johnson, and he them, in particular young Dr. Bathurst. Johnson late in life referred to him as “. . . my dear dear Bathurst, whom I loved better than ever I loved any human creature.” They shared much. Dr. Bathurst was Johnson’s physician, and they were both among the earliest and staunchest anti-slavery advocates in England. Their politics were in complete agree-
ment; Johnson said of him, “Dear Bathurst . . . was a man to my very heart’s content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a whig; he was a very good hater.”

Dr. Bathurst felt there was nothing else to be done but, two weeks after Tetty’s death, to send young Francis Barber to live with Johnson, to help him, and with his presence, cheer Johnson with his gentle disposition and happy personality. Johnson never owned his own home; renting lodgings, he moved frequently, moves often necessitated by his financial condition. When Francis Barber arrived in 1752, Johnson, working on the Dictionary, was living at No. 17 Gough Square. Feeling little need for a personal servant, and being concerned about Francis’ own interests, Johnson sent him almost at once to a nearby school. Only a day later Francis fell ill with smallpox, and was returned home to Johnson. When he had recovered sufficiently, Johnson sent him off to study at the Birmingham Free School, run by a Mr. Desmoulins, who had just married Tetty’s old friend and Johnson’s god-father’s daughter, Elizabeth Swynfen. But Johnson was not then left alone at 17 Gough Square.

Prior to Tetty’s death Johnson had used his influence to arrange for the senior surgeon of Guy’s Hospital, who was also the leading English authority on cataracts, to operate on Miss Williams. She had moved to Johnson’s house from her own miserable lodgings so that the surgery could at least be done in clean, relatively comfortable quarters, where she could convalesce in some comfort. The surgery was attempted, but it failed. Anna Williams stayed on however, and took charge of the household. Thus, when Francis Barber first arrived, and then returned from school, it was to quarters in Gough Square already crowded with Miss Williams, who had taken charge with an iron hand, if a blind eye, of Johnson’s chaotic living arrangements, including Johnson himself, a maid, and a cook.

In addition to giving her a home, Johnson did everything he could to help Miss Williams. He tried to influence a publisher to bring out a book she was compiling, a dictionary of philosophical terms, but to no avail. More successful was Johnson’s effort to have his friend David
Garrick, the great actor/producer and owner of the Drury Lane Theatre, stage a play one evening for her benefit. It produced about 200 pounds, which Johnson invested in her name, yielding a very small interest, but providing Anna Williams with her first dependable income. Much later, in 1766, Johnson bullied Tom Davies—who had introduced him to Boswell—into printing another literary effort by Anna Williams, *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, a work so thin it was padded with several pieces by Johnson himself, and one he solicited from Hester Thrale, his wealthy, aristocratic, and intimate friend. The book sold poorly, but what little it produced was invested along with the proceeds from the benefit performance ten years before.

At about the time Francis Barber had returned from Mr. Desmoulins’ school in 1756, the elder Mr. Bathurst died. His will gave Francis his freedom and twelve pounds. However, Francis had nowhere to go but to Johnson’s rooms on Gough Square, and while he was happy enough to stay on as Johnson’s servant, Johnson, after all, demanded little of him, he could not abide the tyrannical Miss Williams. Francis soon ran away, and found work as an apothecary’s assistant, but he frequently visited Johnson, and finding life outside too demanding, after two years asked if he could return. Miss Williams was by now even more firmly in control, and so Francis, after a few weeks, ran away again, this time to enlist in the navy in 1758.

While Johnson admired the military profession, it was the British Army officer, not the lowly seaman, usually impressed, who earned his approval. About the navy Johnson said:

> No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail, for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned... A man in jail has more room, better food and commonly better company.

It took Johnson over two years to get Francis discharged, but he did, and brought him home in October of 1760. In part because Johnson truly wished Francis to better himself and in part because of the hostility between Miss Williams and young Mr. Barber, he eventually
sent Francis back to school, in 1767. By now in his twenties, he was an unlikely scholar in an English boarding school, and although he mastered reading and writing English, he struggled with Latin and Greek. Nonetheless, apart from visits home, Johnson kept him there until 1772.

By this time another penniless denizen of the London streets was regularly finding shelter in Johnson's quarters. Robert Levett was almost five years older than Johnson, and as a young man had wandered through England, France and Italy, working as a servant and a waiter. Buying a few medical books when he could, and attending some lectures on anatomy and pharmacy in France, he returned to England and, neither surgeon nor physician nor even apothecary, he began to minister to the needs of the street people. An unattractive, brusque man, Levett was married, briefly, to a prostitute who believed him to be a physician, while he believed her to be an heiress wrongfully deprived of her inheritance. Quickly realizing their mutual mistakes, the marriage ended almost as soon as it began, and in 1762 Levett too became a permanent member of Johnson's household. He could contribute nothing to the household—his “patients” often paid him with only a swallow of gin—but he was Johnson's treasured companion at breakfast. Since Levett often roamed the streets late at night ministering to the sick, while Johnson roamed them ministering to his own soul, they would both sleep until noon or later, and take their tea and toast from Anna Williams and the maid of all works, Mrs. White, before they went their separate ways.

After Levett the next to move in was Poll Carmichael. Let us listen to Boswell explain how she arrived:

Coming home late one night, he found a poor woman lying in the street, so much exhausted that she could not walk; he took her upon his back, and carried her to his house, where he discovered that she was one of those wretched females who had fallen into the lowest state of vice, poverty, and disease. Instead of hastily upbraiding her, he had her taken care of with
all tenderness, for a long time, at considerable expense. . . .

The novelist Fanny Burney records in her diary the following further explanation, a conversation between her friends Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, in which Mrs. Thrale inquired about the members of his household, where she, with her aristocratic delicacy, was loath to visit:

Mrs. T. “But pray sir, who is the Poll you talk of? She that you used to abet in her quarrels with Mrs. Williams, and call out, *At her again Poll! Never flinch, Poll!*”

Dr. J. “Why I took to Poll very well at first, but she won’t do upon nearer examination.”

Mrs. T. “How came she among you sir?”

Dr. J. “Why I don’t rightly remember, but we could spare her very well from us. Poll is a stupid slut; I had some hopes of her at first; but when I talked to her tightly and closely, I could make nothing of her; she was wiggle waggle, and I could never persuade her to be categorical.”

Yet she stayed, and like Francis, and Miss Williams, received an allowance from Johnson’s none-too-healthy income.

And so did Mrs. Desmoulins, and her daughter, who came to share a crowded room with Poll Carmichael. Who was Mrs. Desmoulins? You’ve met her before. She was once the young Elizabeth Swynfen, daughter of Johnson’s god-father, friend of his wife, and preparer of his bed long ago. Now the widow of Francis Barber’s former schoolmaster, nearly penniless, she and her daughter had nowhere to go but to Johnson. Although she fought constantly with Miss Williams, and contributed nothing to the running of the house, she and her daughter received food, shelter and half a guinea a week.

And what did Johnson get in return from them all? From Levett and Miss Williams he did get some companionship, Levett at his late
breakfasts, and late night tea with Anna Williams whenever he re-
turned home, but from the whole household what he got was collec-
tive misery. As he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:

Williams hates everybody; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does
not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll loves
none of them.

And we know how Francis and Miss Williams felt about each other.
Francis, by now married, did even less than before. When Johnson's
old cat Hodge was so sick he could only eat oysters, Johnson himself
went to do the shopping so that, according to Mrs. Thrale, Francis'
“delicacy might not be hurt at seeing himself employed for the conve-
nience of a quadruped.”

Johnson’s life after 1765 when he met the Thrales, and until Henry
Thrale’s death in 1781, was in fact lived mostly with the Thrales at their
country house, Streatham Park where he had a room of his own. Not
only was he happy and cared for there, his own lodgings on Gough
Square and elsewhere, and, after 1776 at No. 8 Bolt Court, were full
of what the historian Thomas Macaulay later called a “menagerie”
and Johnson himself jokingly referred to as a “seraglio.” Mrs. Thrale
described it as including “A Blind woman and her Maid, a Black-
moor and his Wife, a Scotch Wench [Poll Carmichael, that would be]
a Woman whose Father once lived in Litchfield . . . —and a Super-
annuated Surgeon,” Mrs. Thrale neglecting to mention both Mrs.
Desmoulins’ daughter and Mrs. White, the cook, but also mentioning
a poor cousin of Johnson’s in the country, and another cousin, a lunatic
in an asylum, to both of whose support he contributed. Mrs. Thrale
tells us that:

He really was oftentimes afraid of going home, because he was
sure to be met at the door with numberless complaints; and
he used to lament pathetically to me, . . . that they made his
life miserable from the impossibility of making theirs happy,
when every favor bestowed on one was wormwood to the rest.
If however I ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would instantly set about softening the one and justifying the other; and finished commonly by telling me, that I Knew not how to make allowances for situations I never experienced.

Mrs. Thrale also tells us that:

He nursed whole nests of people in his house, where the lame, the blind, the sick and the sorrowful found a sure retreat from all the evils whence his little income could secure them.

Johnson’s literary executor and early biographer John Hawkins, of whom Johnson famously said he was “a most unclubable man,” tells us that when asked “how he could bear to be surrounded by such necessitous and undeserving people as he had about him, his answer was ‘if I did not assist them, no one else would, and they must be lost for want.’” In fact Johnson’s sympathy for the poor reflected a profound understanding of the limits of their lives. Mrs. Thrale’s journal records the following:

What signifies . . . giving money to common Beggars? They lay it out only in Gin or Tobacco—and why should they not says our Dr. why should everybody else find Pleasure necessary to their Existence and deny the poor every possible Avenue to it?—Gin & Tobacco are the only Pleasures in their Power.— let them have the Enjoyments within their reach without Reproach.

Why? Why did Johnson observe to his friend William Maxwell that “a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization?” In part, of course because he himself had been so poor for so long. Perhaps a more important explanation is that while Johnson feared only solitude and madness in life, he dreaded damnation after death. He lived in fear that he had wasted his life, that damnation would be his reward. The only good quality he would admit to having was his inclination towards charity. Sir Joshua Reynolds’ sister, Francis,
reports Johnson admitting to her that wandering the streets in the early morning hours “he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls, and that he used to put pennies into their hands to buy them a breakfast.” In his diary he often noted small gifts to anonymous people he sees on the street. And in his Idler, Essay No. 4, he defines a charity as “tenderness for the poor, which is . . . inseparable from piety.” His great Dictionary defines piety as “discharge of duty to God.” And in his diary, reflecting on a year past, he notes that he had maintained Mrs. Desmoulins and her daughter, observing, “other good of myself I know not where to find, except a Little Charity.”

If we conclude from this that he saw his acts of charity selfishly, as his only hope for salvation, we would be shortsighted indeed. Johnson was able to argue—and did, often for fun—any side of anything, but despite the contradictions we find in his writings and reported conversation, he was essentially an absolutist. He believed fervently in right and wrong. Surely right conduct could bring the rewards of a just God, but it is clear that he also believed in right for its own sake, as in his opposition to slavery, or to cruelty to animals. He was, after all, not only a pioneer abolitionist but a pioneer anti-vivisectionist. Does this indicate soft-heartedness—or tough-mindedness? Judge for yourselves from another example, this time a rather obscure one.

The French-Indian wars in the mid-eighteenth century were vicious. As the British struggled with the despised French for control of north-eastern North America few tactics against them were deemed too extreme. The great British hero of the Seven Years War was Jeffrey, 1st Baron Amherst, who was in charge of the British expedition against the French in Canada, and who captured Louisburg, Ticonderoga and Montreal. His success however, was due, in part at least, to weakening the native American Indian allies of the French by sending them small-pox infected blankets, against which they had no resistance. Johnson joined his countrymen in his extreme contempt, if not hatred, for the French—some things never change, do they. For example, consider the famous exchange between Johnson and his friend Dr. William Adams, as Johnson began his work on the Dictionary in
1748, predicting its completion in three years:

Dr. Adams. “But Sir, how can you do this in three years? Johnson. “Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years.”

Adams. “But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their dictionary.”

Johnson. “Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three is to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman.”

Despite this attitude, widespread in England, in 1758, during the height of the Seven Years War, several notable London gentlemen organized a charity to provide relief for French prisoners of war held throughout the British Empire. In 1760 the committee managing the charity published its report of its highly successful efforts. The managers of the Committee persuaded Johnson to write an introduction.

He did. First, he began by placing a Latin motto from Terence on the title page: Homo sum, humani; nihil a me alienum puto. “I am a man and think that there is no human problem which does not concern me.” Johnson’s introduction to the Committee Report then anticipates and demolishes the arguments against helping the despised French when, for example, “there remain many Englishmen unrelieved.” Warming to his subject, Johnson concludes with these extraordinary words:

That charity is best, of which the consequences are most extensive: the relief of enemies has a tendency to unite mankind in fraternal affection; to soften the acrimony of adverse nations, and dispose them to peace and amity: in the meantime, it alleviates captivity, and takes away something from the miseries of war. The rage of war, however mitigated, will always fill the world with calamity and horror: let it not then be unnecessarily extended; let animosity and hostility cease together; and no man be longer deemed an enemy, than while his sword is drawn against us.
The effects of these contributions may, perhaps, reach still farther. Truth is best supported by virtue: we may hope from those who feel or see our charity, that they shall no longer detest as heresy our religion, which makes its professors the followers of HIM, who has commanded us to “do good to them that hate us.”

Soft-hearted Sam? Or tough-minded man of principle? He famously said “No man but a block-head ever wrote except for money,” and he was paid five shillings for his introduction. Do you doubt that he meant it, nonetheless?

Let us conclude this superficial review of the lesser-known Johnson with the story of the Reverend William Dodd. Perhaps you do not recognize his name, but let me introduce him by saying he was the progenitor of a type that reached fruition with Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, and Jimmy Swaggart. Of no particular beginnings, Dodd managed to graduate from Cambridge and later received an appointment as a curate, although he originally had come to London as a writer—a literary hack, just as Johnson had. He continued his literary work, one of which, The Beauties of Shakespeare, ultimately served as Goethe’s introduction to Shakespeare. Good with words, and politics, he dedicated his books to those who could advance his career, and he received an appointment as chaplain to King George III. Dodd first became widely known in connection with his frequent sermons delivered at Magdalen House.

Here is how Dodd begins his An Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Magdalen Charity, first published in 1761:

. . . that in the present disordered state of things, there will always be brothels and prostitutes, is a fact but too indisputable, however unpleasing. Any attempt to prevent this evil, would be no less impossible than impolitic. . . .

Thus it was, Dodd reports, that in 1758 seven gentlemen raised 3000 pounds and opened Magdalen House, where, with eight “unhappy objects” it began to receive these women for rehabilitation. By 1763, 483
had been received, and 370 discharged to better lives as wives, servants or, in fewer numbers, to death or for “faults and irregularities.” Dodd’s Sunday sermons to these women became quite the thing to attend; Horace Walpole took Prince Edward and other society notables to hear him in 1760, and reported that Dodd:

. . . harangu[ed] entirely in the French style, and very eloquently and touchingly. He apostrophized the lost sheep, who sobbed and cried from their souls—so did my Lady Hertford and Fanny Pelham. . . .

Another visitor reported that he had “difficulty to get tolerable seats . . ., the crowd of genteel people was so great.”

Dodd’s fame and contacts and ambition raised him high and then brought him low. He developed a taste for the good life, wearing long perfumed silk robes and a large diamond ring when he was in the pulpit, and living in a country house hung with paintings by Titian, Rembrandt and Rubens when he was not. He was appointed tutor to Philip Stanhope, godson of the famous Earl of Chesterfield; young Stanhope himself became the fifth earl on his god-father’s death. Living beyond his means, Dodd was lucky for a time; his wife, of humble origins, unexpectedly inherited 1500 pounds, and then won 1000 pounds more in a lottery. An interesting story in itself, Mrs. Dodd had gone with her inheritance to bid on something at an auction. When she found herself bidding against a member of the aristocracy, she withdrew. The titled lady, in gratitude then invited her to tea and gave her a lottery ticket, which, as it happened, was a winner.

This was the acme of the rise of the Dodds. Using his wife’s money, Dodd attempted to bribe the lord Chancellor to name him to the prominent and well-paying living of St. George’s Church in Hanover Square. The lord Chancellor was not so easily bought off, and when the attempt was made public, Dodd, in 1774, was removed from the King’s chaplains list. As his means shrunk, his debts grew, and his creditors pressed. Now desperate, Dodd, in February of 1777, forged a bond in the amount of 4200 pounds, and sought to cash it, Boswell
tells us, “flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected.” Let us have Boswell tell us more:

The person whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify, was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who, he perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have generously paid the money in case of an alarm being taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country; but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.

No doubt it did not help Dodd that he was originally brought to be charged before the unclubable John Hawkins. Hawkins, a magistrate, was, despite Johnson’s characterization of him, a charter member of The Club organized by Johnson in 1764. The Club was exclusive and its members were the most notable men of London. And, in 1764, Dodd was in his glory. Soon thereafter he had privately made it known that he wished to become a member of The Club. Hawkins reports that Dodd then “. . . dwelt with his wife in an obscure corner near a village called Warton; but kept, in a back lane near him, a girl.” Sir John goes on to explain that when this and other “particulars respecting his character and manner of living” became known to the member of The Club, “all opposition to his admission became unnecessary.” Thus by 1777 when Dodd was brought before him, Hawkins had long ago made up his mind about Dodd, and lost no time binding him over for the trial. A week later Dodd was found guilty, and the sensitive forger fainted away, as the huge crowd of spectators wept at the verdict.

Dodd was shrewd enough to know that his own powers of persuasion would not be up to the task of saving his own life, however many other souls he claimed to have saved. Relying once again on his highly placed contacts, he had the Countess of Harrington write to Johnson, whom he himself had met only once, some 27 years earlier, to enlist his help. Johnson read the letter, “seemed much agitated” to
the man who had delivered it, but finally said, “I will do what I can.” We will never know what decided Johnson to act in favor of a man who represented the hypocrisy and “cant” Johnson so despised, but it is worth considering that Johnson had long opposed the death penalty, believing that it was not proportionate punishment for anything less morally heinous than intentional murder. We might also note that Johnson’s own younger brother, Nathaniel, had died under mysterious circumstances some forty years earlier, hounded by creditors, perhaps guilty of forgery himself. In any event Johnson threw himself into his defense of Dodd—from a distance, and with his pen. “Block-head” or not, Johnson took up his pen with no expectation of payment.

On May 16, 1777 Dodd was to appear before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield for sentencing. Horace Walpole characterized Mansfield as “inexorable,” and wrote that he “never felt pity, and never relented unless terrified.” The support of the public was not likely to help either, for, as Walpole reports, “Lord Mansfield . . . hated the popular party as much as he loved security.” Johnson’s first piece on Dodd’s behalf was a plea for mercy and a statement of remorse for Dodd to deliver before sentencing. That day, however eloquent, it fell on the wrong ears, and Lord Mansfield, no doubt to the satisfaction of John Hawkins, pronounced a sentence of death. Johnson then produced a remarkable series of writings, mostly anonymous, on Dodd’s behalf. Unfortunately, his letters written for Dodd to send to Mansfield, the Chief Justice, and to the Lord Chancellor had no effect.

Johnson also drafted a letter for Dodd to send directly to the King. It begins with a plea that the King not be offended by a request from “the most miserable of men,” and confesses to the crime of forgery, but then ingeniously dresses the request as a plea to preserve the honor and reputation of the church and the clergy, a particular concern of Johnson’s. Here is some of what Johnson wrote for Dodd to send to the King:

[I] humbly hope that public security may be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets,
to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance. Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal, before which kings and subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude for the life and happiness of your Majesty.

Johnson himself, as I have said, felt strongly about protecting the reputation of the Church and its messengers. In his own name therefore Johnson simultaneously wrote to Charles Jenkinson, prominent in government and friend of the King, asking for consideration because, as he wrote:

[Dodd] is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our church who has suffered public execution for immorality; and I do not know whether it would not be more for the interest of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy.

In his cover letter to Dodd sending the letter he had written for the King, Johnson had been careful to warn Dodd “not to let it be known at all that I have written this letter. . . . I hope, I need not tell you, that I wish it Success.—But do not indulge Hope.—Tell nobody.” Sir Nathanial Walpole, a member of Parliament, wrote contemporaneously that:

The King felt the strongest impulse to save him . . . To the firmness of the Lord Chief Justice . . . his execution was due, for no sooner had he pronounced his decided opinion that no mercy ought be extended, than the King, taking up the pen, signed the death warrant.
Johnson was not through. He wrote a Petition for the City of London and its Council to send to the King asking clemency, and he published newspaper articles supporting a petition for clemency (which he also wrote) presented to the Secretary of State by Earl Percy, and signed by 23,000 people. He wrote a pathetic letter to the Queen for Mrs. Dodd herself to deliver. And he wrote a most remarkable example—perhaps the most remarkable example—of a genre now long disappeared: the “Condemned Sermon.”

It was then the custom for a prisoner under sentence of death at Newgate Prison to deliver a final sermon addressed to an audience usually composed of three groups: fellow prisoners also under sentence of death, other prisoners, and the general public, who attended these events, as they did executions, in large numbers. Johnson’s composition for Dodd drew as its text on the Acts of the Apostles, 16:23 “What must I do to be saved?” Under the title The Convict’s Address to His Unhappy Brethren it was reprinted many times. In fact a version was studied the night before his own execution and speech to his fellow condemnees by one of the Bounty mutineers in 1792.

In order to be saved, Johnson has Dodd say, three things must be done—exert faith, perform obedience, and exercise repentance. The passages on faith and obedience were unexceptional in their substance, although markedly Johnsonian in their eloquence. In the passages on exercising repentance Johnson soars. After discussing the need to truly have a change of heart, to accept what cannot be avoided, to forgive others, to repair whatever injury was caused to the extent possible, and to confess all of the crimes of which the condemned has been guilty, Johnson writes an extraordinary passage about how to die. It is worth repeating:

What we can do, is commonly nothing more than to leave the world an example of contrition. On the dreadful day, when the sentence of the law has its full force, some will be found to have affected a shameless bravery, or negligent intrepidity. Such is not the proper behavior of a convicted criminal. To rejoice
in tortures is the privilege of a martyr; to meet death with intrepidity is the right only of innocence, if in any human being innocence could be found. Of him, whose life is shortened by his crimes, the last duties are humility and self-abasement. We owe to God sincere repentance; we owe to man the appearance of repentance. We ought not to propagate an opinion that he who lived in wickedness can die with courage.

This extraordinary passage represents what one commentator has called Johnson’s “most delicate act of consolation for Dodd.” What he refers to of course, is the reference to the unlikeliness that any of us are innocent, thus reconciling the condemned man to the rest of humanity. Yet, as another wise commentator has said, “There is analogy, but an equation would be fiction.” Johnson offers comfort to Dodd—soft-hearted Sam—but not exculpation; whatever his common humanity, “he who lived in wickedness” has no right to die with a show of courage.

Johnson also sent Dodd one last personal letter of comfort. In it he said, in part:

Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye or turpitude. It corrupted no man’s principles; it attacked no man’s life. It involves only a temporary and reparable injury. . . .

In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, [Dodd having written Johnson to thank him profusely for his efforts] let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate servant

Sam: Johnson

Johnson’s friends were not all pleased by his efforts for Dodd, a reprobate with no personal claim on his good offices. Nor did they find it seemly that Johnson asked the wrong-doer Dodd to pray for
him. Our friend John Hawkins observed, probably with Johnson as much as anyone in mind, that the public, by:

... the insertion of his name in public papers, with such palliatives as he and his friends could invent, never without the epithet of unfortunate, ... were betrayed into such an enthusiastic commiseration of his case, as would have led a stranger to believe, that himself had been no accessory to his distress, but they were the inflictions of Providence.

Hawkins goes on to remark on what he calls an “inconsistency” in Johnson in this case. According to Hawkins, Johnson:

... assisted in the solicitations for his pardon, yet, in his private judgment, he thought him unworthy of it, having been known to say, that had he been the advisor of the King, he should have told him that, in pardoning Dodd, his justice ... would have been called in question.

Another writer called Johnson’s efforts for Dodd, once disclosed after Dodd’s execution, a “prostitution ... of so singular a nature, that it would be difficult to select an adequate motive for it out of the mountainous heap of conjectural causes of human passions or human caprice.” Unless, suggests this critic slyly, he might “have some consciousness, that he himself had incurred some guilt of the same kind.” Johnson’s friend Arthur Murphy said of this charge that “In all the schools of sophistry is there to be found so vile an argument? In the purlieus of Grub-street is there such another mouthful of dirt? In the whole quiver of Malice is there so envenomed a shaft?” Actually, Johnson went to some length, originally, to conceal his efforts on Dodd’s behalf, at least until after the execution. In fact, when Mr. William Seward, a friend of Johnson’s, expressed the view before Dodd’s execution that “The Convict’s Address” was too good to have been written by Dodd, Johnson, dissembling a little, said, famously, “Depend upon it, Sir. When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.”
Francis Reynolds, sister of Sir Joshua, the great painter and friend of Johnson, explains Johnson’s asking Dodd to pray for him in his last letter by Johnson’s acceptance of the sincerity of Dodd’s repentance, and by the certainty that writing to Dodd on the last night of his life, Johnson “was so soften’d with pitty [sic] and compassion . . . he probably did not think of his former transgressions, or thought, perhaps, that he ought not to remember them, when the offender was so soon to appear before the Supreme Judge of Heaven and Earth.” Perhaps Miss Reynold’s further explanation of Johnson’s efforts for Dodd is the most satisfactory, in that it reflects Johnson’s view that people, after the fall, are naturally corrupt. She explains:

No man, I believe, was ever more desirous of doing good than Dr. Johnson, whether propel’d by Nature or by Reason; by both I should have thought, had I not heard him so often say, that “Man’s Chief merit consists in resisting the impulses of his nature.”

In fact, she tells us, that to those who claimed that nature, reason, and virtue were inherent, indivisible principles in man, he would reply that “If man is by nature prompted to act virtuously and right, all the divine precepts of the Gospel, all its denunciations, all the laws enacted by man to restrain man from evil had been needless.”

Or, perhaps the explanation is simpler. In fact, might his defense of Dodd, his efforts for the French prisoners, his charity toward the poor, be only the manifestations of the real tenderness of this hard-headed and intimidating man? We find a clue in an anecdote reported by the Rev. Hastings Robinson, who tells of a conversation at which he was present between Anna Seward, the so-called “Swan of Lichfield,” Johnson’s home town, and Johnson, on a visit there two months after Dodd’s execution. Speaking of Johnson’s direct personal request for mercy for Dodd in Johnson’s letter to Charles Jenkinson, she said:

Miss Seward: I think, Dr. Johnson, you applied . . . to Mr. Jenkinson on [Dodd’s behalf].

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Johnson: Why yes Madam; I knew it was a man having no interest, writing to a man who had no interest; but I thought with myself, when Dr. Dodd comes to the place of execution, he may say “Had Dr. Johnson written in my behalf, I had not been here,” and (with great emphasis) I could not bear the thought!

Judge for yourselves. Johnson, the “Great Cham” of literature, the unblinking moralist, or simply a man, as his friend Arthur Murphy said, whose “humanity and generosity . . . were unbounded.”
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**Book Review**

*New York: Oxford University Press, 2006*

A Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli

Pottle claims that “so early as 1769 Boswell must have been on the continent one of the best known of English authors; better known, indeed, than Johnson himself.” Years later Boswell wrote that “... it was wonderful how much Corsica had done for me, how far I had got in the world by having been there. I had got upon a rock in Corsica and jumped into the middle of life.”

What then was all the fuss about? We might well ask this now because, again deferring to the felicitous phrasing of Professor Pottle, Boswell’s book was very much “a book of the hour,” the equivalent of a book-club book. Although it sold better in his lifetime than either his Life of Johnson or his account of his Johnsonian jaunt to the Hebrides, after 1769 it was never reprinted in its entirety until now, except for a French edition in 1992. The book was the product of more than Boswell’s ambition for fame however. It was the result of his visit to Corsica—about six weeks during 1765—and his enthusiasm for the Corsican leader Pascal Paoli, nurtured by Boswell’s encounters with Rousseau and Boswell’s own enthusiasm for “liberty” and “independence,” quite natural in a young Scots laird, post-Culloden.

After finishing nearly a year of rigorous study, including civil law, in Utrecht, Boswell’s bargain with his father entitled him to take the Grand Tour—Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France—but it also included an unauthorized side trip to dangerous, wild and forbidden Corsica. The British government had tried to stay neutral between the French and Genoese claims to Corsica, and had refused to support the Corsican independence movement led both by Paoli and by his father before him. The history of Corsica was long, and the story romantic and tragic. The Corsican reputation for bravery and honor on the wild island was widespread, although few from Britain, or elsewhere, had actually visited there—no wonder the appeal of Corsica to Rousseau, champion of the “noble savage,” or a young Boswell. During his stay Boswell saw much of the island, including the hard to reach, rugged, and seldom-visited interior, where he spent about a week with Paoli himself, thanks to a letter of introduction from Rousseau. On his return to Scotland, Boswell began almost at once to gather his materials,
his own notes, reports from others, and two earlier books by French
authors.

Travel books were in vogue, and although Boswell’s book was
that, it was more. It comprises two parts; the first and longest is
“An Account of Corsica,” a standard sort of guide, dealing with, ac-
cording to its chapter headings, “the Situation, Extent, Air, Soil and
Productions,” “A concise view of the Revolutions” and “the Present
State . . . with respect to Government, Religion, Arms, Commerce,
Learning the Genius and character of its Inhabitants.” Of this part,
Johnson himself said, “it is like other histories . . . copied from books.”
Boswell somewhat ostentatiously displays his classical learning here,
with citations of many ancient references to Corsica, and draws heav-
ily on the work of his French predecessors in print. After sandwich-
ing in six Corsican State Papers (in the original Italian in Boswell,
but helpfully in English translation only in the OUP reprint) comes
“The Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli.”
And here it is that Boswell sets his book apart and shows preliminary
flashes of the great biographer/autobiographer he was to become. Of
this part Johnson said, “your Journal is in a very high degree curious
and delightful . . . your Journal rose out of your own experience and
observation. You express images which operated strongly upon your-
self, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers.
I know not whether I could have any narrative by which curiosity is
better excited or better gratified.” The Journal segment, unlike the Ac-
count, has been reprinted many times.

In a sense there are two books under review here: Boswell’s, and
the new edition from OUP. As to the first, this reviewer has little to
add to Samuel Johnson’s appraisal, except to note that contemporary
praise, though substantial, and from Lord Lyttelton, Walpole, Mrs.
Macaulay and Garrick, in addition to Johnson and others, was not
universal. The Gentleman’s Magazine (as well as other periodicals) gave
it a great deal of space, and it made Paoli an heroic figure. Aside from
minor pokes of fun at Boswell’s Scotticisms and his spelling (which
he defended in advance in his Preface—incorrectly, as it turns out—as
preserving the “Saxon” origins of words and respecting French versions of Latin roots), there were more serious objections. An unsigned review by Georges Deyverdun or Edward Gibbon (or both) observed that Boswell’s efforts at scholarship were “that kind of erudition which costs little and is worth less.” And Thomas Gray wrote to Walpole of the Journal segment:

The pamphlet proves, what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell’s truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of this kind. The true title of this part of his work is “A Dialogue Between a Green Goose and a Hero.”

Our own interest in Corsica and Paoli may be slight, but Boswell’s book, in its entirety, tells us much about Boswell and his methods. The dry material of the Account plants many seeds that blossom in the Journal’s panegyric to Paoli and Liberty. Boswell the observer and reporter is visible, if as yet not fully formed, in both. The Account and Journal have moments of great charm—and typical Boswellian do-as-I-say-and-not-as-I-do, as when he defends Corsicans’ “private revenge against such as violate the honor of their women,” by observing that while this “. . . may to some appear rude and barbarous. . . . Better occasional murders than frequent adulteries.” In short, Boswell’s book is, indeed, Boswell’s.

As for this Oxford edition there is less to say. It has an Introduction of some length, easy to read and including helpful and accurate, if not particularly original or insightful, material explaining the contexts—historical, political, literary, and personal—in which the book was written. Using Boswell’s corrected third edition as its copy-text, it includes footnotes where the modern reader would want them, identifying names, places and references now often obscure, and additional material, including extracts from the London Chronicle concerning Corsica and Boswell’s forthcoming book from the time of Boswell’s
return to Europe in 1766 until a few months prior to publication. Some of these reports, if not all, were written by Boswell himself, as he attempted to stir up interest in his book. Another appendix includes excerpts from contemporary reactions and reviews. An index of subjects relating to Boswell and Paoli, and a separate index of proper names accompany the textual apparatus enumerating differences among the first, second, and third editions.

Perhaps this edition is enough for most readers, but I doubt it. Most readers will not be choosing between it and John Grisham’s latest. Unlike the editions of Boswell coming from The Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell (full disclosure: I am a member of the Editorial Committee) the footnotes and additional materials are thin indeed. The additional information available from Pottle’s edition of The Private Papers (vol. 7, 1930) and his magnificent biography, James Boswell, The Earlier Years 1740–1769, make available an easily accessible and enormously enriching amount of informative and explanatory background. Anyone curious enough to read this new version would no doubt much prefer a more lavish edition (à la Yale), and that was surely possible given the head start provided by Pottle, but it was not attempted here.

Two quibbles. This edition tells us that “it has not been feasible to reproduce the minutely detailed, fold-out map of the island drawn in Edinburgh by Thomas Phinn” and included in each of the early editions. This is a shame, not only because that map itself provides far more information than the simple representation substituted here, but also because the original, a work of beauty, includes the Boswell family coat of arms in an elaborate medallion inscribed to Boswell by Phinn. Finally, and in deference to the eyesight of many potential readers, it is worth noting that while this edition lacks a colophon, and this reviewer lacks the knowledge to identify the font used, Boswell’s observation about murder being preferable to adultery appears here on page 131, while it is on page 217 of the first and second edition, and page 243 of the third edition. That is to say, there are too many words on a page here. But they are, after all, well worth reading.
Less a book review and more a report: readers of the \textit{Johnsonian News Letter} will hereby be put on notice that what we know as \textit{The Prince of Abissinia a Tale}, by Samuel Johnson, London, MDCCLIX is, at long last, available in Chinese. The translator is Tian Ming Cai, educated in Zhangshan University Guangzhou, the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing, and Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.

The book is almost entirely in Chinese, except for the occasional English translation of a bold-faced Chinese version of a famous aphorism (e.g., “Example is always more efficacious than precept”), a few names in what I assume to be the “Acknowledgments” and “Introduction” sections, and a partial bibliography of editions of \textit{Rasselas} in the library of John Byrne of Subiaco, Western Australia, and an English language bibliography of reference and other scholarly works. Mr. Byrne, a dedicated Johnsonian, member of The Johnson Society of Australia, and contributor to its interesting newsletter \textit{The Southern Johnsonian}, has been a supporter of Tian Ming Cai’s Johnsonian labors for a number of years, and was a contributor, both moral and bibliographic, to the effort that led to this handsome soft-cover edition, with a design and graphic display handsome, even if unintelligible to the eye untrained in Chinese.

My copy of this book, courtesy of John Byrne, came with an inscription by the translator, and a two-page essay by him entitled “Dr. Johnson in China,” which is both a brief history of the rise and fall of
Johnsonian interest in China, and an explanation of “Why Johnson?,” the question put to the translator by his publisher. From this we learn that before the 1949 revolution “everyone in the [Chinese] social, academic and literature world generally knew and talked of Johnson in many ways.” After 1949, Johnson was associated with “counterrevolutionary, conservative and religious beliefs,” and thus was no longer mentioned or studied. Although, since the so-called “cultural revolution” of 1966–1976, China has been increasingly receptive to a broader spectrum of ideas, Johnson has never returned to his former position in the intellectual canon of Chinese culture.

As to the question, “Why Johnson?,” it is perhaps best to quote from the translator himself:

A question I also keeping asking myself all the time while doing the job. The significance of Johnson’s thinking of subordination might not matter so much, if resolution in China did not have a history of class struggles or violence. Ironically, at present and to a certain point, the Chinese need Johnson much more than at any other period, when the Chinese leaders called to “build a harmonious society,” which Johnson could provide some useful thinking, because he always said that “I am a friend to subordination. It is most conducive to the happiness of society.” But bear in mind the record of human right and the existing economic reforms rather than the political reforms. I should mention what the other side of Johnson had said, if government abused its power, mankind would not bear it; against a tyrant, the people would rise and cut off his head (see introduction the Life of Johnson). Johnson is a rationalist in everything, but I love to pay attention to his picture of “the dangerous prevalence of imagination,” and his words that “there are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide” (see introduction Rasselas), when thinking of Bush’s war on Iraq at the beginning of the twenty first century. Simply put, why Johnson, because what we need is Johnson’s broad mind and humanity (good heart), which can lead us walk out of the shades of the Vanity of Human Wishes. Dr. Johnson and his spirit will be welcomed and such enjoyment by the Chinese
generations to come, no need to say, Dr. Johnson’s views of China “possess a peculiar significance.”

You might, as I did, wonder (based on the literary quality of the foregoing), how well the Chinese translation would capture the sense, let alone the language, of Johnson. The translator himself observes in his essay that “[i]t is not easy to read Johnson.” Nor translate him, one might add. Thus I was pleased to have a chance to show the translation, and a copy of a first edition of *The Prince of Abissinia*, to Gunnar Malmqvist, a member of the committee of the Swedish Academy that selects the Nobel Prize for literature, and himself a translator of Chinese into Swedish. Prof. Malmqvist’s English, charmingly accented orally, is fluent and flawless syntactically. He studied both the Chinese and English texts carefully (although, one must admit, after a quite Boswellian dinner), and, even without looking at the English version, read to me from the Chinese, translating into English, as he went, an arbitrarily selected passage. I was astonished. It was as Johnson had written.

I regret—or rather I am pleased—to inform readers of this journal that the excellent first edition of *Rasselas* in Chinese is sold out. I do not know whether there will be a second printing. But it is comforting to have evidence that globalization has brought more than Kit-Kat bars to China from England. And that, Robert Frost to the contrary notwithstanding, in this case the poetry was not lost in the translation.
Let us begin with the Dramatis Personae. “Sam” is Samuel Johnson, the dominant, overwhelming “Great Cham” of eighteenth-century English literature and eighteenth-century London life. “Dave” is David Garrick, the most famous actor of the eighteenth-century English stage, and perhaps of all time. And “Bill”? Bill is William Shakespeare, who, I trust, needs no introduction. In fact, Bill is so well known that it is perhaps jarring to read a suggestion that it could have been necessary or even possible for Sam and Dave to “save” him, 150 years after his death, and after Shakespeare’s own contemporary and rival Ben Jonson had already bestowed immortality on him by declaring that “He was not of an age, but for all time.”

It is today a common assumption by the culturally literate—perhaps even more often by the culturally illiterate—that Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist and perhaps the greatest writer in English of all time. Nearly four hundred years after his death, in 1616, it seems to us now that such an opinion has been the conventional wisdom continuously since then, or at least since the 1623 printing of the First Folio, the first collected edition of his plays. But that is not so. There was a time when Shakespeare was seldom performed and scarcely read. This was followed by a period in which a cult was created, only later named “Bardolatry” by George Bernard Shaw. During these cult years what in fact was worshipped were almost unrecognizable “adaptations” of his plays. The focus was on a near-mythical figure of enormous importance to England’s national self-image, but all in all Bardola-
try during this period had little to do with what the best available evidence now identifies as the work of the Swan of Avon, William Shakespeare, born in 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon.

A little English political and literary history is in order to help understand how low he fell, and how high the artificial Shakespeare rose, before the efforts of Samuel Johnson, David Garrick and others restored him to a more proper and reasonable estimation. Shakespeare wrote most of his plays between 1590 and 1613. Only about half were printed during his lifetime, in part because publication was deemed to be by performance, and in part because Shakespeare did not wish to make copies of his plays available for troupes other than his to perform. It may also be that Shakespeare and his company intentionally withheld publication in order to revive interest in them later, after they had fallen out of the repertoire. In any event, printed versions were scarce. Even the actors were given only rolls of paper with their own lines and cues pasted on—from where, of course, we get the word “role.” Yet during Shakespeare’s lifetime his company, in which he was variously author, actor and theater-owner, was enormously successful. His work was performed frequently for Queen Elizabeth, and following her death in 1603, for her successor, James I. Shakespeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, named after their earlier patron, was taken up by the new king, and renamed the King’s Men. The Shakespeare years were part of a golden age for theater, with Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe and others achieving success. Shakespeare’s plays, however, were widely performed and commercially successful (for the most part), despite the competition.

Censorship and regulation of theaters by the Master of Revels were both firmly in place by 1581, well before Shakespeare began to write. In the years both before and immediately after 1600 there was consistent opposition to the theater, as a licentious, heretical spawning ground for the devil. But even after the death of James I in 1625, theater and Shakespeare’s plays survived, although diminished in popularity and possibility. The First Folio of 1623 was reprinted in 1632, both editions relatively expensive books that sold well. But as they aged, Shake-
speare’s plays were performed less often. For a time the opposition to theater lacked the power to do much other than close down occasional performances, and theaters were occasionally closed due to outbreaks of plague. Until, of course, the Puritan Revolution. After the rise to power of Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans, culminating in the execution of King Charles I (who loved Shakespeare, and annotated his own copy of the Folio), all theater was banned. There was no legitimate theater performed in London from 1642 until 1660, when Charles II’s ascension to the throne marked the beginning of the period we know as the Restoration.

As it had been under Elizabeth and James, Restoration theater reflected the tastes of the times, and occasionally pandered to the tastes of the trend-setters. While it is probably not true that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written to please Queen Elizabeth, who had apocryphally regretted the enormously popular Falstaff’s death, offstage, in *Henry V*, James I was himself a literate, even scholarly man, and the author of, among other things, a book on demonology and witchcraft. There is no question but that the witches and the show of kings who appear in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* were put there, in large part, specifically to please him. Charles II, on the other hand, was no scholar. He was, instead, a notorious libertine, a bawd, a rake. Known as the “Merry King” he had thirteen acknowledged mistresses, including the actress Nell Gwinn. He loved the theater, but not Shakespeare. When Charles II took the throne in 1660 it had been about fifty years since Shakespeare had written his last play, and perhaps seventy years since his first. They seemed old and tired, rustic and unpolished. They were too tame for the “liberated” and sophisticated times of Charles II. In 1661 Pepy’s friend John Evelyn wrote of *Hamlet*, “Now the old play begin[s] to disgust this refined age.”

Restoration drama—unlike Elizabethan drama—was blasphemous, topical, scandalous, often just plain coarse and lewd, especially when compared to Shakespeare, who, no prude himself, was infinitely more subtle than Aphra Behn or William Congreve. Moreover, by the time the Civil Wars began in the 1640s only five of Shakespeare’s plays were
still in the active repertory, *Hamlet, Othello, Julius Caesar, The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV, Part I*. By the time the theaters re-opened in 1660 there were virtually no actors left who knew the lines. Thus, during the early years of the Restoration—from about 1660 until 1680—Shakespeare’s plays were seldom performed, and when they were, the productions were often rewritten, updated, changed so as to be almost unrecognizable to us. *The Tempest* of the Restoration was the most successful, but it was a version by John Dryden and William Davenant, an actor, producer and writer who claimed to be Shakespeare’s bastard son. Dryden, Davenant and others also adapted many other Shakespearean plays, adjusting them to the tastes and politics of the times.

During this period too the actor Thomas Betterton be came famous, in large part for his performances as Hamlet. But whose *Hamlet* was it—Davenant’s, or Shakespeare’s? Betterton acted for many years in Davenant’s version of Hamlet, and one member of the audience at Betterton’s last performance, at age seventy-four in 1709, wrote that reading the play was to see “dry, incoherent, & broken sentences,” but seeing Betterton perform it proved that the play had actually been written “correctly.” In fact, “revising” or adapting Shakespeare’s plays pre-dated the Restoration; as early as 1618 companies producing the plays took considerable liberties in “improving” them.

The early Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare gave way, roughly between 1680 and sometime in the 1690s, to other considerations. This period included various constitutional crises, and particularly the Exclusion Crisis, in which the king and Parliament maneuvered over, among other things, whether Protestant Charles II’s Catholic brother James II could succeed him on the throne. During these years Shakespeare’s plays were often rewritten to avoid any hint of taking sides on these or any other political or religious issue of the day. Questions about the authenticity of what appeared on stage were seldom raised, and “Shakespeare” was simply a convenient brand name to assure some measure of box-office success. In many of these versions, in newly written prologues or otherwise, Shakespeare himself was presented
as a character, often a king or even as a royal ghost of great power, as in John Dryden’s successful rewriting of *Troilus and Cressida*, which remained in the repertory from 1679 through 1719. Shakespeare himself—at least the already mythical Shakespeare—became the point, a kind of authority figure, a John Bull symbol for an England in need of reassurance.

After the constitutional crises the situation reversed, and every faction tried to adopt and use Shakespeare for its own ends, and to advance its own arguments. As one commentator has observed:

> Whether pro- or anti-Stuart, Tory or Whig, the playwrights of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century share a growing perception and promotion of Shakespeare as both a national father and a domestic one, his plays amendable to readings and re-writings stressing their private pathos, or their patriotic morals, or perhaps both.

Thus Shakespeare’s plays became tools to be used to promote whatever agenda the user preferred. Adaptations were cleaned up to reflect the more strict public morals of the post-Restoration Augustan Age. The plays were reworked again, to glorify England’s image of itself, or of Shakespeare, now shorthand for everything great about the growing British Empire. The most popular version of *King Lear*—indeed the only one performed for close to 150 years—was Nahum Tate’s 1681 version, with a happy ending in which Lear reigns sane and happy and, like Edgar and Cordelia, lives on at the end, testament to the glory of British royalty and England itself.

Yet with the beginning of the eighteenth century, things began to change. Several factors were in play, as always with cultural shifts. The Renaissance—a period not identified by that name until about 1850—had seen the growing ubiquity of the printing press and literacy, which stimulated renewed attention to the Greek and Roman classics, both in their originals and in translation. Renaissance humanists like Petrarch, Poliziano and Scaliger had concerned themselves with restoring classical writings from the corrupt forms passed down over
the centuries in manuscript. This Renaissance/humanist tradition of capturing textual authenticity was well known to eighteenth-century writers and scholars, although few knew it as well as Samuel Johnson. Also at work, and again, particularly with Johnson in England, was neoclassicism, a movement that might be said to have started with the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* by the humanists in the sixteenth century, and advanced most significantly by the French dramatists in the seventeenth century, especially Corneille and Racine, but also by John Dryden with his play *All for Love* in 1671 and Joseph Addison with his own neoclassic drama, *Cato*, in 1713.

For our purposes the most important principle of neo-classicism was its insistence on the Aristotelian concept of the dramatic “unities.” This principle held that observing the unities of time, place and action—that is, either comedy or tragedy but not both—in drama helped make a play a better reflection of nature, and, therefore, more likely to be credible and capture the belief and emotions of the audience. In a play of two or three hours, it would not do—or so neo-classic theory held—to have the action spread over many years, or even many days, many places, many themes, or two genres.

One final important consideration before we move on to how Sam and Dave helped bring the pendulum back: Shakespeare needed the passage of time to be considered a “classic” writer. The works of Virgil or Sophocles were not only great, they were also old. The eighteenth century was a hundred years removed from Shakespeare’s time. Johnson himself thought that this period was “the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit.” Thus Shakespeare, according to Johnson, writing nearly 150 years after his death, “may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration.” It was time, in short, to accord Shakespeare the respect accorded the classics, and consider what he wrote, and the context in which he wrote it—in modern terms we might see this as the beginning of what we call historicist criticism. But Johnson’s words again are best. “Every man’s performance, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived.”
The effort to rediscover the “real” Shakespeare can be said to have begun with Nicholas Rowe, who produced the first attempt at a textually recovered Shakespeare in 1709. Rowe was followed by others, by Alexander Pope for example in the years 1723–25, by Lewis Theobald in 1733, Thomas Hanmer in 1744 and William Warburton in 1747. With all these editions, why did Samuel Johnson propose yet another edition in 1756? First, let us hear his summary of how the plays first came into print, in the quarto (i.e., pre-First Folio) editions, both good and bad, based on the various manuscripts and cue cards of the theaters and the memories of the actors during and immediately after Shakespeare’s lifetime. Remember, as Johnson tells us, that the author himself was “so careless . . . of future fame” that “he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been published . . .” so as to be able to leave “them to the world in their genuine state.” As he explained in his Proposals for Printing, by Subscription, the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare, Corrected and Illustrated by Samuel Johnson (1756):

. . . he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre: and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another deprivation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers . . . and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskillful hands.

Starting with this seventeenth-century mess, Johnson conceded that of the various eighteenth-century editors, “not one has left Shakespeare without improvement.” But not improvement enough. Johnson promised in his 1756 Proposals that
The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations will be made.

When Johnson finally wrote his great “Preface” to his edition in 1765 he reviewed the work of his predecessors in detail, finding a few kind words for their efforts, but finally leaving us with the ultimate damnation by faint praise. Of Rowe, Johnson found that while he “collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before . . . he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.”

Of Pope the editor, Johnson—who regarded Pope the poet highly—wrote:

Pope in his edition did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise: he was the first that knew . . . by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate.

Johnson disposed next of Theobald, whom he called “a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions . . . zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it,” but, Johnson says, “A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more. . . .” Theobald, Johnson concluded, was unfortunately “weak and ignorant . . . mean and faithless . . . petulant and ostentatious.”

The next edition had been Thomas Hanmer’s, in 1744. While Johnson acknowledges Hanmer’s diligence and learning, Hanmer unfortunately took Pope and Theobald at face value and “thought himself allowed to extend a little further the license, which had already been carried so far. . . .” Finally, Johnson confronted William Warburton’s 1747 edition. Here he is circumspect, because Warburton is his friend, yet he finds that

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which
is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that
certainty which presumes to do, by surveying the surface,
what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom.

Thus Johnson offered justification for his own edition. He tells us,
in his 1765 “Preface,” that “Not a single passage in the whole work has
appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore, or ob-
scure, which I have not endeavored to illustrate.”

But the importance of Johnson’s edition of Shakespeare is actually
not only, or even primarily, in its restoration of the text to the “real”
Shakespeare. His edition does include nearly 15,000 textual emenda-
tions—we hope corrections—to earlier printings. He does do a far
better job than any of his predecessors had in going back to the First
Folio itself and its existing quarto predecessors, focusing attention on
what existed before the adaptation craze kicked in. Yet neither he nor
we know what the “real” Shakespearian version was, if there had been
one at all. As far as we know, Shakespeare himself did not participate
directly in the early printings of any of the plays. Seven years after his
death the First Folio had been compiled by John Heming and Henry
Condell, fellow actors in Shakespeare’s company, from what they had
at hand, which were probably the existing quartos of the eighteen pre-
viously printed plays and some manuscripts and actors’ rolls, although
none, as far as we know, in Shakespeare’s hand. We do not know ex-
actly what all of their sources were.

Johnson himself had been thinking about this problem of the lack
of an authoritative text for a long time. As early as 1745 when he pub-
lished his Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, he had
attached to it a single page entitled Proposals For Printing a New EDI-
TION of the Plays of William Shakespeare, with Notes Critical Explana-
tory, in which the text will be corrected; the Various Readings remarked: the
conjectures of former Editors examin’d, and their Omissions supply’d. The
title was almost as long as the rest of the text, which merely compared
the proposed price, favorably, to the prices of the Pope, Theobald and
Hanmer editions, and included examples from the Macbeth notes. But
Jacob Tonson, printer, in 1745 claimed the copyright to Shakespeare, and wrote a threatening letter to Johnson's printer, Edward Cave. The edition proposed in 1745 was not to be forthcoming soon.

Yet Johnson, as we have seen, did not forget the idea. In 1753 he wrote a “Dedication” for his friend the Bluestocking Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated*. This work was itself a collection of the sources of Shakespeare’s plots, with translation and commentary where necessary. In his dedication Johnson alluded to what would be the great theme of his own Shakespearean criticism, Shakespeare’s adherence to the real emotions and actions of human beings, not “Phantoms that strut upon the stage.” And during the years between his *Macbeth* observations and Mrs. Lennox’s book, Johnson studied Shakespeare diligently, collecting thousands of quotations for his great *Dictionary*, in progress between 1747 and 1755. Then, with all this behind him, he issued his 1756 *Proposals for Printing by Subscription the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare Corrected and Illustrated by Samuel Johnson*, the promises and premises of which you have already read.

Johnson proposed that the edition would be ready for publication in eighteen months. It took, of course, until 1765, nearly nine years. When it did finally appear, it was, more than anything else, the “Preface” to his edition that allowed his contemporaries, and successive generations, to read Shakespeare in a better light, free from the distortions imposed by ignorance, politics and ambition over the 150 years between Shakespeare’s death and Johnson’s edition. Many Johnsonian scholars consider the “Preface” among the two or three best things we have from him. Indeed his prose is, as sometimes it is not, accessible as well as elegant, and sensible as well as sonorous. While it has been argued that Johnson’s observations are not necessarily original, they are incisive. They clear the fog, they state the whole case for Shakespeare in a way that gives us the forest clearly rendered, rather than merely a better view of the individual trees. His printing of the individual plays, with extensive notes, keeps his promise to restore what had been corrupt, and to illuminate what had become obscure. The appended notes and critical remarks about each play reflect Johnson’s erudition,
his common sense, his sensitivity to shades of meaning, to words, and his alertness to nuances.

But the “Preface” tells us something more, something useful not only to the student struggling with a language different from his own, one that, even in Johnson’s day, in Johnson’s own words, had “become obsolete.” This is because for Johnson Shakespeare was primarily a poet, and he approached the plays as literature, as poetry, not as drama. In his Dictionary Johnson defines “drama” as “a poem accommodated to action.” Johnson himself, plagued by near blindness and weak hearing, seldom attended the theater, and most of what he saw or heard he did not like; he was not seduced into the “suspension of disbelief,” and even his friend Garrick, the greatest actor of his age, was not persuasive as a performer to Johnson. To digress for a moment, Johnson also told Garrick he could no longer visit him behind the scenes to watch the plays, because “the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses do make my genitals to quiver.” (Boswell, in his Life, reports that Johnson said the effect was to “excite my amorous propensities,” but both versions come to us secondhand.) In any event, for Johnson, Shakespeare was literature, to be read, carefully, not necessarily something to watch. after all, he wrote, “A play read, affects the mind like a play acted.”

In reading Shakespeare, therefore, Johnson reminds us that we must always be conscious that “the English nation, in the time of Shakespeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity.” Shakespeare’s England was in its “infancy,” Johnson tells us, in that literacy itself “was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.” To write for and appeal to audiences largely composed of the “vulgar,” the “unenlightened,” and the illiterate (remember, Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre could accommodate nearly three thousand spectators), Shakespeare had to find “strange events and fabulous transactions,” and borrow popular plots, “for his audiences could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.” These stories, he points out, “which are now [1765] found only in remote authors,” were then “accessible and familiar.”
The “Preface” proceeds in an orderly manner. It begins by explaining the need to distinguish between works that are merely old and works that are also important and good. The ultimate test that can be applied, he tells us, is “length of duration and continuance of esteem.” Shakespeare, as you have read, now can claim “the dignity of an ancient, and . . . the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration.” Then Johnson sums up, in a brief paragraph, everything we need to know to make us want to return to these works again and again:

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight a-while, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth. Shakespeare is above all writers . . . the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion.

If there were time and space enough, I would reproduce the rest of Johnson’s great “Preface,” but there is not, and it can easily be found and studied as it deserves. In addition to being remarkable in its Johnsonian command of the English language, it may be in some sense the first fully achieved piece of modern literary criticism, although fans of John Dryden’s 1668 essay, Of Dramatick Poesie, may disagree. Criticism itself is now, of course, a recognized genre, but it was much less so 250 years ago. How much the “Preface” helped that recognition
may be subject to argument by modern critics, just as they argue about whether it represents the last gasp of neoclassical criticism, or the first gasp of romanticism. But it is beyond argument that the “Preface” restored Shakespeare and his plays to the realm of rational and objective and text-based analysis. Johnson describes how and why Shakespeare is the poet of nature, and how he was limited by his age, his audience, and even his education, and how those very limitations became strengths and sources of dramatic power in the hands of genius. Johnson dismisses and discards the neoclassic theory of the unities as necessary to the power of drama. He defends Shakespeare against the attacks of Voltaire and others who argued that Shakespeare’s disregard of the unities of time and place and action makes his plays incapable of engaging and moving the audience. Never again was a serious argument in favor of the necessity of the unities an important element of critical theatrical discourse.

Johnson then moved on to a discussion of Shakespeare’s language, which Johnson’s edition of the texts does much to restore. Considering the tendency of language to reflect fashion, Johnson finds that Shakespeare’s language captures

\[\ldots\] a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial \ldots as to remain settled and unaltered. \ldots [Shakespeare] deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

Next, Johnson does Shakespeare the greatest honor, by daring to identify and discuss his faults. Much of the contemporary criticism of Johnson’s edition of *Shakespeare* focused on this fault-finding in the “Preface”; this reaction was the voice of Bardolatry outraged, but for the most part it has survived poorly indeed compared to the legitimacy of Johnson’s criticism. Johnson also treats questions of Shakespeare’s plots and the challenges to his greatness created by Shakespeare’s lack of formal schooling. Johnson reviews and largely dismisses the work of his own predecessor editors, as we have seen, but in the end Johnson produced what may have been the first variorum edition of any author,
bringing together the work of previous editors, and providing comparisons and commentary. He had promised in his 1756 Proposals that his edition would exhibit

all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found, that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor’s determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

Johnson did not quite manage to include or review “all the observable” copies, in part because Garrick, for one, knowing well how Johnson was careless and hard on books, refused to lend the many and unique valuable texts in his own library. Nevertheless, Johnson exceeded the work of his predecessors in this regard by orders of magnitude.

He once had famously admonished Boswell, “My dear friend, clear your mind of cant.” And that is what Johnson did for Shakespeare’s readers; he cleared their minds of more than 150 years of accumulated cant, and helped them, and us, find ways into the real and complex world of Shakespeare. For Johnson, part of Shakespeare’s greatness lay in his stature as a moral writer. In his plays good is not always rewarded, and evil is not always punished. Both, however, are displayed in full. Complexity of emotion and response is disclosed, and Shakespeare’s palette includes shades of grey. He acknowledges what nature decrees for mankind—not merely right and wrong, but the vast space in between. Johnson reminded the world that:

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of Life . . . [revealing] human sentiments in human language.

Of course Johnson was not alone in his effort to make Shakespeare both relevant and accessible. While Johnson saw Shakespeare primarily as a poet, and his work as literature to be read, Johnson’s friend and former student David Garrick saw Shakespeare primarily as a dramatist, and his work not, as Johnson thought, “poetry accommodated to action,” but as words needing action to bring them to life. Yet
Johnson and Garrick, the closest of friends, did have at least one essential common view of why Shakespeare was and would always be thought great. Perhaps this fundamental agreement is best expressed in one couplet from the “Prologue” Johnson wrote, and Garrick delivered, at the opening in 1747 of Garrick’s new Drury Lane Theatre. In part a paean to Shakespeare, the “Prologue” is also a paean to theater itself, and this couplet summarizes what Johnson and Garrick understood about why Shakespeare was both universal and immortal. It is because Shakespeare is the ultimate proof that

The Drama’s Laws the Drama’s Patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live.

That Shakespeare would again and forever please drama’s patrons was the lifework of David Garrick.

Garrick, nearly nine years younger than Johnson, had also been raised in Lichfield. He was one of less than a dozen students Johnson had been able to recruit for his short lived school at Edial. When the school failed, in 1737, and Johnson set out to make his way in London, young Garrick walked there with him. Although his stated purpose was to enroll in a school and then study for the bar, his father’s death led him instead to enter the wine trade with his brother. From the beginning, however, Garrick’s real interest was the stage. His play Lethe was first performed in London in 1740 and stayed in the repertoire for many years thereafter. Garrick himself took to the stage in 1741, anonymously making his debut in the role of Shakespeare’s King Richard III. Garrick was an immediate sensation, initially as an actor, then as a playwright, and, after 1747, as proprietor of Drury Lane. He became famous nationally and even internationally—not easy for an actor before television or film or radio—and wealthy and respectable, too, the first actor to be accepted as a gentleman by virtually all of English society.

Garrick’s contributions to the stage were enormous. It was he, for example, who introduced sophisticated concepts of lighting and scen-
ery, who first darkened the theater, who finally eliminated the ancient practice of letting wealthy men sit on the stage to be closer to the actresses, who introduced the concept of rehearsals, and, finally, who created the naturalistic, as opposed to the declaratory, style of acting. He also introduced the cult of celebrity—he being the principal celebrity—with Garrick teacups, perfume bottles, snuffboxes, plates and pictures, all contributing to his wealth and fame. Yet from the first he saw that his celebrity would ultimately be tied to Shakespeare. Even before taking the theatrical world by storm with his Richard III in 1741, he had in the late 1730s supported the efforts of a group known as the Shakespeare Ladies’ Club to have a statue of Shakespeare placed in Westminster Abbey. Remember that by the 1730s Shakespeare was seldom produced, other than a few plays, and those largely in adaptations we would scarcely recognize today. Garrick saw in the Shakespeare Ladies’ Club a sign that there were those who would welcome and support more and better Shakespeare, as a matter of patriotism and as an antidote to the bawdy Restoration comedy and the then-popular Italian opera seria and opera buffa, often shallow and tedious, if not downright silly. After the passage of the Licensing Act of 1737 the censors made a return to Shakespeare even more appealing for theatrical managers, since there were few “approved” new plays. Garrick better than others capitalized on the opportunity. He first played Hamlet in 1742, and over the course of his career played that part 90 times, along with 113 performances as Benedict in Much Ado About Nothing, 85 as Lear, 83 as Richard III, 60 as Romeo, and numerous performances as Macbeth, Henry IV, Iago and Othello and others. In addition to acting in Shakespeare he also adapted more than twelve of the plays for his own use. Often, but not always, he restored the texts, using the available eighteenth century editions, as well as drawing on his own unmatched collection of early pre-Folio printings. While hardly a purist—he did favor “improved” versions of Shakespeare in which the parts he played were “enhanced” in one way or another—by the end of Garrick’s career in 1776 Shakespeare was again as regular an offering on the stage as he had been during his
own lifetime. During Garrick’s years as manager of Drury Lane, for example, Shakespeare represented 27% of all performances of tragedy and 16% of all performances of comedy presented there.

No doubt exists, however, about which of Garrick’s numerous promotions of Shakespeare had the greatest and most long-lived impact. It was the great Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769. According to legend the idea of commemorating Shakespeare in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon can be traced to local outrage in 1758 over the fact that the then owner of Shakespeare’s house had dared to cut down a mulberry tree allegedly planted by Shakespeare’s own hand. The populace drove the landowner out of town, and the tree, purchased by a shrewd carpenter, was carved into a variety of objects, including a chair, designed by Hogarth, for Garrick, which can now be seen at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington. But, in a very modern chamber-of-commerce spirit, the town leaders some years later gave Garrick the equivalent of the keys to the city, sent in an elaborate box carved from the same mulberry tree, and requesting a portrait of Shakespeare’s greatest representative to hang in the new Town Hall then under construction.

Garrick quickly recognized an opportunity to promote himself, his theater, Shakespeare, and Stratford. The Jubilee took shape as he planned for a three-day festival of events. An elaborate amphitheater along the banks of the Avon was to be built to accommodate the crowds during the indoor programs, which would include dedication ceremonies, concerts, balls, and masquerades. Outdoors there would be processions, fireworks, and even a horse race. Garrick devoted substantial attention to the planning of the Jubilee, even to specifying the prices for rooms and meals in town. His partners in the Drury Lane grudgingly cooperated—although Garrick’s proposed procession of over one hundred Shakespearean characters in Drury Lane costumes was vetoed because of the owners’ fear that rain would ruin the costumes—and enthusiasm throughout England, stirred up by Garrick’s manipulation of the press, resulted in enormous crowds. The event itself was an oddity, and belittled by some, including Horace Walpole
and Samuel Foote, the actor and playwright, once Garrick’s friend, but never thereafter. There was, for instance, no performance of any of the plays. And it did in fact rain—the River Avon flooded, mud was three feet deep, and the fireworks and horse race were ruined.

But the high point of the Jubilee was, in effect, a significant moment in the resurrection of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century. Garrick himself wrote a celebratory Ode for the dedication of both the new Town Hall and a statue of Shakespeare. Delivered during the second day of the Jubilee, Garrick recited it to background music composed by Thomas Arne, better known to us as the composer of “Rule, Britannia.” This, at least, was a success. There is no doubt that Garrick’s presence on a stage was mesmerizing. Even in the rain and mud, with a musical background and text that is not exactly Shakespearean, it was a triumph. Before two thousand spectators Garrick was at his best. Even his rival actor, William Smith, of Covent Garden, wrote this reminiscence, forty years later, in his copy of the Ode:

I heard with rapture the great genius, author of the Ode recite it at the Jubilee in Stratford upon Avon, amidst admiring multitudes. . . . I loved, honored and respected his virtues and his talents, and ever thought one of the fortunate circumstances of my life was living in the days of Garrick.

If the Jubilee itself was subject to ridicule, Garrick soon turned it into a triumph. He put together a new play, based on the events of the Jubilee, making fun of the crowds, the weather, the shortages and the price gouging. It also included nineteen processionals, using Drury Lane actors and costumes, depicting the high points of many of the plays. Was it a success? It ran for ninety-two successive nights at the Drury Lane, the longest continuous run of any play in eighteenth-century London.

It cannot be said that without Sam and Dave old Bill would be forgotten today, or known only to that diminishing few who also still recognize the names of Fletcher and Beaumont, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson. But it can be said that the impulse to revive and restore
Shakespeare, and the modern scholarly tradition of critical attention to text, and even the beginning of Shakespeare as an industry, were all nurtured by these two old friends, who, with different points of view, and in very different ways, had much to do with what we today know and see and think of Shakespeare.

As Garrick wrote in his celebratory Ode:

Now swell at once the choral song
Roll the full tide of harmony along;
Let rapture sweep the trembling strings,
And fame expanding all her wings,
With all her trumpet-tongues proclaim,
The lov’d, rever’d, immortal name!

SHAKESPEARE! SHAKESPEARE!
SHAKESPEARE!

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


[Note: In 2015, in Great Britain, a slightly different version of Ruxin's talk was published by the Trustees of Dr. Johnson's House (ISBN 978-1-899284-10-8). Entitled, Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, and the Restoration of Shakespeare, it included the following acknowledgement: “The author wishes to acknowledge the generous contributions to this work by Stephen Clarke, James Shapiro, Celine McDaid, and Pollyanna Montagu, all of whom have made it significantly better than when it first reached their eyes, and to express gratitude to the Folger Shakespeare Library and the British Museum for permissions to use illustrations from their collections.” The version included here borrowed occasionally from the 2015 publication when sentence alterations served to add clarity to the text. GMP]
SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.

From a Painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the Possession of R. Longman, Esq.

Published with the Print Jan. 3, 1799, by F. S. Longman, in Barbadoes Row.
PART II

A Passionate Pursuit of Books
Part II

A Passionate Pursuit of Books

During his book collecting years, Paul did not simply amass a collection of books with a particular focus. He developed an intense commitment to understanding what his collection meant: the context of his books, what they meant to their authors, and what they could mean for us. In his later years, Paul was especially intrigued by descriptive bibliography, a term which includes the publishing history of the book, ownership marks and inscriptions, marginalia and the like. The following seven essays were also given as talks to a variety of audiences, talks which describe not only the books themselves but also offer a commentary on his research and discovery. His audience of readers or listeners was invited to share his thrills of discovery, the joys he found in scholarship, and the excitement of those insights which were created through careful and persistent study.

In the final thought-provoking and compelling piece, published posthumously, Paul talks about our pervasive digital environment which often features and applauds virtual reality over the physical object. He then argues persuasively for the importance of our direct engagements with the physical books themselves.
What is collecting? The root of “amateur” is the Latin *amo amare*, “to love,” and as an amateur collector, I am passionate about, but not an expert on, collecting. In fact, I had not even thought much about it until I was asked to contribute to this discussion. Trying to prepare, I went to Amazon.com and searched for all the books about “collecting.” Amazon provided the information that, at that exact time in space, there were 5,730 different titles on the subject. Although a cursory review of the results suggest at least some of these books were about credit and collection policies rather than book collecting, the number still astounded me.

What kind of collecting am I talking about? Take the copy of the magazine *Collector’s Mart* I recently found in an antique shop. The publication is geared to collectors of such things as Dean Middleton Original Dolls, Harbor Lights, and cocktail swizzle sticks. The edition I found featured an artist named Gaylord Ho in what appeared like the old-style ads for brands of scotch whiskey wherein famous people revealed what they did and did not like. In the ad, Ho answers a series of seemingly banal questions—for example, What is his favorite food?—and then reveals his philosophy of the art he creates (Ho makes ceramic angels and glitter domes): “I believe art should help make the world a better place.” Of course, this is a profoundly generous statement that is hard to argue with. But, at least in my view, book collectors have a different take on the meaning of what they collect than the people who read *Collector’s Mart*. Samuel Johnson once
reviewed a book that he found to be “both good and original.” Unfortunately,” he went on to point out, “that which is good is not original, and that which is original, is not good.” The pack rat instinct will always be with us, and there will always be people who buy and collect books, whether they are recognized classics on erudite topics, Nancy Drew books, or something less ephemeral. There will also be book collecting like ours in the age of the Internet, no question about it. The most popular program on public television is *Antiques Road Show* proving that for virtually everything available there is an audience and a demand.

Serious book collectors are engaged in a different kind of activity than the audience *Collector’s Mart* addresses. Ours is a more rarefied kind of collecting, and I am going to intersperse some history among my few thoughts on this. Let us begin by remembering George Santayana’s famous observation that “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” It is worthwhile to ask who the serious collectors of the future will be as well as who were the collectors of the past. One of the first and most notable European book collectors was Jean Grolier. Grolier was a great scholar and a great man and although he began the book-collecting tradition in many respects, others who may not have had his intellectual capacity have continued it. Through this line of descent we came to Thomas Dibden, for example, who, in a sense, popularized the collection of books. Some people do, in fact, collect the works of Dibden himself. However, beginning in the nineteenth century, men of means who were not necessarily interested in or able to understand the content of books began nonetheless to purchase them in large quantities.

Book collecting became a status symbol under the example of people like Henry E. Huntington, J.P. Morgan, and members of the Folger family. It is useful to remember, of course, that J. P. Morgan himself had the redoubtable Belle da Costa Greene as his librarian and adviser. Other great collectors of the age also had their own advisers and favorite dealers. But book collecting in the golden age of the last part of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, unlike
during Grolier’s time, was perhaps not always driven by serious interest in the books’ contents. For a time, book collecting seems to have become the thing to do if one could afford it. Over time, however, the ability of collectors to find suitable material diminished, and the nature of the collectors changed for the better, in my opinion, because some of the great collectors who followed that golden age were more serious about their books than had been their predecessors. People like Haskell Norman (who assembled an extraordinary collection of medical books) or, as famously, H. Bradley Martin and Estelle Doheny, were seriously interested in books and what they contained. More recently, there have been exemplary collectors who have built extraordinary collections and became profoundly knowledgeable about them. The outstanding example, of course, was Mary Hyde. Viscountess Eccles, who began with her first husband, Donald Hyde, to assemble the great Johnson-Boswell collection, which is now at Harvard. Another example is Gwin J. Kolb, whose astonishing *Rasselas* collection is now at the University of Chicago.

Many serious collectors exist today, and it is important to think about and compare some of the current collectors with the Huntington and the Morgans of the past. I can think of three or four people who are assembling or who have assembled great collections of great books. With the advice of Stephen Massey, Stuart Rose of Dayton, Ohio, is building a fine “high points” collection. Another great collection—built over the last sixty years and just put back in the market through his sale at Christie’s—is that of Abel Berland of Chicago. and of course the collections of people like Jon Lindseth, Fred Kittle, and others, who have built extraordinary focused collections about which they have become prominent scholars.

An interesting question is why the enormous new wealth created by the Internet and e-commerce has not led to a wave of new collectors. I can only think of two who have participated in a serious way. Bill Gates, for example, bought the Da Vinci notebooks for an astonishing amount of money, and has bought a fair number of other books. However, like his nineteenth-century antecedents, it is not
clear whether Gates spends any time reading or studying these books. John Warnock, creator, founder, and former CEO of Adobe Systems, is also building an extraordinary collection and is indeed a lover of those books and their contents.

What will the collectors of the next century collect? It is hard to collect the things that have been collected because most of those collections were, or will be, passed on to institutions. The Hyde’s Johnson-Boswell collection, as noted, is at Harvard, removing a great deal of Johnson-Boswell materials from the market. Kittle’s Conan Doyle collection has gone to the Newberry Library. You can certainly find first editions of Johnson’s dictionary and Sherlock Holmes books, but many of the crucial works you would need to create a truly great collection around these literary giants are unlikely ever again to be on the market. The same is true of Jon Lindseth’s Lewis Carroll collection at Cornell, and Kolb’s Rasselas collection at the University of Chicago. I have been looking for Johnson’s “Prologue to Comus” for twenty-five years and I have never seen one offered. But there will always be serious collections to be created. Jim Hagy in Chicago, for example, is now building an extraordinary collection of books about magic.

Our notion of what is worth collecting and what is important to collect changes in response to availability and taste. Suppose someone today wished to create a great collection of detective fiction. Perhaps not knowing much about where to begin, that person might choose as a likely place to start, say, Edgar Allen Poe. Then that collector might decide to move on to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—certainly no one would argue about the appropriateness of collecting Doyle. The collector might then say, “I probably ought to have Agatha Christie, and, I don’t know, maybe Dashiell Hammett—who would not want to have that in a collection—then Mickey Spillane, Sara Paretsky. Dick Francis ….” And why not, if that is what this person wished to collect? Is Dick Francis less important to collect than Edgar Allan Poe? Some collectors might argue that relative scarcity, for example—Francis is not scarce, and Poe is—renders one more desirable to collect than another. Scarcity, however, is not the only mark of an important book

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for a collection. To have a complete collection and to understand the genre, you need them both. I doubt most serious collectors believe simply that the fact a book is scarce and expensive makes it worth having or makes it important to collect; conversely, the fact that a book is available does not necessarily diminish its importance or make it not worth collecting.

Plenty of things exist for collection in the future, even if they are not the same things we collected in the past. How will collectors of the future go about it? Probably in much the same way as we always have, with some differences. When I started to collect Boswell and Johnson, it was simple to use the Courtney and Smith bibliography and I naïvely thought at the time that I might just be able to find everything on their list. Now the Fleeman bibliography, which consists of two of the thickest volumes I have ever seen, demonstrates this to be an impossible task. Fleeman should be used as the basis for judging the success or failure of a Johnson collection only if one is prepared to accept failure as the result.

Book fairs still exist—perhaps in even larger numbers than they did previously. However, they seem to be less interesting than they were formerly. Many of the leading dealers now appear at only the largest fairs: London, New York, Los Angeles, or San Francisco. Many dealers no longer have shops that are open to the public. For example, I was disappointed at a recent show in Chicago that had only three or four dealers, and even they had little to offer, really more used books than rare books. Catalogues remain a prime source for collectors, as do occasional auctions, like the Abel Berland sale.

Perhaps most important, building a serious collection in the twenty-first century will require an established relationship with a specialized dealer or group of dealers. Berland admits, for instance, that without the help of John Fleming he would never have been able to create his great collection. I could not have progressed with my own collection without the help of a number of dealers, including Ruth Igelhart, Stephen Weissman from Ximenes, and others. Identifying the serious and knowledgeable dealers in the areas in which you intend to be
a serious collector remains essential, and becoming a favorite client of such dealers will no doubt aid you in your search. Indeed, great dealers of the past have always had their top clients. One of the problems this raises, however, is favoritism. There are at least three of us who are serious about our collections of Boswell and Johnson: Gerry Goldberg, Loren Rothschild, and I. Unsurprisingly, seldom do three copies of the same important or scarce book come up simultaneously—and, if the book goes to Stephen Weissman or Simon Finch or Christopher Edwards, all of whom know the three of us, these men are put in a terrible spot. Whom do they call? What do they do with the book?

Dealers are of crucial importance, even in the age of the Internet and despite the wealth of Internet sites available to booksellers and buyers. While such sites are easy to use and accessible for purchasing certain items—usually inexpensive and common—serious collectors’ books of real value and scarcity will rarely be traded on the Internet. Buyers will continue to patronize knowledgeable dealers who will always call their favorite clients first when something juicy arrives, and it is dealers and serious collectors who will continue to buy and sell the great books. Internet sites can be useful for building the beginnings of a serious collection or filling in basic spots, but the treasures will always come from dealers. Some readers may have had the pleasure of dealing with Simon Finch, Stephen Weissman, or Christopher Edwards. Connected to all kinds of British sources, including old families, and, country homes, they know when people with libraries die, and heirs without fail call them, but not you, the collector, to sell these estates. Through dealers like these, a book that has been on the shelf for hundreds of years might enter your possession without ever going to market at all. Indeed, I have acquired some extraordinary association copies in this manner.

I conclude with a few questions and the answers they elicit: Why do we love and collect books? Why is it such an important exercise to us? Why do we care whether book collecting as we know it continues in the twenty-first century? To answer the first question, one need look no further than The Rowfant Club, which takes as its creed the...
“critical study of books in their various capacities to please the mind of man.” Books and book collecting at this level are a mental endeavor; but collecting is not only about the mind. Books resemble architecture, which is truly unique among the fine arts because it alone deals with both form and function—it serves a practical purpose as well as having an aesthetic importance. The book, like a building, is a combination of form and function; interacting with one is a unique human experience. Books appeal to humans at every level: from the physical sensations of holding an old book in your hands, feeling the rag paper, and admiring a beautiful binding or printing to the intellectual experiences reading fine writings elicit. Books define us as human beings—through them, we absorb ideas and memories from the printed words of people who have gone before us. And so, the study of books, the love of books, will continue to be important to those of us who value those basic elements of what make us human.

There is a final reason in the age of the Internet why book collecting will endure. People often assume that reading is a solitary pursuit and that book collecting by extension must also be a lonely endeavor; the pleasure of it comes from sitting alone in your library, surrounded by books and removed from human contact. Of course, the falsity of such a notion is obvious to FABS [Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies] members both separately and collectively. In the age of the Internet, when electronic communication has increasingly replaced face-to-face interaction, the fellowship of the book is an extraordinarily rewarding part of life. The collective nature of book collecting leads us to each other and it is our human connections that ensure the future of our passion for books in the twenty-first century.

NOTES


Synonymy and Satire by Association

In the world of book collecting, as everywhere, it is always better to be lucky than to be good. However assiduous the collector, the choicest acquisitions often seem to come unexpectedly, manna from heaven, or, often in these cases, from dealers. After enduring a particularly dry spell of reading dealer and auction catalogues, I was simply lucky when the offer of a choice Boswellian association copy came my way. Of course one of the challenges of collecting association copies is that the existence of such books is often unknown. You can acquire, for example, the auction or sale catalogues of Samuel Johnson’s library, and other famous collections, but even they will not identify the books the owner once had, or gave to someone else. And there is no database I know that allows you to search for inscribed copies that an author might have given away. You can’t, in short, search for a book you don’t know exists.

“Would you like Boswell’s copy of John MacLaurin’s Essays in Verse?” asked the e-mail from a dealer in California. While my answer to such a question about Boswell’s copy of anything is usually an unthinking “yes,” whether I know about the book or not, in this case it was one I could have known about. Included in the A. Edward Newton sale in 1941, it is described—although incorrectly—in the catalogue of that famous auction. It had not, however, occurred to me before to ask a dealer to trace the chain of ownership of all the Johnson and Boswell books I don’t have from the Newton sale (or any other). This does now seem an obvious way to pursue collecting, heirs be damned. But even if
I had been so good a collector, I doubt this book would have been high on my pursuit list. How wrong I would have been.

John MacLaurin, Lord Dreghorn, was only a name, familiar from Boswell’s journals and his _Life of Samuel Johnson_, but not one to which I had ever, on seeing it, given a second thought. In fact he was one of Boswell’s closest friends, like him a Scottish lawyer, although more devoted to their profession than was Boswell. MacLaurin became a judge in 1788, taking the (non-hereditary) title Lord Dreghorn when he ascended to the bench. But MacLaurin is more interesting for his avocations than his vocation. He was a drinking buddy of Boswell’s: they played at cards and other things together, and were part of what is sometimes called the “Edinburgh Enlightenment,” legal and landed gentlemen with a literary/scholarly bent and part of a distinctive social milieu. MacLaurin, as did many of his peers, wrote poetry when poetry was cool. Unlike his peers, MacLaurin also printed his poetry, in small but beautiful editions, and distributed them to his friends. In one such copy the recipient has written:

> These Essays were presented to me by the ingenious Author John MacLaurin, Esqr. Advocate.—They were not only wrote, but printed by him at a portable press—And he told me the printing cost him much more labour and pains than the writing!

A brief sketch of MacLaurin in a sort of nineteenth-century “Who’s Who” (or “Who Was Who”) of eighteenth-century Scotland described him as “singular” but “unprepossessing” in appearance, given to “brilliant sallies of wit . . . a most lively imagination, and a levity which spurned all rules . . . pleasant good natured . . . a good scholar and a hard student.”

Among his works, both literary and legal, were some on which he and Boswell collaborated. Not, however, the _Essays in Verse_. Printed in a series of installments, it is its third and final edition that has happily come my way. Where it has been since the Newton sale in 1941 I do not know. But I do know, because it is written in Boswell’s distinctive hand.
on the front free end leaf, that in 1778 it was in Edinburgh, “A Present from The Author.” Only one other copy of this book is known to exist, and it is in the British Library, where it is incorrectly catalogued as dated 1769, the date of the first edition. Although the title page of this edition is undated, the penultimate poem is dated March 1775.

My copy differs from the one in the British Library in several ways. The London copy, of course, was not Boswell’s. In addition to Boswell’s inscription in the front of my book, he has handwritten a “Contents” table on the verso of the title page, listing the sixteen poems and a Latin and English epitaph for MacLaurin’s father, and their page numbers. MacLaurin’s Latin version on the epitaph was amended by Samuel Johnson himself, at a dinner with Boswell, MacLaurin and others, in 1774, before it was carved into the elder MacLaurin’s tombstone in Edinburgh and before it was printed in the third edition of Essays in Verse. Thus Essays in Verse is also, if in small part, the work of Johnson. Someone has written “By John MacLaurin Esq:” on the title page of my copy, and although the Newton catalogue also identifies the writer of this line as Boswell, it is clearly not in his hand.

The most interesting difference between the two copies is that my copy has a stub, evidence of a cancellandum. The British Library copy has the original leaf. Why Boswell’s copy lacks it is a mystery. The cancelled leaf followed the title page, and has a “Preface” on the recto, and a “Contents” on the verso. The printed “Contents” page on the cancellandum is almost identical to Boswell’s hand-written one. The “Preface” is a poem by MacLaurin. It tells us that the author has destroyed most of his early poems, and apologizes for the ones printed here, in words Boswell himself might have used to describe his own occasional doggerel verse. The “Preface” includes these lines:

If in these pages, sometimes there is found
A line imperfect, or discordant sound,
If sometimes nice and critic ears detect
In spite of all his efforts to correct,
False language, or provincial dialect,
Do not deride, but overlook the flaw,
His country, Scotland, his profession, Law.

Whether the book came to Boswell with this leaf missing is a question not likely to be definitively answered.

The absence of the cancellandum is, however, only one of the elements that make this association copy a particularly intriguing one to own. It turns out that its greatest delight for me has come from within the contents. One of the poems is titled “On Johnson’s Dictionary.” While it had also been part of the two earlier editions of Essays in Verse, I had never seen those either—there are only seven known copies of the first printing, and one of the second—nor the poem itself. But “On Johnson's Dictionary” achieved independent immortality by virtue of its place in Boswell’s Life of Samuel Johnson. There, on 18 April 1775, Boswell describes having discussed with Johnson various attacks on his notoriously Latinate style. Boswell records the following:

One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr. MacLaurin, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. This (said he,) is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself.

And so now we turn to “On Johnson's Dictionary.”
First let us study the poem as MacLaurin presented it:

In love with a pedantic jargon,
Our poets, now a-days, are far gone;
Hence, he alone can read their songs,
To whom the gift of tongues belongs;
Or, who to make him understand,
Keeps Johnson’s lexicon at hand;
Which an improper name has got,
He should have dubb’d it polyglot.

Be warned, young poet, and take heed,
That Johnson you with caution read,
Always attentively distinguish
The Greek and Latin words, from English;
And never use such as 'tis wise
Not to attempt to nat’ralize;
Suffice the following specimen,
To make the admonition plain.

Little of anthropopathy has he,
That in yon fulgid curricile reclines,
Alone, while I, depauperated bard!
The streets pedestrious scour; why with bland voice,
Bids he me not his vectitation share?
Alas! he fears my lacerated coat,
And visage pale, with frigorific want,
Wou’d bring dedecoration on his chaise.

Me miserable! that th’ Aonian hill,
Is not auriferous, nor fit to bear,
The farinaceous food, support of bards;
Carnivorous but seldom, that the soil
Which Hippocrene humectates, nothing yields,
But sterile laurels, and aquatics sour.
To dulcify th’ absinthiated cup
Of life, receiv’d from thy novereal hand,
Shall I have nothing, muse, to lenify?
Thy heart indurate, shall poetic woe,
And plaintive ejulation, nought avail.

Riches desiderate I never did;
Ev’n when in mood most optative: a farm
Small, but arboreous, was all I ask’d.
I, when a rustic, wou’d my blatant calves,
Well-pleas’d ablactate, and delighted tend
My gemelliparous sheep, nor scorn to rear
The strutting turkey, and the strepentine goose,
Then to dendrology my thoughts I’d turn,
A fav’rite care shou’d horticulture be,
But most of all, wou’d geoponics please.

While ambulation, thoughtless I protract,
The tir’d sun appropinquates to the sea,
And now my arid throat, and latrant guts,
Vociferate for supper; but what house
To get it in, gives dubitation sad.
O! for a turgid bottle of strong beer,
Mature for imbition; and O! for—
(Dear object of hiation,) mutton-pye.

The first two stanzas are a charming cautionary tale, warning the Dictionary reader of difficulties ahead. The next four bemoan the plight of the poor poet/author, having failed to achieve recognition or wealth, seeking only a simple rustic life and the comforts of strong beer and mutton pie. Part of their charm is their witty reflection of Johnson’s great poem London, itself in part expressing a preference for the values of country life, and also an “imitation” of Juvenal’s Third Satire, the original, of course, in Latin. These stanzas contain at least thirty-three words which, even in the 1770s, were likely not in everyday use. Most of these words are of Latin origin; there are also a few of Greek or old French derivation. Each of them (or a variant of each) was included in the first edition of Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language, printed in 1755. By the time MacLaurin wrote his ode, probably around 1765 when the first printing of Essays in Verse appeared, the Dictionary had been published in both the second and third folio editions, each slightly revised, as well as numerous abridged, pirated and other quarto printings. I do not know which version MacLaurin owned or used.

It is most pleasing, of course, to think he had a first edition. The logical thing to do, therefore, is to sit down with a first, and look up those “hard” words. Three references that readers today might not recognize are not in the first edition of the Dictionary, but they would have been familiar to the educated reader of the mid-eighteenth century. The “Aonian hill,” another name for Mount Helicon, was familiar to readers of Virgil and even Milton. A “curricle” here refers to a two-wheeled racing chariot, and derives from the Latin for “course,” as in race course. The same root gives us our word “curriculum.” The last
undefined reference is to “Hippocrene,” which was the fountain of the muses at Mount Helicon. The literati of the day knew their mythology. Thus—substituting Johnson’s definitions, the *Ode* reads this way with the substituted words in bold-face:

In love with a pedantic jargon,
Our poets, now a-days, are far gone;
Hence, he alone can read their songs,
To whom the gift of tongues belongs;
Or, who to make him understand,
Keeps Johnson’s lexicon at hand;
Which an improper name has got,
He should have dubb’d it *polyglot*.

Be warned, young poet, and take heed,
That Johnson you with caution read,
Always attentively distinguish
The Greek and Latin words, from English;
And never use such as ‘tis wise
Not to attempt to nat’ralize;
Suffice the following specimen,
To make the admonition plain.

Little of *sensibility* has he,
That in yon *shining* curricle reclines,
Alone, while I, *impoverished* bard!
The streets *on foot* scour; why with bland voice,
Bids he me not his *carriage* share?
Alas! he fears my *torn* coat,
And visage pale, with *chill-inducing* want,
Wou’d bring *disgrace* on his chaise.

Me miserable! that th’ Aonian hill,
Is not *producing gold*, nor fit to bear,
The *mealy* food, support of bards;
Carnivorous but seldom, that the soil
Which Hippocrene *moistens*, nothing yields,
But sterile laurels, and aquatics sour.
To *sweeten* th’ *embittered* cup

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Of life, receiv’d from thy stepmotherly hand,
Shall I have nothing, muse, to assuage?
Thy heart hardened, shall poetic woe,
And plaintive outcry, nought avail.

Riches wanted I never did;
Ev’n when in mood most desirous: a farm
Small, but tree-filled, was all I ask’d.
I, when a rustic, wou’d my bellowing calves,
Well-pleas’d wean, and delighted tend
My twins-bearing sheep, nor scorn to rear
The strutting turkey, and the loud goose,
Then to the study of trees my thoughts I’d turn,
A fav’rite care shou’d horticulture be,
But most of all, wou’d the science of agriculture please.

While walking, thoughtless I protract,
The tir’d sun approaching to the sea,
And now my arid throat, and barking guts,
Cry out for supper; but what house
To get it in, gives doubting sad.
O! for a turgid bottle of strong beer,
Mature for drinking; and O! for –
(Dear object of gaping,) mutton-pye.

You will see why MacLaurin and Johnson had fun with this—and why I did as well. Johnson was attacked often during and after his life for what his critics deemed to be his pretentious and pompous style, full of Latinate and polysyllabic words. Here MacLaurin makes further fun of Johnson’s use of these words by selecting words of largely scientific usage (Latin, at the time was still the source language for scientists), but turning them to the purposes of unscientific poetry. Among works criticizing or parodying Johnson several were particularly vicious, and the harshest of these was Deformities of Dr. Samuel Johnson, first printed in Edinburgh in 1782 by an anonymous author, later identified as James Callendar. Callendar subsequently came to America and continued his mean-spirited ways here. First he achieved
American notoriety by publishing the scandalous story of Alexander Hamilton's adulterous affair with Maria Reynolds. Next, thanks to a low point in Thomas Jefferson's ethical career, Callendar wrote a libelous attack on President John Adams, identifying him as a warmonger and ambitious man working to become President for life. This appeared in an article commissioned by Jefferson, then Vice-President, who paid Callendar handsomely to write it, a fact Jefferson subsequently denied. Callendar next proved himself completely unscrupulous by publishing Jefferson's incriminating letters to him on the subject, and topped it off by being the first to claim in print that Jefferson had a sexual relationship with his slave Sally Hemmings.

But I digress. Callendar’s lengthy attack on Johnson’s language, and Johnson himself, might have been motivated in part by a popular—if perhaps unjustified—belief in Johnson’s dim view of Scotland and Scots. In any event, Callendar’s attack includes, among other things, a paragraph that he suggests might be written by “a foreigner [who] sits down to compose a page of English, by the help of Johnson’s work.” I won’t give you all of it, but try this sentence out: “His nefarious repercussion of obloquy must contaminate, and obumbrate, and who can tell but it may even aberucate his fewlant and excrementious celebrity.” Callendar was both vicious and vengeful, and, you will agree, I trust, he lacked MacLaurin’s wit and charm. It is no wonder that Boswell reports that at a dinner in Edinburgh on 17 August 1773, just before Johnson and Boswell set off for their historic journey to the Hebrides, with Sir Alexander Dick, Lord Hailes, Dr. James Gregory, Boswell, Boswell’s uncle Dr. John Boswell, Johnson and MacLaurin, “All was literature and taste, without any interruption.” Not likely to have been the case if Callendar had been present.

Why collect books? Because they can take you everywhere. This particular copy of a book, some 230 years old, privately printed, surviving in only two copies, takes me to dinner with Samuel Johnson and his circle, and to the Adams/Jefferson rivalry, as well as to a nostalgic visit with my secondary school Latin, and, of course, to the library of James Boswell at Auchinleck, in Ayrshire, Scotland. I couldn’t get to
those lost places any other way. And, without the help of John Crich-ton at the Brick Row Bookshop, I couldn’t have gotten there at all.
Not in Fleeman
A Meditation of Collecting

[The following talk was given by Paul to a number of different audiences, and has appeared in print as well. This particular text was given as a talk to members of the University of Chicago Library Society. Paul was introduced by Philip M. Burno, then Chairman of the Society’s Steering Committee, and his remarks follow: “It is my great privilege to introduce our guest speaker for the evening. Paul Ruxin, Of Counsel with Jones Day, is an avid book collector. He is a member of the Caxton Club, the Rowfant Club of Cleveland, The Chicago Literary Club, and the Grolier Club of New York. He serves as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Folger Shakespeare Library of Washington, D.C. He is also a member of The Association Internationale de Bibliophilie (The International Association of Bibliophiles), The Editorial Committee of the Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell, and serves as Vice-Chairman of The Friends of the Amherst College Library. His personal collection of the works of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and their circle is among the most complete in private hands in the world. Mr. Ruxin is a frequent speaker before various groups on literary and bibliophilic subjects. Tonight, his talk will use one serendipitous acquisition as a starting point for discussion of the pleasures of collecting books.”]

To the question “Why collect books. and, especially, Samuel Johnson?” there are many answers. The short version is because they bring pleasure. What follows is simply an exemplary and expository long
version. Let us begin chronologically. Quintus Horatius Flaccus—Horace—was born in 65 B.C. in Venusia, Italy. Well educated in Rome and Athens, he was swept up in the popular enthusiasm for the cause of freedom after the assassination of Julius Caesar by Brutus, and led a small force of Brutus’ army at the unfortunate battle of Philippi, where Marc Anthony and Octavian, later the emperor Augustus, defeated Brutus and Cassius. Horace seems to have saved himself at the battle by going AWOL. He found his way back to Italy, becoming an Epicurean; fortunately he was able to indulge that lifestyle by virtue of his friendship first with the wealthy Maecenas and then, through him, with Augustus. The emperor, forgiving Horace’s flirtation with Brutus, asked him to be his secretary, a request Horace declined and Augustus accepted with grace. We know Horace best for his Odes, the bane and pleasure of Latin students for millennia, and an important influence on poets throughout those years, down to Alexander Pope and Robert Frost, to drop two of the more recognizable names. Horace claimed to be the first to adopt the meters of the Greek lyric poets Alcaeus and Sappho and the lyric qualities of Pindar and Anacreon to Latin verse, and indeed his poetry does reflect a wide variety of Greek metrical forms and their variations. More of these later.

Augustus as emperor tried to revive many older Roman customs, not least of which were the so-called Secular Games. This festival, celebrated every 110 years or so (also called the Centennial Games, “Secular” referring here to “century,” not to some antonym of “religious”), recognized the founding of Rome. Along with sporting events, it traditionally included a song dedicated to Apollo and Diana, the gods responsible for the city’s preservation. Since the beginning of a new century occurred during Augustus’ reign, he built a temple on the Palatine hill for the festival, and in 17 B.C. commissioned Horace to write a song for the closing ceremonies. The song he wrote was what we know as the “Carmen Seculare,” or the “Centennial Hymn,” to be sung by a chorus of 27 boys and 27 girls.

Let us Jump forward about 1770 years. Giuseppe Marc Antonio Baretti was born in Turin in 1719, and came to London in 1751 where
he became a writer and teacher of languages. Among his pupils (in English, French and Italian) was young Queeney Thrale, daughter of Samuel Johnson’s friends and patrons Henry and Hester Thrale. Bar-etti was, by all accounts, a mean-spirited man with a violent temper, but his network in the literary community was large and stood him in good stead after he killed a man in a London street fight. At his trial for murder Johnson—as well as Edmund Burke, Joshua Reynolds. David Garrick and Oliver Goldsmith—testified on his behalf. and he was found not guilty by reason of self-defense.

In 1779 Baretti, always scrounging for a way to make a pound or two, turned to Horace and his ancient Odes. In particular, he focused on the “Carmen Seculare,” and constructed a piece consisting of translated excerpts from Book One, Ode 21; Book 4, Ode 6; and Book 3, Ode 1 and including the whole of the Centennial Hymn. This work of Baretti’s in its original printed form is prefaced by an introduction addressed “. . . to the English Reader,” consisting of seven and a half pages in large part expanding on Baretti’s view “That the Odes of Horace are susceptible of the finest musick [sic].” Here he reminds the English reader that Horace himself had often said he composed his poetry to the sounds of music. Baretti argues that the Spanish and Italians still do so, even if the English and French generally do not. Baretti also reminds his reader that Horace frequently alludes to meter in poetry, and that music and poetry go “hand in hand.” Inspired by the fact that the “Carmen Seculare” was originally written to be sung, Baretti resolved to have a musical setting “in the modulations of the Augustan age,” the original Roman melodies being unknowable in 1779. Baretti’s arrangement of the excerpts from the Odes and the “Carmen Seculare” for the musical setting was taken from one done much earlier by a Jesuit named Sanadon, who had believed that the entire organization of Horace’s Odes, including the “Carmen Seculare,” as received through the ages, made little sense. Sanadon’s hybrid version, which Baretti largely adopted and translated, seemed to him more coherent and internally consistent than the traditional structure of the Odes and the “Carmen Seculare.” To his translation, Baretti
added a four line Latin “Epilogue” of his own composition.

For the music Baretti turned to Francois-Andre Danican Philidor, a composer whose work Baretti had heard at the Paris Opera. The work will be done, Baretti hoped, in offering it to his “English Reader,” to the satisfaction of an English audience. Philidor’s musical version received the advance blessing of the great encyclopedist, Diderot, in Paris. The English musicologist Dr. Charles Burney, friend of Johnson and Baretti also gave it a blessing, but a rather ambiguous one—he told Baretti that “. . . if it does not fail it will succeed, but if it does not succeed . . . it must fail.” In the event the Baretti-Philidor version of “Carmen Seculare” was performed for three nights in London, with Johnson in attendance once—February 26, 1779—and Baretti reported in a letter that it “. . . brought me a hundred and fifty pounds . . . and three times as much to Philidor. . . .” True to his nature, Baretti added a note to himself that they both would have benefited even more if Philidor had not proved to be a scoundrel. What he meant by this I have not been able to determine, other than that Baretti didn’t like anybody very much, even his own chosen collaborator. It is worth noting that for all his talk about music, poetry and meter, Baretti’s translation is in prose. For music, Philidor was left to fend for himself.

As a collector I am pleased to report that my copy of the “Carmen Seculare” and its introduction is one of fewer than ten known to exist, and is probably the most perfect, entirely untrimmed, sewn, and the largest copy I have been able to identify. Satisfying as it is to own it, this is only the beginning—or perhaps the mid-point—of this illustration of the Joys of Collecting. No collector builds an important collection without the aid and advice of dealers. As a collection is built, dealers become even more important. You can’t, for example, look for a book you don’t know exists, but such books of interest to you do sometimes, if infrequently, come into the hands of dealers who can anticipate your interest. One of the dealers who has been most helpful to me in building my collection is Steve Weissman of Ximenes Books. Without him my collection would be much diminished. In addition to dealers, collectors necessarily rely on scholars. While there are a few
scholar-collectors, most, at least in the Johnsonian world, are one or the other, for reasons sometimes, but not always, obvious, but irrelevant here, I am not a scholar, and so I rely on those who are. Among the greatest of the Johnsonian scholars was the late J.D. Fleeman.

One of the monuments of scholarship, not merely of the Johnsonian variety, is Fleeman’s magnum opus, *A Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson: Treating His Published Works from the Beginnings to 1984*. (2 vol. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000 pp. xlv + 1972.) No misprint here: 2000 pages listing the various printed versions of Johnson’s works. It is overwhelming in its scope and detail. Even a familiarity with Fredson Bower’s *Principles of Bibliographical Description* and the complementary work of G. Thomas Tanselle and others will scarcely equip the amateur to grasp everything Fleeman presents. Another great scholar, David L. Vander Meulen, in his own masterful and scholarly 46-page review of Fleeman’s book in 2002 referred to it as “an Essay Towards Perfection,” borrowing a phrase from Johnson. You can imagine then that the holy grail of Johnson collecting is to find a publication or printing or book of unquestionable Johnsonian origin that is “Not in Fleeman.”

Baretti’s “Carmen Seculare” is in Fleeman, and it is there noted that Johnson’s translation of Baretti’s “Epilogue” appears in the several 1779 printings of Baretti’s “Introduction to the English Reader,” both with and without the translation itself, and again in 1788 in a separate printing, where the text of Johnson’s translation of the “Epilogue” varies slightly from the 1779 printings. Fleeman also records a limited history of reprints in several periodicals. No other printings of Johnson’s contribution to the “Carmen Seculare” of Baretti and Horace appear in Fleeman. Satisfied, and even pleased, with my copy of the first edition of 1779, I had looked at it when it arrived in 2000, but not closely, and never since.

Earlier this year I received an e-mail from Steve Weissman of Ximenes. Remembering that he had provided me with my 1779 “Carmen Seculare,” he wrote to say he now had a copy of *Select Odes of Pindar and Horace*, 1780, by the Rev. William Tasker. It is a rare book
indeed, with only six copies known, all in the U.K., and it includes 65 marginal corrections, in Tasker’s own hand. Samuel Johnson is listed as a subscriber. Among Rev. Tasker’s translations from Horace included in the book is the “Carmen Seculare.” Tasker explains in his notes how his translation differs from Baretti’s, but he reprints Baretti’s original Latin epilogue, because he says it is “a very approved poetical version of that little appendix,” and he offers it “in preference to any that he can give.” On the opposite page is an eight-line English translation—in Tasker’s hand we see below the title that it is “by Dr. Johnson.” There it is. But it is “Not in Fleeman.”

Of course I accepted Steve Weissman’s offer. Having first Baretti’s, now Tasker’s, version of Horace sent me to others in my library. In all of the translations there is discussion of the difficulty of transforming to English Horace’s Latin versions of the Greek meters he himself had adopted and adapted. In an English version of Horace’s work by James Michie, for example, we learn of the translator’s belief that Horace’s use of the Alcaic meter (most commonly a line consisting of an anacrusis, and then various trochees, spondees and dactyls) “could be strictly and successfully naturalized” into English, but those using Sapphic meter (commonly consisting of some pattern of trochee, spondee, dactyl, trochee, trochee, with variations sometimes including a choriambus) could not. Michie found that Horace adopted a form of Sapphic meter for the “Carmen Seculare.” Since Michie could not duplicate it, he reports that his translation thus reflects not some preconceived theory for the “Carmen Seculare,” but a meter he tells us that “seemed to choose itself after more obvious approaches had failed.” Indeed the English lines in his version do have varying meters, not limited to the Alcaic and Sapphic. As far as my amateur ears and eyes can hear and see, they are wildly diversified, just as Michie tells us Horace’s were, with lines that seem Asclepiad, Alcaean, Archilochian and Pythiambic. Michie’s translation—nearly fifty years old now—thus reads as more musical than Baretti’s prose text, but not by much.

David Ferry [Amherst ’46], on the other hand, in his 1997 transla-
tion, tells us that he did not even try “to reproduce or imitate the Latin meters . . . , since English meters are so different.” Sometimes, though, his translations will be “a kind of allusion to a Latin meter (for example, the faux-Sapphic meter of my translation of the ‘Carmen Seculare’).” Ferry much more frequently gives us pentameter lines, with an iambic foot, while Michie more often uses the traditional classical hexameter. The result, it seems to me, is that Ferry, sacrificing translation for transformation, renders Horace’s Latin poetry into English poetry, while Michie, simply and more literally translates Latin poetry into something more like Baretti’s English prose.

To be fair it is important to consider both the original and the translations. Not to be tedious, however, it is best to take a single stanza. First, Horace:

Vosque veraces cecinisse Parcae,
Quod semel dictum est, stabilisque rerum
Terminus servet, bona iam peratris lungite fata.

Even if you need to look up more than a few words, or just ignore their meaning altogether, you can still hear Horace’s music here, and his balance of sounds. This cannot be mistaken for anything but poetry—perhaps because it is Horace who helped define for us what poetry is. Ask then, whether Baretti has done it justice (or can we not fairly judge his version without hearing Philidor’s music)? Baretti renders it this way:

And, O ye Sisters of Destiny, that sing with
unfailing veracity what has once been decreed,
and is established by the unalterable settlement
of things; join new predictions of happiness
to those that have been now fulfilled!

Let’s hope Philidor did his job with the music part.

Did Mr. Michie do much better? Remember, he told us he had attempted to emulate Horace where he could. but some passages “seemed to choose” themselves in translation:
And you, O Fates, who have proved truthful prophets,
Your promise stands—and may time’s sacred landmarks
Guard it immovably: to our accomplished
Destiny add fresh strength.

Better than Baretti, I suppose, but it doesn’t sound much like Horace to my ear. So, let us try David Ferry:

And may the Fates, having been true to us
In what they told, fulfill the prophecy
Until the end; may fortunate destiny
Be joined to fortunate past.

Here, at last, is poetry, not merely translation, not merely transformation, but words and music that capture both the sense and the sound of the original. Compare it, for example, with Reverend Tasker, who sought to improve on Baretti if not Horace.

Tasker adopted the Jesuit Sanadon’s organization of the stanzas, as Baretti had, and he also observes that “the English language will scarcely admit of Sapphic measure,” as translators have before and after him. But he goes on to say “... that the following translation is at least attempted in a measure nearer to the Sapphic, than any that hath yet appeared...” Here it is:

Ye sisters of firm destiny!
What’s past, you sing—and what’s to be,
Consult the future doom:
Expand the secret page of fate,
Foretell new honors to the state
And deathless fame to Rome.

What of Tasker’s translation? Let me not trouble you with my opinion, because we have something better—Samuel Johnson’s view. Once again we have Boswell to thank. He tells us of visiting Johnson on March 16, 1779, and finding there, among others. the Rev, William Tasker, “a clergyman, who had come to submit some poetical pieces to
his [Johnson’s] revision.” Boswell tells us in the *Life of Samuel Johnson* that the reverend poet was “writhing in agitation, while Johnson read” the proffered work. In his journals Boswell describes Tasker as “a foolish, scatter-brained creature. He was a lank bony figure, with short black hair. He had an idiotical grin. . . .” When Boswell arrived, the subject under discussion was Tasker’s translation—still in manuscript, Boswell reports—of the “Carmen Seculare,” which Johnson had heard in performance two weeks earlier in the Baretti-Philidor version, and where he had met Tasker, and Tasker had requested an audience. Here is Boswell’s report:

After he had done, Tasker asked him bluntly if upon the whole it was a good translation? Dr. Johnson, who is truth itself, was sadly puzzled for a little what answer to make, [wishing] at least, I suppose [not to condemn] as he certainly could not commend the performance. With great address he answered thus: “Sir, I do not say that it may not be made a very good translation,” [or some such] exquisite evasion. Nothing whatever in favor of the performance was affirmed, and yet the poor fellow was not shocked.

Tasker then had Johnson read other of his work, and to Johnson’s observation that in one he had made the masculine figure of “Genius” feminine, Tasker admitted the grammatical error, but said he had written it in tribute—flattery more likely—to the famous Duchess of Devonshire, who had appeared in military uniform to rouse the morale of the troops. In Boswell’s journal, Johnson replied “Sir, you are giving a reason for it, but that will not make it right. You may have reasons why two and two should not make four. But they will still make four.” Later, revising his journal for the *Life*, Boswell reports that Johnson said “You may have a reason why two and two should make five; but they will still make four.” So much for the relative merits of Boswell as editor of Johnson’s conversation, and Tasker as translator of Horace.

At last let us consider Baretti’s Epilogue, and Johnson’s English version, now known to exist in Tasker’s book, as well as Baretti’s.
Baretti wrote:

Quae fausta Romae dixit Horatius
Haec fausta vobis dicimus, Angliae
Opes, triumphos, et subacti;
Imperium pelagi precantes.

Thus Baretti seems here to try to mimic Horatian meter, as he did not in his translation. The result, of course, isn’t Horace, but it isn’t bad. Johnson, on the other hand, eschews mere translation:

Such strains as, mingled with the lyre,
Could Rome with future greatness fire,
Ye Sons of England, deign to hear,
Nor think our wishes less sincere.
May ye the varied blessings share
Of plenteous peace and prosp’rous war
And o’er the globe extend your reign,
Unbounded masters of the main.

Johnson thus, in eight lines, writes not only poetry, but captures for England the entire essence of the “Carmen Seculare,” Horace’s song of prayer for the continued dominance and success of Rome. Johnson takes both Latin prayer and Latin poetry, and makes both English prayer and English poetry, something neither Baretti, nor Tasker, nor Michie nor even Ferry, attempted.

What has this incident in collecting brought me, in addition to the books themselves, that 1779 “Carmen Seculare,” and the 1780 Tasker? While in themselves they are pleasing, even lovely objects, survivors of a time now nearly a quarter of a millennium past, they have also helped me retrace some of my own past, and motivated me to continue to learn, which is to say, to continue to live. The experience of collecting Johnson here has brought a return to dimly remembered Roman history, for example, how Octavian became the Emperor Augustus. It has inspired a pleasing visit to seldom visited high school Latin, and to the joys of Horace, enhanced this time by a deeper look into the
meter that makes the music of poetry. Another gift of owning these books has been the chance to dig a little deeper into the obscuranta of descriptive bibliography, a reminder of the respect true scholarship commands, and the pleasure it affords. And, of course, all of this provided for another visit to English prose in the full range of its ability to instruct and entertain, from Boswell the story-teller, to Johnson the poet, from David Vander Meulen the explicator and critic, to Tasker, the failure, to David Ferry, the genius. Is there another avocation providing so much stimulation and so many varieties of pleasure? I do not know it.

Sometime in the spring of 2006, the phone rang. A Dr. Curwen, unknown to me, was calling to offer me an “old dictionary” by Samuel Johnson he had inherited from his father, D’Arcy Curwen.

Such moments happen to collectors, but usually while they are asleep. I was wide awake. Of course I said I was interested, but I recommended that he consult an expert, an independent appraiser. I mentioned Bob Barry of Stonehill, Inc., in New Haven, who has helped build many Johnson/Boswell (James Boswell was Johnson’s biographer) collections, including mine, and has dispersed others. Barry visited the doctor and examined the books. He identified the “old dictionary” as a first edition (1755) of Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language, bound in two volumes, its contemporary boards skillfully rebacked, perhaps by the master New England binder Arno Werner (1899–1995). The first volume is inscribed on the free front endpaper “Hill Boothby’s The Gift of the Author.” The second volume bears on its free front endpaper the inscription “H. Boothby’s The Gift of the Author.” Both are writ large in faded ink, in a very lovely hand.

Johnson famously stated that second marriages represent “the triumph of hope over experience.” At age forty-two he was widowed, after seventeen years of marriage; his wife, Tetty, was sixty-three at the time of her death. His marriage to Tetty had been largely happy, but less than ideal, not only because she was over twenty years his elder, but also because his dedication to her was challenged by poverty; the extensive time they spent apart; her addiction to alcohol, opium, and
romance novels; and periods of involuntary celibacy resulting from her unavailability or lack of interest.

While Johnson never did remarry—perhaps following his own advice—he did at least consider doing so. His journal for Easter Sunday, April 22, 1753, as surreptitiously copied by Boswell, records the following, about a year after his wife’s death: “As I purpose to try on Monday to seek a new wife without any derogation from dear Tetty’s memory I purpose at Sacrament in the morning to take my leave of Tetty in a solemn commendation of her soul to God.” Did Johnson have someone in particular in mind? If so, whom? His language does not suggest that this was a search with a focus. “Seek a new wife . . . ,” he wrote, rather than “pursue Miss______” His entry suggests only that he was lonely and wanted intimacy of a sort different than what he had within his own, odd household and wide circle of acquaintances.

There were several possible candidates for a marital partner in 1753, but scholars believe the most likely was Miss Hill Boothby. Johnson’s senior by a year, she was a “pious and learned lady, unmarried,” according to one report. Johnson had probably met her in 1739 on a visit to his friend Dr. Taylor. They corresponded over the years. Two
distinguished Johnsonians, Donald and Mary Hyde (later Viscountess Eccles), noted, “As his acquaintance with Boothby grew, he formed the highest opinion of her attractions, purity of mind, her intellect, wit and grace of manners.” Nearly a quarter of a century after Boothby’s death, according to one close friend, Johnson remained “almost distracted with his grief; and . . . the friends about him had much ado to calm the violence of his emotion.” When he published his Lives of the Poets, in which he had harsh things to say about Lord Lyttelton and his work, Johnson told his confidant Hester Thrale, “that dear Boothby is at my heart still. She would delight in that fellow Lyttelton’s company though, [for] all that I could do; and I cannot forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like hers.”

Yet of course such feelings, expressed many years after Hill Boothby died, do not constitute firm evidence that, if he had decided to marry again, she would have been his choice. What we know of their relationship comes largely from two sources: Hester Thrale’s writings and her publication of some of Johnson’s letters to Boothby (1788), and a curious little book with a very long title, An Account of the Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, from His Birth to His Eleventh Year, Written by Himself to which we added Original Letters to Dr. Samuel Johnson, by Miss Hill Boothby: From the MSS preserved by the Doctor; and now in the Possession of Richard Wright, Surgeon; Proprietor of the Museum of Antiquities, Natural and Artificial Curiosities (1805). The small number of surviving letters from Johnson to Boothby, published by Mrs.Thrale, is puzzling because Johnson had written to his friend Dr. Taylor, who may have introduced them, “Indeed, I never did exchange letters regularly but with dear Miss Boothby.”

Reading these letters, we must be careful to separate their literal words from their context in seeking to understand the state of Johnson’s heart in 1753. They are dated between January 1, 1755, and January 8, 1756. Boothby died on January 16, 1756, and Johnson, writing to her in the weeks immediately before, knew her death was imminent. He addressed her in one letter “My Sweet Angel,” and in another “Dearest dear.” He wrote her, “You know Des Cartes’ argument ‘I think there-
fore I am.’ It is as good a consequence ‘I write therefore I am alive.’ I might give another ‘I am alive therefore I love Miss Boothby,’ but that I hope our friendship may be of far longer duration than life.” But we must understand that these were not “love letters” of the courtship variety. Indeed, in 1753, when he had first resolved to seek a new wife, we know little of the nature of his relationship with Boothby. That same year, she had undertaken responsibility for the management of her cousin William Fitzherbert’s household and six children when his wife—her close friend—died. Having accepted the responsibility for the family in 1753, Boothby was not one to abandon it.

The little book with the lengthy title contains thirty-two letters Boothby wrote to Johnson. The editor of this volume, Dr. Richard Wright, stated that the letters “were all numbered and labeled by [Johnson] himself, and are bound together in a thin quarto volume.” Alas, this volume of the original letters appears to have been lost. The earliest of her communications to him reprinted there date to July 1753, and the last to December 1755. They are warm and affectionate, yet reserved and respectful. They contain much talk of religion and religious duty, much inquiry about mutual friends, much about her health and Johnson’s, much about her six charges (they “can make as much noise as any six children in England”), interspersed with inquiries about the progress of his great Dictionary. But while indicating a deep and intimate friendship, they contain no hint that marriage, if it was on Johnson’s mind, weighed at all on hers.

Whatever their actual story, it is obvious that Johnson cared greatly for and about Boothby and that he gave her a copy of his Dictionary when it was published in 1755. In J. D. Fleeman’s Preliminary Hand List of Copies of Books Associated with Dr. Samuel Johnson (1984), we find a reference to a first edition of the Dictionary: “Pres. SJ to Hill Boothby, with inscriptions by her.” Fleeman noted its appearance in the auction house Maggs’s sale catalogue 244 (1909), offered for £5.5s, but stated that, as of 1984, it was “unlocated.” In a letter to Johnson of July 4, 1755, printed in the 1805 volume, Boothby wrote, “The great Dictionary is placed in full view, on a desk in my own room.” Was the one Dr. Cur-
The easiest way to determine the identity of the *Dictionary* I was being offered would be to compare the inscriptions in the front of each volume to known copies of Boothby’s handwriting. And this is where things stalled. Before Bob Barry could fairly appraise the value of this particular copy, he needed to determine the authenticity of the inscriptions. While Fleeman had said that they were written by Boothby, he had not seen the book himself and had relied on Maggs’s catalogue. Barry’s and my search for Boothby’s signature and letters went on for a year. He consulted with the British Library, with the great collections at Harvard and at Yale, and with expert Johnsonian scholars. I placed a notice in *The Johnsonian News Letter*. I pursued a tip over the internet that Leiden University had a letter by her, but they reported they did not. I checked with all the collectors I know. I contacted the Samuel Johnson House Museum in Lichfield and searched the internet for records of Dr. Richard Wright and his “Museum of Antiquities,” where the title page of his 1805 Account reported that the “thin quarto volume” containing Boothby’s letters to Johnson were said to reside. Wright’s “museum,” or at least some of it, was dispersed in 1821, and its contents appear to be untraceable, although it is not clear that the volume of letters was still among them in that year.

The source of Wright’s collection had been a similarly named museum created by his grandfather, an apothecary and antiquarian named Richard Greene, of Lichfield, a friend of Johnson. Johnson had visited the museum in Lichfield with Boswell and contributed to its support. The catalogues of Greene’s museum, published in 1773 and 1782, and one issued by a subsequent owner in 1801, list numerous “Antiquities, natural and artificial curiosities,” but include no mention of the letters, although it is clear that the 1773 and 1782 catalogues would not have mentioned them, since Johnson lived until 1784. Barry and I hit dead ends everywhere. If there is an example of Boothby’s signature or handwriting extant, neither of us could find it.

What we did learn is that D’Arcy Curwen acquired his copy of the *Dictionary* around 1957. In 1962 Yale University librarian Fritz Liebert,
a great Johnsonian, referred to it as “the presentation copy.” Always a scholar and man of caution, Barry concluded that perhaps Johnson had simply asked his London publisher to have a copy delivered to Boothby at Tissingron House in Derbyshire, and that the inscription was in fact penned by the publisher’s clerk. If true, this would diminish somewhat the fair market value of the book, although not its value to me. And so Barry set a price on the conservative assumption that the inscriptions were not in Hill Boothby’s hand; Dr. Curwen and I agreed it was fair, and I acquired the two volumes.

This is not, however, the end of the story. Recently, I delivered a talk to the Club of Odd Volumes in Boston. Among their generous gifts to me that evening was the Catalogue of an Exhibition of Literary Material Pertaining to Doctor Johnson & James Boswell—Held by the Club of Odd Volumes May 1–23, 1928. According to the introduction, the books on display all came from libraries of club members. Number 12 is identified as “The Dictionary. London, 2 vols., 1755. Presentation copy from Johnson to Miss Hill Boothby.” The introduction’s author also observed, “A few volumes are notable for their condition, as witness, among others, the uncut copies of London, the Dictionary (this being an association copy as well), the Rambler, and Boswell’s Life.”

This is both encouraging and discouraging. We know Maggs sold the book in 1909. We know too that a book meeting Maggs’s description was owned by someone in Boston in 1928. Unfortunately, the Odd Volumes catalogue describes it as “uncut,” and my copy is surely not uncut. On the other hand, it is likely, judging from the condition of the boards, that the book was in pretty bad shape in 1928 and that sometime afterward it was indeed rebacked and probably trimmed as well.

Another bit of persuasive evidence that my dictionary set is indeed the one Johnson gave to Boothby is found in Volume I. Focused on authenticating the handwriting, Barry had not mentioned that two additional leaves are bound into the front of that volume. They contain several things. The first is a printed letter from the antiquarian Henry Smedley, dated 1831, explaining how he had commissioned the
creation of a facsimile of a letter from Johnson recognizing the award of his honorary master's degree from Oxford. A facsimile of the degree and a transcription of Johnson's letter are also included. More to my purposes, however, is a pastedown of a letter from Smedley, also dated 1831, accompanying the facsimiles. It is addressed to a "Miss Fitzherbert." The Fitzherberts, of course, were the family whose care Boothby had assumed in 1753. It seems more than likely that this copy of the Dictionary stayed in the Fitzherbert family well after Boothby's death in 1756. Perhaps the "Miss Fitzherbert" addressed by Smedley in 1831 was one of the six noisy charges she oversaw in the last years of her life.

This discovery convinced me that I had the right book, but it also sent me back to Wright's 1805 account and description of Boothby's letters. I read a footnote, not for the first time, but for the first time with care. It contains the following observation: "A Hebrew Grammar, or the sketch of one, composed for her own use, and written in a beautiful character [emphasis added by me], has been preserved by Miss Boothby's family, as a distinguished testimony of her literary attainments." Then I looked at a history of Lichfield during Johnson's lifetime, where I found both a picture of Tissington, the Fitzherbert country residence where Boothby lived, and, in an extended description of her life, found the following: "... her handwriting was especially admired."

Looking again in my books at the inscriptions "Hill Boothby's. The Gift of the Author" and "H. Boothby's The Gift of the Author," I was struck at once by the "beautiful character" of the hand. Would a publisher's clerk have made a notation in such an elaborate manner? Had the inscriptions been those of a clerk, would they not have more likely begun, "To Miss . . ."? And why would a clerk have written "Hill Boothby" in one volume and "H. Boothby" in the other? The descriptions of Boothby's handwriting have led me to believe that she inscribed these volumes from her dear and famous friend herself, proudly, with her own name writ large in her own fine hand, linking herself and the books to Dr. Samuel Johnson, LL.D., and now, after 252 years, to me.
Other People’s Books
Association copies and another pleasure of collecting

The collecting impulse traces a broad path through humanity. Our concern, however, is only with its manifestation as an obsession with books. Others might build deeply loved collections of Elvis memorabilia, or school lunch boxes, or Barbie dolls. Ours, we like to think, is a higher calling. Indeed, the pleasures of bibliophilia are both numerous and great. According to The Rowfant Club formulation, it is books “in their various capacities to please the mind of man” that captivate us. The pages of the Caxtonian have been graced recently by essays from our member Eden Martin, taking us on a bibliographic tour of the works of Whitman and Poe, compliments of his own collections, and illustrated with images of some of his books. Among the highlights of Mr. Martin’s collections are some “association” copies, books whose prior owners include individuals of interest to readers, or collectors, for their connection to the author or in their own right.

Association copies are themselves a broad sub-species of bibliophilia, one distinctly different from collecting fine bindings, or focusing on typography or paper-making, or books-about-books. In the ordinary course I would guess that few collectors begin with the notion of building a collection of association copies. More often, I suppose, it happens as it happened to me. First I found a subject, a group of writers, and collecting “their” books, the ones they had written, led me to collecting “their” books, the ones they owned.

My own collection is small in quantity—early and rare editions of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Oliver Goldsmith, Hester Lynch
Salusbury Thrale Piozzi, and their circle. After nearly thirty years of collecting, little I covet now becomes available, and often what does is one-of-a-kind, and I find myself in competition, out of my league, with, say, Harvard, or a fellow Johnsonian named, not coincidentally, Rothschild. My hunger unabated, I have necessarily expanded my focus by reducing it, and now I assiduously read the catalogues of dealers and auction houses and wait for tips and calls searching for association copies of books (most of which I already have) from the Johnson circle.

It is stimulating in more ways than one; for example, it stimulates me to keep working to better support my habit. But it is also stimulating physically and intellectually. For example, in 1751 when Samuel Johnson was compiling (really creating) his monumental *Dictionary of the English Language* a man he actually did not much admire, James Harris, published *Hermes: or, a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar*. Johnson observed that the dedication to that book, “though but fourteen lines long . . . [had] six grammatical faults in it.” While Johnson admitted Harris was “a sound sullen scholar,” he also felt he was “a prig and a bad prig. I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system.” Yes, Johnson “looked into his book,” even as he was working on his own great book, the *Dictionary*. The very copy of *Hermes* that Johnson “looked into” is mine now. You may imagine, perhaps better than I can describe, the physical sensation of sitting in my library, surrounded by various editions of Johnson’s *Dictionary*, and holding in my hands the very volume Johnson himself consulted while drafting the famous “Preface” to those dictionaries, and his introductory articles about English grammar and etymology. Having Johnson’s *Hermes* also stimulates my own search through his balanced and elegant Johnsonian sentences for traces, hints, of the same thoughts, perhaps originally expressed in the more straightforward prose of Harris. Stimulation indeed, of many of the senses—including, of course, the sense of smell, attuned to the scent of 250-year-old paper and leather.

There is an undeniable pleasure in owning a 1651 first edition of Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan, or, The Matter, Form and Power of*
a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil. Hobbes was regarded by Johnson as morally dangerous, and rather than include Hobbes’ own words in the 114,000 quotations in the Dictionary, he quoted extensively from John Bramhall, surely a thinker and writer of less significance than Hobbes, referring to Bramhall’s frequent refutations of Hobbes. Johnson even quotes Richard Bentley, a lesser writer than even Bramhall, to illustrate the definition of “scribble”:

If a man should affirm, that an ape casually meeting with pen, ink and paper, and falling to scribble, did happen to write exactly the Leviathan of Hobbes, would an atheist believe such a story? And yet he can easily digest things as incredible as that.

What a complex pleasure it is then to have in my library, as I do, Johnson’s own copy of that very despised Leviathan.

Perhaps the appeal of association copies can be better expressed by spending a little more time with a few others. Let us begin with a book by Thomas Goodwin, entitled The Returne of Prayers: a treatise wherein this case [How to discerne Gods answers to our prayers] is briefly resolved. A copy of the fifth edition, published in 1638 in London, 141 years later, in 1779, came into the possession of James Boswell, in Edinburgh. We know this because it is signed and dated in his distinctive hand on the free front flyleaf. To understand what this book—a frequent resident of Boswell’s pockets—suggests about Boswell, perhaps we need a slight refresher course in who he was.

Of course he was the famous biographer of Samuel Johnson, but he was much more than that. A complex and contradictory life is sometimes best illuminated by small insights, such as the ones provided by Boswell’s devotion to an old book offering reassurance of the efficacy of prayer and its constant availability both as a source of solace and of hope for a better life, not only in the hereafter, but in this world. James Boswell was born in 1740, scion of an ancient and noble Scots line, whose family had held the estates of Auchinleck, in Ayrshire, since the 14th century. His father, Alexander, was a distinguished jurist who sat on the highest civil and criminal courts of Scotland. Boswell himself
was a lawyer, and an author, long before 1791, when his famous *Life of Samuel Johnson* was published. In fact his first book, an account of his travels to Corsica, made him famous in 1768 when he was only 28 years old; published to great success, it was translated almost immediately into five languages. He was, even by the lofty standards of the time, highly educated, a master of many languages and famous as a wit, a social butterfly, a skillful advocate, a politician, and also as an intemperate drunk, a debauched profligate, and an ambitious man always at work defeating his own ambitions.

Among his most consistently pursued, and consistently undermined, ambitions, was to be pious. A staunch Scots Presbyterian, he flirted with Roman Catholicism in his youth, then attended Protestant church services regularly in England and Scotland, where he was often moved to tears. He repented his sins deeply, but frequently, because he was in fact better at remorse than he was at reform. Boswell was torn by his own need for salvation, and by profound self-knowledge that led him to fear it would, in the end, be denied him. The late Prof. Frederick Pottle, of Yale, known as “Boswellianissimus,” explains his dilemma and his appeal to us this way:

There is nothing painful in the autobiography either of a saint or of a complacent libertine. John Wesley’s Journal is not painful, nor does one suffer as he reads the Memoirs of Casanova. We can stand apart from such men and judge their lives as we would works of pure fiction. But Boswell’s Journal is painful to read, because, while we are laughing with him and at him, the scales fall from our eyes and we come suddenly to see that he is ourselves. He is the articulate honest expression of that state of being which nearly all of us experience: of piety that seldom issues in righteousness; of primordial indecencies mocking our boast of civilization; of ambitions misdirected beyond our strength; of warring motives which can never be reconciled; of childish dreams carried over into mature life. Like him we do our best work half-heartedly while we pursue phantoms; we spend our lives in turmoil and heartache, lacking the power to shape our destinies.
Reading Boswell's journals and his recitations of his hopes for his children, his desires to excel, to be faithful to his beloved wife, interspersed with his accounts of whoring and drunkenness, it is clear how this little book was a source of comfort. It was, no doubt, a physical as well as spiritual bridge that allowed him to cross quickly back from the depths of his worst self, to the peaks of his better hours. Reading it we can consider one source of his continually renewed optimism, his eternal hope and his belief that it is never too late to become better. The object itself, always within his literal grasp in his pocket, was, we can believe, a physical comfort to this tormented man.

Now, for the solution of a bibliographic mystery of 215 years’ standing, we turn to another book of Boswell's, this time one he wrote, his 1785 *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* In 1773 Boswell and Johnson had undertaken a strenuous trip to the western islands of Scotland. Both kept journals, and Johnson turned his immediately into a book, published in 1775. Boswell, always intending to write Johnson's biography, published his only after Johnson’s death in 1784, as a preview of what was already promised to the public, realizing that it would take him years to complete the larger work. Boswell’s *Journal* was a great success—it captured Johnson’s wit and powers of observation, as well as Boswell’s, and it reflected the wide range of their conversations, many of which, you might guess, were about books and people they both knew.

Among the people much on Johnson’s mind during this journey to the wilds of Hebrides, where English was often only a second language and crude huts or the outdoors frequent lodgings, were Henry and Hester Thrale. Henry was a wealthy brewer and member of Parliament, and he and his wife Hester had “adopted” the widower Johnson in 1764. They gave him his own room in their country seat at Streatham, and Johnson spent many days and nights there, almost a member of the family. The Thrales nurtured him, and he revered them. Henry Thrale was an educated man, although not a scholar, with considerable social and intellectual polish and great financial resources. Hester was a remarkable woman, also well educated—
although never in school. She was a social lioness, a woman whose salon was enlarged and made famous by the frequent presence of Johnson. She nursed him when he was ill, and he confided his hopes and fears, as well as his opinions, to her.

This was an era when the Blue Stockings held sway over London society. They were a remarkable group of women, mostly wealthy and aristocratic, who were also writers, or close to the world of literature and the arts. At their evenings card-playing was forbidden, and good conversation the featured entertainment. The most famous people in London frequented their rooms, including politicians as important as Edmund Burke, artists as renowned as Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great actor David Garrick, and others of similar reputation. The bluest of the Blue Stockings was Elizabeth Robinson Montagu, of ancient lineage, great wealth, and social position. She was also the author, in 1768, of a much-discussed essay on Shakespeare. Hester Thrale and Mrs. Montagu were friends, but rivals. They were famous for their conversation; others would come to Mrs. Montagu’s evenings just to hear them talk to each other. It was no secret that Johnson’s devotion was one of Hester Thrale’s few advantages over Mrs. Montagu.

So it went, until 1781, when Henry Thrale died. The Thrale marriage had been an arranged one, and largely happy, but one with more respect than love on both sides. Hester had given birth to twelve children in eighteen years, only five of whom survived their father’s death. These five daughters were tutored in music by an Italian singer and composer, Gabriel Piozzi, who had become a fixture in the Thrale household. More than that, he had fallen in love with Hester, and she with him. It was impossible, unthinkable. An Italian Catholic music master could not aspire to such a match. More to the point, no one of the widow Thrale’s status could possibly so degrade herself. Her friends, especially the novelist Fanny Burney, were horrified. Her daughters, especially the oldest, the accomplished but cold Queeny, were scandalized; and all refused to consent. It was a nightmare for her, as the gossip columns speculated about whether she would marry Dr. Johnson, a father-figure some thirty-two years her senior, and he,
unable to imagine she would remarry at all but instead continuing to believe she would devote herself to his increasingly needy care, made demands she could not meet. Finally she bowed to the pressures and sent Piozzi away, back to Italy. She then sank into a depression so deep that, on her doctor’s advice, and with her daughters’ grudging consent, Piozzi was summoned, and they were quietly married in 1784, to the horror of virtually all who knew them. It marked the end—and a bitter one—of her relationship with Johnson.

Public humiliation and ridicule drove the newlyweds to a lengthy honeymoon in Italy and Europe. Dr. Johnson, feeling abandoned and betrayed, died a few months after the event. The Blue Stockings never mentioned her name except, perhaps, in ridicule or contempt. And then, in 1785 Boswell published his *Journal* of the great Hebrides 1773 adventure. He was a careful reporter. His *Journal* recited, verbatim, many of his conversations with Johnson during their time on the road. He was proud of his skills as an author, and immediately after the trip, showed the manuscript to Johnson and others, including Mrs. Thrale, who returned it with compliments. Now, twelve years later, in 1785, seeing it through the press with editorial advice from his friends, Boswell was careful about what would reach the public. The original manuscript of his *Journal* reported the following exchange one evening on the Isle of Sky:

Boswell:
I spoke of Mrs. Montagu’s very high praises of Garrick.

Johnson:
Sir, it is fit she should say so much, and I should say nothing. Reynolds is fond of her book, and I wonder at it; for neither I, nor Beauclerk, nor Mrs. Thrale, could get through it.

It was this manuscript that Mrs. Thrale herself had returned to Boswell with praise after reading it, some twelve years earlier. Now, however, she had fallen from grace and was in virtual exile in Europe. Let Boswell describe what happened next:
I had no motive whatever to invent it . . . I said . . . “Why should I set two women to pull one another’s caps” Besides had Mrs. Thrale been still in the state she formerly was, I might have been less scrupulous; but now she is under a cloud and may probably desire to have the protection of Mrs. Montagu should she venture to return to England, it might hurt her.

So Boswell crossed out Mrs. Thrale’s name in the manuscript before he sent it to the printer as an act of kindness, although he had been as cruel about her remarriage as anyone, and knew she was a potential rival as a biographer. In conversation with his friends and literary advisors, Edmond Malone and John Courtenay, however, Boswell had second thoughts. Again, Boswell:

Mr. Courtenay, however, insisted that as Dr. Johnson had done Mrs. Thrale the honor to quote her as an authority on taste and to class her with himself and Beauclerk, I had no right to deprive her of such a distinction. . . . I . . . ordered her name to be reinstated.

Indeed the evidence shows this to be true. The deletion of Mrs. Thrale’s name can clearly be seen in the surviving manuscript originally sent to the printer, and its insertion in the first proof from the printer, in Boswell’s hand, is equally clear. The book was then published, the first edition of the first state, with a print run of about 1500 copies, proclaiming to the world that Mrs. Thrale could not even finish Mrs. Montagu’s book. The Blue Stockings, especially Mrs. Montagu, were livid. Mrs. Thrale, who indeed intended ultimately to return to England, was horrified. Her war with Boswell, which later became highly public, had begun. That, however, is another story. This is a bibliographic one.

This story stems from Boswell’s explanation of the publishing history of his Journal in a letter he wrote to Malone, and later in a published reply to a published effort by Mrs. Thrale to regain Mrs. Montagu’s good graces; although, having seen the original manuscript in 1773, she could not in 1785 exactly deny Johnson’s report of her difficulty. First,
to Malone in 1786, Boswell described his original uncertainty about including the reference to Mrs. Thrale and his initial decision:

Upon these considerations I struck it [Mrs. Thrale’s name] out, and some hundreds of the first edition were actually thrown off without it. Sir Joshua Reynolds’ copy has it not.

Then, in the published response to Mrs. Thrale, he wrote:

When my Journal was passing through the press, it occurred to me, that a peculiar delicacy was necessary to be observed in reporting the opinion of one literary lady concerning the performance of another; and I had such scruples on that head, that in the proof sheet I struck out the name of Mrs. Thrale from the paragraph in question, and two or three hundred copies of my book were actually published without it; of these Sir Joshua Reynolds’ copy happened to be one, but while the sheet was working off, a friend for whose opinion I have great respect, suggested that I had no right to deprive Mrs. Thrale of the high honor which Dr. Johnson had done her, by stating her opinion along with that of Mr. Beauclerk, as coinciding with, and, as it were, sanctioning his own. That observation appeared to me so weighty and conclusive, that I hastened to the printing house, and as a piece of justice, restored Mrs. Thrale to that place from which a too scrupulous delicacy had excluded her.

There is one problem with all of this. As Prof. Pottle, and R. W. Chapman, the great Johnsonian, have observed, no copy of the first edition has ever been seen without Mrs. Thrale’s name. Two other respected scholars wrote in 1972 in the periodical *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* that they had advertised widely in bookish papers and journals, but had been unsuccessful in turning up a single copy without the reference to Mrs. Thrale. If indeed “hundreds,” or even only “two or three hundred” sheets had been printed that way, out of an edition of 1500, at least one should have survived. The authors speculated that Boswell just didn’t really know what the state of the printing process was when he hurried to the printer to put Mrs. Thrale
back, and that in fact sheet U6 had not yet been run without her name, and never was except for the first proof. As for the Reynolds’ copy, they speculated that perhaps a stray uncorrected proof had been picked up and hurriedly bound in the early copy prepared specifically for Reynolds’ review. Alas, they concluded, “Reynolds’ copy is not known to be extant,” and so the mystery must remain unsolved.

In 1999 Stephen Weissman of Ximenes Rare Books, in Gloucestershire, England, called me. He had just been offered Sir Joshua Reynolds’ copy of Boswell’s *Journal*. Would I be interested in having it? Would I? And so the mystery is solved. The book is shown here, inscribed in Reynolds’ hand as “From the Author,” and signed by Reynolds with his marginal notes. Sheet U6 gives us the answer, and makes the Bibliographical Society authors look prescient. Holding the solution to this mystery in my hands is satisfying indeed. Think what satisfaction there is in having this particular association copy, even beyond the pleasure of reading a copy of Boswell’s own book, given to his dear friend, the great Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Perhaps the pleasure association copies provide comes simply from the way they lead us deeper into the general subject that was the original focus of our collecting impulse, along paths we would not otherwise have known to explore. A good example of this is the story of another book, to be told, perhaps, in another *Caxtonian*. 
Eleven More Fore-edge Paintings

In response to Terry Seymour’s contribution to the last number of the *JNL* “A Brace of Fore-edge Paintings” (pp. 33-34), I wish to offer the examples in my collection.

1. S. Johnson, *Rasselas*, London, 1819. This is in all likelihood from the workshop of Edwards of Halifax, and is remarkably similar to the image on the fore-edge appearing in a copy of the 1835 printing of Johnson’s *Sermons* presented in last September’s *JNL*. It is by far the best of the ten paintings in my eight books.
2. S. Johnson, *A Dictionary . . . compiled from Dr. Johnson . . . with the addition. . . .* London, 1823. This is the fore-edge of a small volume, the contents of which include new words, a dictionary of heathen mythology, a list of British cities and towns, and grammar, none of which bear any relation to Johnson’s *Dictionary*. The paintings are intended to represent Johnson and a London street scene with a gate, but evidently not St. John’s Gate, the often-depicted home of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.

3. S. Johnson, *Rasselas*, London, 1828. This and the next image show a pair of true double fore-edge images. These images represent one of only five known double fore-edge paintings in a book with a Johnsonian theme. In a double fore-edge painting, the viewer sees one image when spreading the pages from the verso and another when fanning the pages from the recto side of the book. This image, spread from the recto side, is an unidentified urban scene.
4. The same. This is the handsome country-seat shown on the verso side of the 1828 true double fore-edge.

5. Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, London, 1892. This copy of this very poor edition of Boswell’s *Life* has portraits of Johnson and Boswell surrounding a poor copy of Rowlandson’s “Walking up the High Street, Edinburgh,” plate No.4 from his “Picturesque Beauties of BOSWELL,” 1786.

8. The same. This is the Volume II painting, again a sort of familiar but not quite certain image.

9. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, London, 1860 (ed. Croker, “a new edition” from John Murray). A true oddity, this is not a double fore-edge in the authentic sense, but a “split” fore-edge, two images shown on the same edge, but different halves of the book, so that there is only one image on each leaf-edge, rather than two, as in a true double. This is the image on the spread from the recto pages in the last half of the book.
10. The same. This is the other side of the “split” fore-edge, these images being on the edges spread from the recto side of the pages comprising the first half of the book. Note the identification of “Litchfield” [sic].

That famous Santayana warning about the past tells only half the story; sometimes repeating the past offers not doom, but promise. Although the lessons of the past are as useful a tool for special collections libraries and librarians as they are for other institutions and people, the collections themselves are the past, not merely remnants or memories, but survivors. What follows are merely three examples of how the special collections libraries of the future can benefit, and benefit their future clients, from paying attention to what has gone before.

On April 4, 2001, two divisions of the Library of Congress, the Center for the Book, and Rare Book and Special Collections, sponsored a Rare Book Forum at the Library. Moderated by Mark Dimunation, it presented three speakers, Alice Schreyer of the University of Chicago, special collections and rare book librarian; Bill Reese, of William Reese Company, dealer; and Robert Jackson, of Cleveland, collector and philanthropist. Their presentations are available and very much worth seeking out.1 All three papers are thoughtful and carry messages perhaps even more important now than when originally delivered.

Among the several points they addressed that current special collections libraries must confront today, one stands out: special collections libraries were seldom “collected” through patient acquisitions over many years by the libraries and their librarians. Building a collection requires a dedicated collector, a budget, and time. Great collections have most often been assembled by great collectors—
Folger, Morgan, Huntington, Hyde-Eccles—and have by gift become part of institutional special collection libraries, which have continued to enhance the original gift. Some libraries, like the Newberry, are rightfully proud of being a “collection of collections,” representing many significant gifts, and purchases of collections built by others (e.g., the Harmsworth collection at Folger, or the Silver collection at Newberry. In general though, great collections have been built by collectors, not by librarians).

While there are still great private collections and collectors, the golden age of collecting is in the past. Moreover, many collectors, now as always, are torn between two altruistic impulses—the first, to preserve their collection intact for the use of future scholars, the second, to have their collection dispersed for the pleasure of future collectors. While both paths offer opportunities for special collection libraries, it is also true, as Bill Reese pointed out in 2001, that over time the supply of “rare” books—the heart of what makes a collection special—is shrinking, as they disappear into institutions, never again to be available for acquisition. Fewer collectors, fewer collections, fewer books—surely these are among the challenges libraries must meet in attending to the “we must build it so they will come” part of their mission. These circumstances make building relationships with collectors more important than ever, as acquisition budgets and potential donors both reflect diminishing numbers. The three speakers at the Library of Congress in 2001, had much good advice on this subject (as does Jon Lindseth, whose remarks are included in chapter 3 of this volume).

Let me offer some suggestions for meeting these challenges. First, special collections are not and ought not become museums. The books and manuscripts they contain are there to be used, not to be worshipped as relics. “Building” special collections must thus be broadly understood. In this context “building” is not limited to acquiring, displaying, and preserving the books and manuscripts themselves, but must also include encouraging collectors as well as cultivating, building bridges, and opening conversations among the libraries, and the collectors, dealers, and scholars whose collaboration will produce
special collections that can achieve their optimal use when ultimately housed in a special collection library. Special collections librarians must regard establishing personal relationships with collectors, as well as with dealers, as a significant responsibility within their job descriptions. Major gifts, after all, seldom come from strangers. “Building” collections must also include expanding access to an expanded audience of potential users. Cataloging previously unfindable material and digitizing previously untouchable, fragile paper or parchment are the equivalents of acquiring something new. If the point of special collections is to preserve their holdings for use, rather than simply for viewing in exhibition cases, libraries, collectors, dealers, scholars, conservators, and technology experts must see themselves as part of the same enterprise, and must come to know each other, to respect each other, to encourage each other, and to work together.

In August 2014 Florida Polytechnic University (FPU) opened a library in a building designed by Santiago Calatrava. It contains a “digital” library (reportedly of 135,000 volumes), but it houses no physical books. The Director of Libraries at FPU called it “a boldly relevant decision to go forward without books.” Relevant to what, the press release did not say. Surprisingly a “policy analyst” for the American Library Association said that “Digital in some ways is better. People can find things easier [sic],” and more important, observing with dismay that, “in the past, you could buy a . . . book and it could sit on your shelf for 120 years.” Yes it could. And it could be filled with unexpected treasures of history, or evidences of ownership or usage, until discovered by a reader or user never imagined by the acquiring librarian over a century earlier. That future discoverer, however unexpected or tardy, will be engaged, delighted, and informed by the unexpected gift of finding it, holding it, and examining it closely for the evidence that proves that books—physical books, the essence of special collections—are timeless. The lesson of FPU and its admirers is for us to understand how wrong they are, how important it is that a book may be “found” even if, or perhaps only if, after 120 years. That possibility is, of course, a raison d’être of special collections libraries.
On February 25, 1987, David Vander Meulen gave the Engelhard Lecture at the Library of Congress, entitled *Where Angels Fear to Tread: Descriptive Bibliography and Alexander Pope*. The special collections library will continue to be important long into the future, for many reasons, but Vander Meulen helps us understand several of these. First, despite their digitization, original materials will continue to be indispensable primary source material. As anyone who has used EEBO, ECCO, Hathi Trust, or Google Books images will know, digitization is far from perfect—whole pages are often missing, or illegible. Second, many of these digital databases are prohibitively expensive. Special collections libraries and their parent institutions, and smaller colleges and universities often lack the money necessary to purchase the costly access by subscription necessary to make them available to their own users. Thus, physical books will remain important for a long time, until questions of both access and accuracy have been addressed.

Equally important is the fact of the object itself. There is certainly an emotional and subjective response to the intellectual experience of reading it, which is enhanced by holding a 1623 First Folio, as compared to viewing it on a screen. But this aspect of the importance of the object is less pressing, less universal, and, frankly, less easy to justify in any objective way than another aspect of the physical book that Vander Meulen helps us appreciate. In this aspect of its mission, the special collection library of the future has an important and perhaps unique role to play in the world of scholarship and learning. It can be—it ought to be—the center for the underutilized, underappreciated, understudied, but profoundly learned, discipline of descriptive bibliography. Descriptive bibliography has been around for a relatively short time in the history of the book, even if we go back to the seminal work of Fredson Bowers and, later, Philip Gaskell and Thomas Tanselle. I believe that at one time, PhD degree candidates in English were expected to have a working knowledge of it. Such masters as Frederick Pottle and Richard Fleeman in the mid-twentieth century created magisterial works of bibliography, without which much of the subsequent research and scholarship in their chosen subjects could
not have been accomplished. It is not possible, in my opinion, to be a serious collector, dealer, or special collections librarian without some mastery of the language, semiotics, and notation of formal, descriptive bibliography. This is because the physical object itself carries information that must essentially be decoded and understood to extract from the book its full intellectual value.

Vander Meulen’s talk at the Library of Congress was about his then ongoing (perhaps it still is, in the sense that a bibliographer’s work is never done) bibliography of Pope’s *The Dunciad*. His is a truly magnificent achievement, but at the time of his talk it was very much a work in progress. At the time he had reviewed 800 copies of 33 editions of *The Dunciad*. Why is that important? What was the process he followed? Why does it matter for the future relationship between special collection libraries and descriptive bibliography? Here is part of his description of what he did to distinguish among the copies. He used a micrometer to measure paper thickness—first the total bulk of all the leaves that had passed through a press. Then I also measured the thickness of each leaf at the center of each of its three outside edges. As a result, I hoped to offer quantitative data for what Griffith [an earlier bibliographer] had pointed to only in relative terms: he had distinguished issues of Pope’s *Works* in 1717, for instance, as being on a “second royal” paper, on “still thicker” royal paper, and on “a very thick” royal paper.  

What Vander Meulen learned from this is as important as what he did not; in fact, the average thickness of a large number of samples of the same paper differed from the average thickness of another variety, [but] the variation within the same paper . . . was too great for the result to serve as a trustworthy means of discriminating varieties.  

But he also measured the exact size of each leaf, which enabled him
to check his tally of chain lines, which in turn enabled him “to make discoveries about these books that simply would have been impossible otherwise.”

While “smell-o-vision” may someday be an enhanced feature of digitization, we are a long way from the time when digitization will allow collectors and scholars to feel, touch, and measure with precision the objects we care so much about. Until then descriptive bibliography will be in large part dependent on having the books themselves, and scholars and librarians and collectors will be dependent on the collections that can be described only by such bibliographic efforts. Special collection libraries ought to shape their own futures by reemphasizing descriptive bibliography; reintroducing their librarians and users to the concepts and principles of descriptive bibliography; teaching how the book as information and the book as thing, the book as text and the book as object, are integrated by descriptive bibliography, thus enhancing their value for all who collect and learn from them. Special collections libraries must become not only repositories, but also teaching centers. Instruction in descriptive bibliography ought to be widely available in the very places it can best be applied and used. As a collector, my own rudimentary knowledge of descriptive bibliography has served me well. It has allowed me to identify books to a certainty well beyond what truncated and often erroneous catalog or dealer descriptions suggested, and to buy, or not buy, accordingly. Think what a real grasp of its principles could do for the librarian and scholar.

The answer to why descriptive bibliography is important to the broader community engaged with special collections is, once again, best described by Vander Meulen. Using the tools provided by descriptive bibliography results in involvement [that] leads to the most fulfilling pleasure of all, the excitement of engaging in the historical reconstruction of these works. It is an activity that requires those much-discussed eighteenth-century qualities of reason and imagination. It is a process that brings us not only closer to the minds and actions
of those who manufactured the books but also, ultimately into the presence of Alexander Pope himself.⁶

NOTES

1. The three talks were published as Collectors & Special Collections – Three Talks (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2002). Alice Schreyer’s talk was also published separately as Elective Affinities: Private Collectors & Special Collections in Libraries (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2001).


3. Ibid.


5. Ibid., 17.

6. Ibid., 28.
PART III

Paul’s Legal Writings and Thoughts
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Paul’s Legal Writings and Thoughts

This section begins with an article that demonstrates Paul’s ability to focus on a specific issue in a way that transcends a narrow problem. “The Right Not to be Modern Men” examines the law surrounding the state’s presumptive authority over the patterns of life within a religious community, namely the Amish. His graceful writing not only covers the applicable case law, but does so without jargon, making it readily comprehensible to the common reader. Creating a wider perspective, Paul frames the issue so that it reveals the continuing tension in American society between tradition and the unceasing “improvements” used by many to define modernity. Written while in law school in 1967, the article conveys Paul’s continuing effort to answer a specific concern while presenting a standpoint for a panorama of interpretations.

Paul’s legal career, long and successful, focused on energy policy. He wrote countless briefs in his distinguished tenure at Jones, Day in Cleveland and then Chicago. The further writings here capture his thinking in the area of regulation and public energy decisions. A series of his thoughts about contemporary legal issues have been added. In these representative instances, Paul is able to see the value of multiple perspectives, even as he is clear about the consistent vision he brings to the issue at hand.
In recent years the public has been made aware of a newsworthy curiosity, the Old Order Amish. Much of this publicity, undesired by the Amish, has resulted from contempt actions, judicial sales, imprisonments and other legal actions brought to compel Amish families to send their school-age children to public schools or to parochial schools which satisfy varying state educational standards. While urbanization has made the one-room country school obsolete and undesirable for most Americans, the Amish have become acutely aware of their own need to maintain the small rural school. The consolidation of rural schools and the increasingly stringent enforcement of state compulsory attendance and teacher-certification laws have resulted in greater pressures on the Amish to send their children, particularly those from fourteen to sixteen, to acceptable schools. The Amish have acceded to the public education of their children through the eighth grade. However, schooling beyond that point is thought unnecessary to a community of farmers and destructive of the basic tenets of Amish life. The Amish feel that exposing their adolescent children to the embryonic sophistication found in consolidated high schools will result in the disestablishment of the old order religion through the involuntary weaning of their young. Therefore, the Amish have often embarked upon a course of civil disobedience, resisting the compulsory school laws and invoking what they feel is a higher command rooted in the tenets of their faith: “And be not conformed to this world;” “Keep thyself pure.”
The conflict between the Amish and the school authorities involves two potential constitutional claims—the right of a parent under the fourteenth amendment to rear his child and the first amendment right of parent and child to adhere to their religious beliefs. The right of parents to raise their children according to their lights is protected by the fourteenth amendment prohibition of arbitrary state laws which are not rationally related to a valid state purpose. In *Meyer v. Nebraska* the Supreme Court struck down a state statute that forbade the teaching of a modern foreign language to any child under the age of twelve. The Court held that the statute violated due process of law where it was applied to punish an instructor who taught German to a child of ten in a parochial school. *Meyer* was later relied upon in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* to invalidate an Oregon statute that compelled every parent to send his child to a public school. Under the doctrine of *Meyer*, the Court thought it plain that the statute “unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control.” If there is a right of parents to raise their children freely, it is entitled to constitutional protection only when it is infringed by a state law bearing no rational relation to a valid state interest. Laws which require attendance at a certified public or private school clearly do not violate this edict, as the Supreme Court admitted in *Meyer* when it stated that “the power of the State to compel attendance at some school and to make reasonable regulations for all schools . . . is not questioned.” Thus if the Amish controversy presents serious questions of constitutional dimensions, it is because the claim to be exempt from school attendance requirements is predicated upon the right to freedom of religion.

The role of religion in an essentially secular scheme of education under the first amendment has been a source of highly emotional controversy in recent years. Under the establishment clause prayers and Bible reading exercises in public schools have been held unconstitutional, and there is currently grave doubt concerning the extent to
which the federal and state governments can provide tax-supported aid to parochial schools. The Amish controversy presents the other side of the first amendment coin—the extent to which the free exercise clause protects a close-knit religious society in its resistance to involvement with the secular world.

As Mr. Justice Roberts articulated the scope of the free exercise clause in Cantwell v. Connecticut, it “embraces two concepts,—freedom to believe and freedom to act. The first is absolute but, in the nature of things, the second cannot be. Conduct remains subject to regulation.” Thus where legislation abridges the free exercise of a religious practice while advancing valid state goals, the courts must determine which interest should yield. In the confrontation of church and state, the state is often, but not always, the victor. The Supreme Court in Reynolds v. United States upheld a statute proscribing the practice of polygamy, despite the Mormons’ claim that for their sect polygamy was a divinely ordained way of life. The Court found polygamy to be an “odious” practice among western nations and subversive of peace and order in the realm. An overriding state interest was similarly recognized in Prince v. Massachusetts, which affirmed the conviction of a Jehovah’s Witness for allowing a minor to sell religious literature in public in violation of a child labor law. Although both guardian and child believed that failure to perform this missionary work “would bring condemnation to everlasting destruction at Armageddon,” the Court postulated a higher interest:

> Acting to guard the general interest in youth’s well being, the state as parens patriae may restrict the parents control . . . The right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose . . . the child . . . to ill health.

This same rationale of protecting the public health and welfare has been used by states to justify compulsory vaccination of small children and x-ray examinations of state university registrants, even though such practices may be abhorrent to religious sects such as the Christian Scientists. The Supreme Court has vacillated on the ques-
tion whether this rationale supports the validity of state requirements that public school children salute the flag. In *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*, the Court held that compelling Jehovah’s Witnesses to make a pledge “forbidden by command of Scripture” was a legitimate exercise “of specific powers of government deemed by the legislature essential to secure and maintain that orderly, tranquil, and free society without which religious toleration itself is unattainable.” But three years later in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, the High Court overruled *Gobitis* and held that compulsory flag salutes violate the first amendment right to free exercise of religion.

In *Reynolds, Prince*, and the flag salute cases, the court invoked a balancing test to gauge the constitutionality of a statute directly prohibiting a specific religious practice or commanding members of a religious sect to engage in a practice repugnant to their faith. This approach has also been taken where the validity of a statute regulating a secular activity but stifling religious practice as an attendant consequence has been challenged. In *Braunfeld v. Brown* the Court sustained the constitutionality of a Sunday closing law which was attacked by Orthodox Jewish merchants who were required by state law to close their businesses on Sunday and by their religious scruples to close on Saturday. The appellants contended that the law constituted an establishment of religion and infringed the free exercise of their religion by forcing them to the Hobson’s choice of financial loss or religious infidelity. The Supreme Court found no infringement in the operation of a secular law that made religious practice more expensive since in establishing a uniform day of rest the state had a valid purpose, which would not necessarily be served by exempting Sabbatarians from the legislation or by designating a different day of rest.

The current vitality of *Braunfeld* is suspect, however, in light of *Sherbert v. Verner*, which struck down a state statute under the free exercise clause in a case which three Justices thought indistinguishable from *Braunfeld*. The Court concluded that South Carolina could not deny unemployment compensation to a Seventh Day Adventist on the statutory ground that refusal to work on her Saturday sabbath
was a failure to accept “available suitable employment” without good cause. Since the ineligibility for benefits was derived solely from the practice of her religion, the Court held that state pressure to forego this religious practice violated the first amendment in the absence of a compelling state interest.

It is within this constitutional setting that the Amish problem must be viewed and the balance struck between the conflicting interests of the state and a curious, minority religious sect.

_The Clash of Interests_

The states, so often portrayed as the villains of this piece, have long asserted their interest in compulsory education as a remedy for parental neglect. In 1642 Massachusetts passed the first American school law, to cure “the great neglect of many parents & masters in training up their children in learning & labor, & other imlyments which may be profitable to the common wealth . . . .”\(^35\) The law provided that the local selectmen would be responsible for directing parents and tradesmen in the proper education of the children and would submit annual reports on the educational progress of the community. This _ad hoc_ method of instruction was formalized by the Massachusetts School Act of 1647 which established the first public schools in America.

It being one chiefe project of ye ould deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of ye Scriptures, . . . . It is therefore ordred, yt evry towneship in this jurisdiction, aftr ye Lord that increased ym number to 50 housholdrs, shall then forthwth appoint one wth in their towne to teach all children . . . to write and reade, . . . & it is furthr ordered, yt where any towne shall increase to ye number of 100 families or househowldrs, they shall set up a grammer schoole. . . .\(^36\)

Ironically, this famous old law would now be unconstitutional to the extent that it established public schools specifically for religious purposes.
Thus from its inception this country has placed its faith in public education as a means of insuring the development, improvement and preservation of the social fabric.\textsuperscript{37} In \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}\textsuperscript{38} the Supreme Court, in holding that separate facilities for the races are inherently unequal, recognized this deep commitment to public education:

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.\textsuperscript{39}

This traditional view of public education has clear implications regarding the nature of the state’s obligation to its citizens in providing schooling. Less clear is the power of the state to compel education of its citizens, such as the Old Order Amish, who object on religious grounds to accepting a certain amount of education and to adhering to the state’s view of what constitutes a proper education.

Clearly the state has a valid interest in compulsory education: the goal is not the standardization of the nation’s youth but enforcement of the minimum standards of education thought necessary for an informed and useful citizenry. In sheer economic terms, the nation’s children are a natural resource, which the state may legitimately exploit to its full potential by means of compulsory education. But there is a countervailing, though largely undefined, policy of pluralism and deference to minority ethnic groups that supports
the Amish refusal to be modern men.

Pluralism is a shibboleth of American society, perhaps more honored in oratory than in practical tolerance. The Constitution, in providing for a federal government, secured the separate existence of independent states representing diverse ways of local life. Yet the response of the Supreme Court, like that of society at large, has at times been ambivalent. In striking down a state law prohibiting the teaching of a foreign language to children under twelve years of age, the Court in *Meyer v. Nebraska* remarked that “the desire of the legislature to foster a homogeneous people with American ideals . . . is easy to appreciate.” However, the emphasis on protecting diversity emerged again in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, where the Court stated that the Constitution “excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers.” The High Court further embraced the concept of pluralism in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. During World War II the Court in the name of freedom of religion held that requiring school children to salute the flag when it violated their religious scruples was unconstitutional. The Court noted that the state could not compel one to utter what was not in his mind, and to attempt such coercion would indicate a “preference to officially disciplined uniformity for which history indicates a disappointing and disastrous end.”

Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard. . . . [We] apply the limitations of the Constitution with no fear that freedom to be intellectually and spiritually diverse or even contrary will disintegrate the social organization. . . . We can have intellectual individualism and . . . rich cultural diversities . . . only at the price of occasional eccentricity and abnormal attitudes.

America’s history thus points to both a longstanding interest in education and an equally honorable interest in preserving the existence of its sects and eccentrics. Admitting the existence of a valid state interest in educating its citizens, the question is whether an excep-
tion should be made for the Amish who feel that education beyond the eighth grade will work involuntary assimilation of their children into the mainstream of American life at the expense of the continued existence of the Old Order.

The Old Order Amish

Sociologist David Riesman, speaking of “tradition-directed” peoples, provides an introduction to the prototype of the Old Order Amish:

The type of social order . . . is relatively unchanging, the conformity of the individual tends to reflect his membership in a particular . . . clan . . . ; he learns to understand and appreciate patterns which have endured for centuries, and are modified but slightly as the generations succeed each other. The important relationships of life may be controlled by careful and rigid etiquette, learned by the young during years of intensive socialization that end with initiation into full adult membership. Moreover, the culture, in addition to the economic tasks, or as part of them, provides ritual, routine, and religion to occupy and to orient everyone. Little energy is directed toward finding new solutions of age-old problems. . . .

The Amish as an independent sect were founded in 1693, near Erlenbach, Bern, Switzerland. Jakob Ammann, a Swiss Anabaptist and a follower of Menno Simons and the Mennonites, broke with his church in disagreement over what he felt were unwarranted departures from traditional practices. The Amish, the followers of Ammann, thus dedicated themselves to maintaining the old practices and resisting any capitulation to the sin of worldliness. As early as the 18th century the Amish began to migrate to America. The original settlements were in Pennsylvania, but today the Amish are found in most states, with the largest communities in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana. The Old Order Amish are the most conservative and traditional of the several branches of the sect, numbering about fifty thousand
children and adults in the United States.\textsuperscript{50} Their life is centered around the church, and the basic unit of their society is the church district which may be composed of ten to one hundred families encompassing several hundred people. Since there is no central authority, each church district promulgates its own rules of daily life, the\textit{ Ordnung}, so that certain practices vary from district to district within the Old Order. Each district chooses its own officers, a bishop, several ministers, and a deacon. These men are chosen by lot\textsuperscript{51} and hold office for life, and without pay. The Bishop is the ultimate authority in secular and religious matters, although he is guided by the\textit{ Ordnung} of his district and by the adult male church members. The Old Order rejects church buildings, and services are held every other Sunday at the farms of the members in rotation. Amish theology is based on literal acceptance of the New Testament, and services consist of prayers, hymns, a sermon, scripture readings, and testimony by members supporting the sermon or generally praising the Old Order life.

Religion pervades every aspect of Amish life. The\textit{ Ordnung} dictates what clothes may be worn, what tools may be used, what attitudes and positions about life are acceptable. The Amish are forbidden to own cars or to use electricity or power tools. Because the\textit{ Ordnung} requires inordinate discipline, Amish parents take great care to see that their children are trained early in hard work, long hours and contempt for the modern conveniences forbidden to the Old Order generally.

Next to religion the most important facet of Amish life is the family. Whether or not the Old Order will be able to maintain its 19th century way of life depends entirely on the continued integrity of the Amish family unit. Patriarchal in character, the Amish family usually includes three or more generations living together. The father’s word is always final; Amish children do not question their elders and speak little in the presence of adults. When they do speak, their language is Pennsylvania Dutch, a high German dialect. This is the “every day” language, and in many Old Order communities the children do not begin to learn English until they start school. German itself is the language of the church, and thus proficiency in German is an Amish
status symbol although most members of the Old Order read but do not speak it. The Amish do speak English; in their desire to live apart from our society they do not deny the need for some contact. Consequently their everyday dealings with businessmen, with doctors, and increasingly, with officers of the court are conducted in English.

The Amish do not believe in insurance, for they feel that insurance will dilute the importance of the family, of man’s dependence on his brother. Thus Amish men gather to rebuild the burnt barns of their coreligionists and provide for their own sick and aged. Their refusal to accept Social Security benefits was a longtime problem. Some Amish men had their horses and farms seized for refusal to pay the tax. Others paid the tax but never collected the benefits. And all this was done in keeping with the Biblical injunction:

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Recently, however, relief has been granted by exempting the Amish from the Social Security laws.

The Amish are also an agrarian people. The farm to them represents a way of life that enables a family to stay together, to do God’s work with God’s earth. Since the Amish use no tractors or electricity, a large family is both economically desirable and necessary. The Amish produce much of what they use, and since their expenditures for clothing or cars or education are minimal, they require little cash. They save what they can and direct all their efforts toward obtaining land for themselves and their sons. The Old Order farmer uses many modern agricultural techniques, and his per acre yield is high. But he is not concerned with aiding agricultural progress himself, and he has little time and little use for books, plays or theatre. He directs his family toward the church, and away from worldliness. His guiding principle is to live simply, to love his neighbor and to avoid worldliness, for that is the path to salvation.
The Amish strictly enforce their way of life by absolute expulsion of those who stray. The shunning or *Meidung* is so complete that even the family of the one shunned may not eat at the same table with the outcast. Because of the severity of the ban, the *Meidung* has been challenged in two civil actions by members who had withdrawn from the Old Order to join a more liberal church. In *Ginerich v. Swartzentruber*, plaintiff asked that the bishops and elders of his church district be enjoined from leading the community boycott against him. The court granted the injunction, noting:

The facts developed present a novel question of religious liberty. The defendants assert the right of religious liberty to apply their belief in their “Confession of Faith” rendered holy by its antiquity, and their consequent right to apply and enforce its doctrine literally.

On the other hand, under our constitutional guaranty plaintiff himself must be granted equal rights. . . . [H]e has the right . . . to be a modern citizen if he chooses.

In enjoining the shunning, the court ignored the effect of its decision on the integrity of Old Order life, which is dependent upon the *Meidung* as the most effective means of maintaining traditional values against the onslaught of modern values. The court failed to realize that it could not enjoin a pattern of behavior that is woven into the fabric of a people’s life, for in the Amish community there is no halfway house that allows a person to be a member economically but not religiously. This case and the second *Meidung* case demonstrate the real anguish that accompanies attempts by Old Order members to exercise their right to be modern citizens. While the resort of Andy Yoder and Eli Gingerich to the courts is atypical, the cases suggest something of the distance between Amish society and American society as a whole. Attempts at bridge building are painful and expensive for all involved.
Public school education has been one of the state’s means of trying to bridge the gap between the Amish and modern society. Since the various state compulsory attendance laws have common features, it is instructive to examine the provisions of one state, such as Ohio, where conflict with the Amish has been particularly bitter. The sections of the school code which are involved in this controversy fall into three categories. The first is concerned with identifying the children who must attend school, the second with locating the responsibility for such attendance in the parents or legal guardians, and the third with specifying the standards which schools must meet. The Ohio law declares that children between the ages of six and eighteen are “of compulsory school age.” Formerly, the code provided simply that such children “shall attend” school, but since 1965 it has required that the legal guardian of the child shall cause such a child to attend. Other sections of the code provide for a system of enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws through truant officers, juvenile court proceedings and the punishment of violators.

The Ohio Code provides that the compulsory attendance laws are not to be applied to children who have been “determined to be incapable of profiting substantially” from further education. When ill health makes attendance impossible, a pupil may be excused by the superintendent of his school district for the remainder of the school year. The requirement of compulsory attendance to age eighteen is further softened by the availability of “age and schooling” certificates to children over sixteen who have completed an educational program adequate to equip them for employment. The certificate requires written proof that the child will be legally employed, but the statute does allow that work done directly and exclusively for the benefit of the minor’s parent on the parent’s farm is appropriate and sufficient employment.

Those subject to the compulsory attendance laws are not required to attend the public schools. Such a requirement would be uncon-
stitutional. But whatever school the child attends must conform to minimum standards set by the state board of education. If the parent chooses to send his child to a private school, “the hours and term of attendance exacted shall be equivalent to the hours and term of attendance required of children in the public schools of that district.” The state board of education sets standards to determine who is eligible to teach, what subjects shall be taught, what physical facilities are required, and what records need to be kept. These standards include such requirements as a pupil activity program, guidance programs, toilet rooms, custodial service, and a school staff “organized on a democratic basis.”

Old Order parents have resisted the requirements of these statutes in two main respects: (1) the standards for Amish elementary and secondary schools, and (2) the age or grade to which children must attend school. The Old Order do not oppose all public schools or certified teachers. In the past many Amish have sat on local school boards and have sent their children, until the eighth grade, at least, to public schools. All this is changing now, and the chief reason has been the consolidation of local school systems with the resulting demise of the one-room school house. It is to avoid sending their children to a distant school aboard a school bus that the Amish have resorted to private instruction. The Amish also have preferred their own schools for the required education beyond the eighth grade in order to insulate their children from the influence of the modern consolidated high school.

The crucial question concerning the private Amish school is the equivalence of the education given there. The Amish school system typically does not meet state standards in any one of numerous ways. The teachers have no pension plan, and the schools have insufficient heating and lack indoor plumbing. The subjects required by law are not taught. Moreover, teachers in Amish schools have themselves only eighth grade educations. But the Amish argue that they should be governed by different standards which their bishops and elders have set forth in a formal plan. Under the heading “Teachers: Qualifica-
tions And Duties,” they suggest the following standard in lieu of the college degree required by Ohio law for teachers in private schools:

It is recognized that the teacher is the hub on which the entire school revolves. Therefore it is highly essential great care and good judgment is exercised in selecting teachers. Realizing that the school teacher is very influential in molding the life of a child, it is of great importance that the teacher possess, first of all, good Christian character. Equal in importance is good educational background and a desire to further improve that education. Specifically the education shall consist of an eighth grade education. Other characteristics a teacher should possess are: the ability to “get along” with children, willingness to co-operate with parents and school board, and a sincere attachment to the teaching profession.82

Even when the Amish capitulate to the demands of the state and send their children to the public schools, it is a qualified compliance. The Old Order attitude toward education is ambivalent. The Amish know they must pay taxes, sell their crops, buy supplies and deal with others. For this reason Amish parents want their children to go to school to learn English, reading, writing and arithmetic. More than this, they feel, is unnecessary for the life ahead of the Old Order child83 and dangerous to the Old Order itself.

The plain people desire an eigth-grade [sic] school education, and believe in learning the 3 R’s—reading, writing, and arithmetic. Schooling beyond this is unnecessary, as most of them are farmers and desire no office work, no government positions, no places of honor or power. Also, further schooling, they feel, would tend to undermine their religious teachings.84

Thus the Amish have traditionally felt that eighth-grade education is enough—that school to the age of fourteen is “safe.” Beyond this, in their view, children are too easily swayed by what they see outside the home. Exposure to cars, to teachers with short skirts, to students with modern clothes and ideas will sway the Old Order young, make
them envious and dissatisfied. All the parents desire is to give Amish children an “education suitable to their station in life” as farmers and homemakers. In assessing the state’s interest in raising this educational level, it must be noted that Amish educational theories have, in practice, produced a product consistent with the objectives of public school education:

[C]andor compels the observation that there is no objective evidence whatever that the education of Amish children by Amish teachers produces lower values, less loyal citizenship and a lower level of culture than the forced integration of such children into consolidated school systems.\textsuperscript{85}

[T]he record fails to sustain the proposition that the public welfare is injured by the conduct of [the parents] . . . . What evidence there is . . . tends to show that respondents are good farmers who desire to continue to lead a rural agrarian life, free from many of the trappings of modern materialistic society. . . . There is no evidence that the operation of these two schools . . . had led to the commission of crime or to juvenile delinquency by their children or has been in any way injurious to society or to the private citizens. . . .\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{Balancing the Interests: The Judicial Reply}

In the face of rigid and unyielding state educational requirements, the Amish can win judicial exemption only on the constitutional ground that the compulsory education laws, as applied to them, restrict the free exercise of their religion.\textsuperscript{87} Almost uniformly, state courts have denied this constitutional claim, but often on the basis of insensitive and incomplete analysis of the issues.

In Ohio the most notable series of cases has involved one John P. Hershberger. In 1954 Hershberger and others, in Hardin County, established a private school in a one-room frame building without light and heated by a coal stove. The teacher, with no formal training or experience, had completed the eighth grade. Hershberger was tried and
found guilty of failing to cause his children to attend school as required by the compulsory education laws of Ohio. The court announced that no question of religious freedom was involved in the case. It was clear to the court that the defendant had every right to establish a private school and send his children there. The issue as viewed by the court was whether the instruction provided in the private school was equivalent to the instruction given in the public schools. The court felt it “obvious” from the record that the instruction was not. The opinion is barren of any awareness on the part of the court of a conflict between the state’s interest in the quality of education received by all children and the parent’s interest in preserving his way of life for his children.

No question of religious Freedom is presented in this case. By requiring the defendant to provide for the proper education of his children, his right to worship according to the dictates of his conscience is no way abridged, and his right to instruct his children in the tenet of his chosen faith is unquestioned.

The father was convicted, fined twenty dollars and ordered to post a one-hundred-dollar bond with surety to ensure compliance with the law.

This was not the end of John Hershberger’s problems. Moving to Wayne County, he and other Old Order church members were charged with child neglect for failing to send their children to school. After numerous court delays, the children were found to be neglected, and the parents were ordered to surrender them to the custody of the Child Welfare Board. James Leedy, the prosecuting attorney, reports that on the appointed day the parents appeared without the children. The parents claimed they could not find the children, but the judge sentenced them to jail for contempt and sent the truant officer to the Hershberger farm. The truant officer found about twenty Amish children, all dressed alike, and when he asked for Andy Hershberger, he received twenty answers, all in Pennsylvania Dutch. The truant officer returned empty handed, and the judge, sensing public sympathy for
the jailed parents, finally let them go, ordering them to return with the children at the end of the week. They arrived on Friday, still without the children. Before the court pronounced a second sentence for contempt, the bishop promised to have the children in school Monday. Monday came, but the children did not. The prosecutor and the judge then learned that the Amish were going to appeal the first contempt order. At that point the whole matter was dropped, and Mr. Leedy seemed happy that the Wayne County Board of Education, at least, was content to ignore the Amish. 94

If the Hershberger cases seem unsatisfactory, they can in part be excused by the failure of the Amish to urge any constitutional objections to compulsory education, or to present any evidence that such education would result in specific harm to their religious community. There have been cases in other states where the Amish have attempted to raise the constitutional claim, but they have generally been unsuccessful. 95

In Kansas, for example, the Old Order for a time found solace in the fact that the compulsory attendance laws, while requiring children to attend school until they were sixteen, exempted those who had completed the eighth grade. However, this exemption was revoked in 1965, and in State v. Garber 96 an Amish parent was charged with failing to require his child to “attend continuously” a public or private school within the terms of the statute. 97 After the exemption was revoked, the defendant’s daughter attended an Amish school in the Reno County Yoder Church District, which was specially organized for those children who had completed the eighth grade but were not yet sixteen. 98

This school was organized pursuant to a written plan in accordance with the Amish religious faith and way of life. . . . It is taught by an Amish farmer whose formal education has consisted of eight grades in the public schools. Formal classes are held . . . one morning each week. On each of the remaining four school days students spend at home one hour in study and five hours in pursuit of vocational training upon which a written report is submitted to the instructor. . . . Emphasis is placed
on the vocational home training consisting generally of farming projects for boys and home economics and home management for girls.\textsuperscript{99}

The court noted that the legislature had specifically deleted exemptions for home-study programs, and had only substituted the words “private, denominational or parochial school” as acceptable surrogates for public schools. Thus the court held that the daughter had failed to attend school within the meaning of the statute,\textsuperscript{100} and that “her father, no matter how sincere or well intentioned, must be deemed guilty of violating the statute.”\textsuperscript{101}

Having determined that the defendant had violated the statute, the court next considered the claim of the Amish parent that the law infringed his freedom of religion. In denying this claim, the court followed old free exercise clause precedents in distinguishing between “religious beliefs” and “religious practices.”\textsuperscript{102} Since the court found that the school law did not interfere with religious beliefs, it denied relief.

There is no infringement upon the right to worship or to believe insofar as either defendant or his daughter is concerned. Their freedoms to worship and to believe remain absolute and are not affected. . . . Defendant may instruct his daughter in religious beliefs as he desires. It can scarcely be doubted that defendant is sincere when he says his religious convictions are violated if his daughter receives a secular type of education found in the secondary public schools, but it is apparent he does not object to secular education \textit{per se} since his daughter has attended the elementary public schools eight years. We are not called upon to attempt to prescribe any permissible degree of secularity in education beyond which religious freedom is infringed. The question of how long a child should attend school is not a religious one.\textsuperscript{103}

The difficulty with the court’s analysis is that it restricts the protection of the Constitution to religious beliefs and ignores religious practices.
Not all religious practices must yield to state interests. Religious practices—which are often essential to the integrity of beliefs—are also constitutionally protected if they pose no threat to any significant state interest, or if their importance is found to outweigh that of the state interest. The court did not consider the problem in the total context of Amish life, and thus failed to take into account the fact that the Amish practice of withdrawing from public education after the eighth grade touches the very heart of their religious beliefs, which they feel are endangered by further education.

No court seems to have plumbed sufficiently the depths of the Amish problem, not even the one court which found in their favor. In Commonwealth v. Petersheim, Amish children, over fourteen but under sixteen, were assigned to attend an Amish parochial school. Their fathers did not send them, and the fathers were convicted of violating the Pennsylvania compulsory attendance law by a justice of the peace. On appeal to the county court the questions were heard de novo. The Amish interposed two defenses. They first asserted that the existing Pennsylvania law did not apply because the children had reached the age of fifteen, were engaged in farm or domestic work for their parents, and were entitled to a permit from the board of school directors of their school district exempting them from the compulsory attendance law. The court chose, however, to decide the case on constitutional grounds. It began with the premise that religious liberty encompasses the right “to adopt any creed or hold any opinion whatever on the subject of religion, and to do, or forbear to do, any act for conscience sake, the doing or forbearing of which is not prejudicial to the public weal . . . .” Then the court proceeded to extol the sincerity of the Amish convictions and the honesty of their religious beliefs, quoting a well-known passage from the Amish confession of faith which demonstrated distrust of higher education. Citing the flag salute cases, the court concluded that “the trend of the recent and modern decisions is in favor of the religious liberty of the individual when it comes in conflict with a State law, ordinance or regulation.” Thus the court held that the compulsory attendance laws could not be
enforced against the defendants, since to do so would constitute “an abridgement and infringement of their constitutional rights of liberty and conscience,” which the fourteenth amendment guarantees. Although the Amish emerged as victors, the court utterly failed to investigate or speak to the real nature of the controversy. Nothing was said of the effect of education on Amish children, or of the relative importance to the Amish religion of the freedom to remain ignorant and to keep their children ignorant, or of the importance, if any, of preserving a place for the Amish in American society.112

The *Petersheim* case was not the last or the best word from the Pennsylvania courts on the Amish controversy. In *Commonwealth v. Beiler*113 the Pennsylvania Superior Court, without referring to the county court opinion in *Petersheim*, affirmed the conviction of two Amish fathers whose children had not continued school after the eighth grade. The court began with the customary deference to the Amish as “a quiet, pious, industrious, thrifty people, whose vitalizing contributions to the welfare, and especially to the development of the agricultural resources, of the Commonwealth have always been gratefully recognized.”114 The court accepted without question the genuineness of the religious basis of the Amish stand against education beyond the eighth grade.115

Thus, we are squarely faced with competing demands of the Commonwealth, evidenced by its compulsory school law, and religious liberty, guaranteed by the Constitution. Or to state the problem in other terms: In the realm of secular education, which is paramount? The State functioning according to democratic processes and depending for its virility upon enlightened citizens; or parents, whose deep and sincere religious convictions reject advanced education as an encroachment upon their way of life?116

With the question so phrased the court’s answer was obvious—the state interest is paramount in the realm of secular education. In reaching its result the court invoked the familiar proposition that “religious

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liberty includes the absolute right to believe but only a limited right to act.\textsuperscript{117} In support of its decision the court pointed out that Mormons were forbidden plural marriages,\textsuperscript{118} that Jews could not refuse to be judicially sworn on their Sabbath,\textsuperscript{119} and that the child of a Jehovah’s Witness could not sell religious pamphlets in violation of a child labor law.\textsuperscript{120} The court distinguished the flag salute cases on the ground that they had decided only that compulsion of belief is violative of first amendment rights. Instead, the court relied upon \textit{Prince v. Massachusetts}\textsuperscript{121} and \textit{Pierce v. Society of Sisters}\textsuperscript{122} for the proposition that the \textit{parens patriae} role of the state in enforcing compulsory education overrides parental claims based on religion or conscience.\textsuperscript{123}

Perhaps the \textit{Beiler} court struck the proper constitutional balance, yet there is still a missing analytical element that makes the decision ultimately unsatisfactory. The important questions are never asked. Will public secondary education or equivalent parochial secondary education result in the inability of Amish children to adhere to a faith which will deny most of what they are taught and shown? If this is the result, will the next step be the dissolution of the Old Order Amish through a gradual decrease in young church members? If so, is such a cause and effect relationship forbidden by the first and fourteenth amendments? Finally, is the interest of the state in securing two more years of schooling for a small minority of its youth so important as to justify the possible disestablishment of a unique American subculture?

\textit{Conclusion}

The courts’ almost uniform denial of the Amish claim to be exempted from compulsory education laws is consistent with the conclusion reached when other religions have challenged the school laws.\textsuperscript{124} But the crucial factor that is lost in the weighing is that compulsory education might not present the same threat to other religious groups that it does to the Amish.\textsuperscript{125} The abiding fear of the Amish, not voiced by other religious groups, is that the continued exposure of its youth
to motorized buses and large schools, to electricity, to modern science, to modern clothes and speech and customs and comforts may indeed threaten the very existence of the faith. This possibility has not generally been examined by the courts, and it cannot of course be tested without forcing the Amish to risk the destruction they fear. Amish children, placed in consolidated rural high schools against their will and the will of their parents, will know the anguish of living in two worlds. The education they receive there might either be irrelevant to their lives as members of the Old Order Amish, or might make their lives as Old Order Amish impossible.

The relevant case law indicates that compulsory education is one more area where religious convictions must yield to what the courts uniformly consider to be an overriding state interest. In this respect school attendance is put on a level with compulsory vaccination, enforced medication and the secular Sunday sabbath. In all these cases it was held that the ultimate benefit to the state and to the individual, even if he did not desire it, justified infringement of sincere and established religious principles. On the other hand, the Amish and other groups have seen in the flag salute case and in _Sherbert v. Verner_ the notion that certain kinds of religiously motivated conduct will be constitutionally protected from infringement.

The line between these cases is totally unclear, perhaps because the variables which are thrown into the balance—the religious interest on one side and the interest of the state on the other—vary with the facts of each case and because the “balancing test” itself provides no analytical frame-work for exposing the underlying competing interests. Even if the proper test cannot be precisely defined, it is clear that the approach of the courts to the Amish school cases thus far has been unsatisfactory. Admittedly there is a strong and valid state interest in public education. However, no real inquiry has been made into the Amish claim that further education will ultimately destroy their way of life. If this claim could be substantiated, it might well outweigh the countervailing state interest. But perhaps the Amish overstate the danger. Amish parents have remarkable control over their children,
and neither parents nor children, much as they might wish it to be otherwise, live entirely separate from our world. Amish children ride in cars, hear radios, read newspapers and magazines and books, perhaps even sneak off to the movies. Amish children know a great deal more of the outside world than their parents might wish; certainly, even without schools, they are exposed to it frequently. Yet the vast majority of them remain in the faith and join the church. And it may be unrealistic, as well as futile, to argue to the courts that the existence of their religion depends on judicial exemptions for their children from compulsory education laws.

Assuming that the compulsory school laws are fairly and constitutionally entrenched, the Amish have two avenues of relief. The first is highly unsatisfactory, yet it is the approach that has been most frequently taken. The technique of ignore-the-problem-and-it-will-go-away is widely practiced. Yet no one can be satisfied with a solution which demands that citizens and officials alike ignore the law, that the former refuse to obey it or that the latter fail to enforce it. Thus the second road seems preferable—relief through legislative exemption.132 The Amish have, as a matter of legislative grace, already been exempted from the payment of Social Security taxes.133 In granting the exemption, Congress accepted the traditional Amish reliance on their brethren in lieu of compulsory governmental assistance. This legislative largesse is not an unconstitutional establishment of religion. Referring to an establishment clause attack on the selective service law’s exemption for those opposed to war on religious grounds, the Supreme Court has noted that “its unsoundness is too apparent to require” discussion.134

Like Social Security and the draft, compulsory education is a statutory creation. State legislatures, having created these laws, may regulate and limit their application. One state has already demonstrated that it is not impossible to resolve the Amish problem satisfactorily. Pennsylvania has adopted a plan which provides for the operation of day schools by church groups, offering school-work programs to those fourteen and older who have completed the eighth grade.135 Each
student must spend no less than three hours a week in such a school, where he studies such subjects as English, mathematics, health and social studies, supplemented by outside agricultural and domestic projects. These “schools” must keep regular attendance records, and the teachers are to “visit the farm or home periodically and confer with both the pupil and the parents relative to the pupil’s obtaining the maximum educational value from the home project.”\textsuperscript{136} This plan has eliminated all legal problems with the Amish since it was put into effect.\textsuperscript{137} And since perhaps the principal legitimate goal of compulsory education is to insure that children become useful and productive adults, and that they will not prove so dysfunctional as to become wards of the state, such agricultural and domestic vocational training for these future farmers and homemakers ought to be as satisfactory as trade schools which teach mechanical and factory skills to urban youngsters.

It is better to seek such a legislative solution to the conflict presented by the desire of the Amish to remain apart than to rest the decision on constitutional grounds. The legislative approach is flexible and permits exemption from compulsory education laws to be granted or withheld on the basis of a judgment as to how well the practices of the individual sect will serve the minimal interests of society. Constitutional adjudication is too rigid, and either resolution of the first amendment issue is unsatisfactory. If the Amish have a constitutional right to educate their children in accordance with their religious beliefs, how can a distinction be made between their practices and those of another sect which fails to educate its children well enough to make them useful members of society? On the other hand, if the constitutional interests are weighed and that of society is found to be paramount, the rule laid down might well prove to be unnecessarily rigid. Vital religious practices which do not really threaten to undermine society’s interest in securing a functional citizenry might be stifled, with no appreciable benefit gained by the state.

If other courts and legislatures are to follow the Pennsylvania lead, they must answer these questions: Is there, within the richness
of American society, room for those who are able to contribute little towards our material and technological advancement? With our vast human resources can we afford to allow a few potential doctors to be farmers? One court has said that an Amishman has the right to be a modern man if he chooses.13 What has been overlooked is that he and his children should also have, within limits, the right to choose not to be modern men.

NOTES


5 Romans 12:2.

6 1 Timothy 5:22.

7 262 U.S. 390 (1923).

8 Speaking of the fourteenth amendment’s guarantee that no one be deprived of “liberty . . . without due process of law,” the Meyer Court said:

While this Court has not attempted to define with exactness the liberty thus guaranteed, the term has received much consideration. . . . Without doubt, it denotes . . . the right of the individual to . . . marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. . . . Id. at 399.

9 268 U.S. 510 (1925).

10 Id. at 534-35.

11 See, e.g., State ex rel. Smith v. Kemp, 124 Kan. 716, 261 P. 556 (1927), appeal
dismissed, 278 U.S. 191 (1929) (state action furthering education as a reasonable exercise of state police power); Parr v. State, 117 Ohio St. 23, 157 N.E. 555 (1927) (compulsory school attendance for children below sixteen is a valid exercise of police power).

262 U.S. at 402. But cf. Farrington v. Tokushige, 273 U.S. 284 (1927). In Farrington the Court struck down certain Hawaiian private school regulations, noting that the state has no right to give “affirmative direction concerning the intimate and essential details of such schools, entrust their control to public officers, and deny both owners and patrons reasonable choice and discretion in respect of teachers, curriculum and textbooks.” Id. at 298.

12 U.S. CONST. amend. I, which provides in part: “Congress shall make no law representing an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, . . .” The prohibitions of both the establishment clause and the free exercise clause have been held applicable to the states through the due process clause of the fourteenth amendment. E.g., Sherbert v. Verner, 374 U.S. 398 (1963) (free exercise); McCollum v. Board of Educ., 333 U.S. 203 (1948) (establishment).


15 The establishment clause has been held to bar local school boards from allowing released-time religious instruction in public school classrooms. McCollum v. Board of Educ., 333 U.S. 203 (1948). But the Court has allowed pupils to be released from public school for religious training outside the school. Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306 (1952). Nor does the establishment clause in all cases bar the use of public tax money to aid in the education of children, even when such money must be filtered to the children through a parochial school. Under a “child benefit” theory, tax money may be used to defray the transportation expenses of parochial school students. Everson v. Board of Educ., 330 U.S. 1 (1947). And it may be used to defray their textbook expenses. Cochran v. Louisiana State Bd. of Educ., 281 U.S. 370 (1930). The establishment test is whether there is a “secular legislative purpose and a primary effect that neither advances nor inhibits religion.” School Dist. v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203, 222 (1963). See generally Sky, The Establishment Clause, the Congress and the Schools: An Historical Perspective, 52 VA. L. REV. 1395 (1966).

17 “The distinction between the two clauses is apparent—a violation of the Free Exercise Clause is predicated on coercion while the Establishment Clause violation need not be so attended.” School Dist. v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203, 223 (1963).
On some occasions, courts have a relatively easy time choosing between the religious interest and the state’s policy. In Kentucky, the State Supreme Court upheld a law which made snake handling in conjunction with religious ceremonies a misdemeanor. Some Baptist sects believe the Bible compels the use of snakes in certain services. The results have occasionally been fatal, and the Kentucky court recognized that the lives and health of its citizens were an overriding consideration. Lawson v. Commonwealth, 291 Ky. 437, 164 S.W.2d 972 (1942).

98 U.S. 145 (1878); accord, Cleveland v. United States, 329 U.S. 14 (1946) (Mormon polygamy no defense to Mann Act); Davis v. Beason, 133 U.S. 333 (1890) (statute disqualifying polygamist from voting or holding office upheld). For a criticism of the polygamy decisions as an unjustified interference with a harmless religious practice and a dilution of the first amendment, see Freeman, A Remonstrance for Conscience, 106 U. PA. L. REV. 806, 824–26 (1958).


We balance them, the interest of the individual right of religious worship against the interest of the state which is sought to be enforced. The process of balancing is twofold: first, a determination whether a restriction will be thus imposed on the individual’s freedom of worship, and secondly, a determination whether the presence of a restriction is justified, after a consideration of the social and constitutional values involved.
People v. Woodruff, 272 N.Y.S.2d 786, 789 (1966). The case involved the refusal of one of Timothy Leary’s L.S.D. research supporters to testify regarding others involved, on the ground that her Zen-like religion did not allow her to do acts which might injure others.


32 366 U.S. at 608.


34 Justice Stewart, who thought Braunfeld was factually indistinguishable, concurred in Sherbert on the ground that Braunfeld was wrongly decided. Justices Harlan and White dissented on the ground that Braunfeld was controlling.


36 Id. at 29.

37 In Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390, 400 (1923), the Court noted, “The American people have always regarded education and the acquisition of knowledge as matters of supreme importance which should be diligently promoted.”


39 Id. at 493.

40 262 U.S. 390, 402 (1923). (Emphasis added.)


42 319 U.S. 624 (1943).

43 Id. at 634.

44 Id. at 637.

45 Id. at 641-42. Compare Cantwell v. Connecticut, 310 U.S. 296 (1940). Recognizing that the Constitution is intended to protect a pluralistic society, the Court noted:

The essential characteristic of these liberties is, that under their shield many types of life, character, opinion and belief can develop unmolested and unobstructed. Nowhere is this shield more necessary than in our own country for a
people composed of many races and of many creeds.

*Id.* at 310.

46 Still another relevant consideration is the fact that America itself is a nation with religious roots. See, *e.g.*, NIEBUHR, *THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN AMERICA* (1937). The New England Colonies in fact were theocracies, and the Puritan Ethic, though significantly transformed, is part of our national character. The emphasis is no longer on spiritual salvation, but we continue to have a healthy respect for “Religion” generally, if not for any specific religious ideology. The first amendment, by the establishment clause, demonstrates our national rejection of a state church and our national acceptance of individual churches, through the free exercise clause. See BOORSTIN, *THE GENIUS OF AMERICAN POLITICS* (1953).


49 The Old Order as a distinct branch of the Amish came into being as the result of a series of conferences of Amish Mennonite leaders. The Old Order represented the followers of those who were entirely unwilling in 1862-1876 and in 1878 to make any concessions to modern times. See *Diener-Versammlungen*, in 2 Mennonite ENCYCLOPEDIA 56 (1956); Hostetler, *Amish Problems at Diener-Versammlungen*, 4 Mennonite LIFE 34 (1949).


51 The Confession of Dordrecht of 1632, the basic Mennonite confession of faith, retained by the Amish as a source of Old Order doctrine, announced a distrust of an educated clergy. The Confession noted that a lack of faithful ministers and the presence of “erring sheep” could be cured if people of God would “not turn to such as have been educated in universities, according to the wisdom of man.” *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* in 2 Mennonite ENCYCLOPEDIA 92 (1956); see WENGER, *THE DOCTRINES OF THE MENNONITES* 78-86 (1952). Thus all male church members are eligible to be a minister or bishop of their
church district. After nominations, their names are placed in a Bible, and the name drawn from it at random is thought to be thus called by God to His service.


53 1 Timothy 5:8.


55 See BEEGLE & LOOMIS, RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS 11-14, 789-824 (1950).


57 22 Ohio N.P. (n.s.) 1 (Holmes County Ct. 1919). The reported opinion alternately records the plaintiff as Ginerich and Generich. In fact his name was Gingerich, a common Amish name, particularly in Ohio and Indiana. Gingerich's decision to leave the church was apparently motivated by a desire to wear rubber suspenders, something which was forbidden by the *Ordnung* of his local church.

58 *Id.* at 6. Plaintiff also originally sought money damages, but when it was suggested that money was his sole motivation, plaintiff emotionally denied that he wanted any money at all, and the court denied all monetary relief. The case raises the interesting question of whether a religious practice, the *Meidung*, might be a new tort.

59 *Id.* at 4, 10.

60 There are numerous levels at which the Amish enforce the *Ordnung*. The simplest stage is their reliance on the conscience of the faulting member, which, if ineffective, is followed by warnings, conversations with the ministers, even public rebuke in the Sunday church service.


62 Yoder v. Helmuth, No. 35747, Wayne County, Ohio, C.P. Ct. (1947), discussed in SCHREIBER, OUR AMISH NEIGHBORS 97-117 (1962). In the *Yoder* case, an Old Order member left his church to join a reformed group so that he might have a car to drive his sick daughter to a distant hospital for necessary treatment. His original church stated that it had been willing to allow him to borrow or hire a car whenever necessary for this purpose, and shunned him, not for helping his daughter, but for leaving the church. Yoder asked for and received both an injunction stopping the ban and several thousand dollars in money damages.
The consequences of this interference with a religious practice were truly tragic. One of the ministers against whom the judgment was rendered lost his farm at a forced sale to provide money to satisfy the judgment. He subsequently died, his wife claims, of a broken heart. Andy Yoder’s daughter died shortly after the trial, and Andy Yoder hung himself. An Amish blacksmith thought the death resulted because Andy Yoder could not live with himself for breaking his contract with God, made by joining the church, and for the guilt that he felt for going to court against his brothers.


64 OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3321.01 (Page Supp. 1965).

65 Compare OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3321.03 (Page 1960), with OHIO REV. CODE ANN. 3321.03 (Page Supp. 1965). New § 3321.03 provides:

Except as otherwise provided in this section, the parent, guardian, or other person having the care of a child of compulsory school age which child has not been determined to be incapable of profiting substantially by further instruction shall cause such child to attend a school which conforms to the minimum standards prescribed by the state board of education for the full time the school attended is in session, or shall otherwise cause him to be instructed in accordance with law until one of the following occurs:

(A) The child receives a diploma.

(B) The child receives an age and schooling certificate as provided in section 3331.01 of the Revised Code.

(C) The child is excused from school under standards adopted by the state board of education.


68 OHIO REV. CODE ANN. §§ 3321.38, -.99 (Page 1960). These sections provide for the posting of a $100 bond to insure the child’s attendance, fines ranging from $5 to $1,000, and jail terms ranging from ten to thirty days.
An age and schooling certificate may be issued only by the superintendent of schools of the district of residence of the child . . . and only upon satisfactory proof that the child . . . is over sixteen years of age and has satisfactorily completed a vocational education or special education program adequate to prepare students for an occupation.

Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925). Compelling attendance at public schools to the exclusion of all others would unreasonably interfere “with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control.” Id. at 534-35.

The general powers and duties of the state board of education are set forth at OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3301.07 (Page 1960). The standards for schools are reproduced in OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION, AMISH SECTARIAN EDUCATION IN OHIO 24-29 (Research Rep. No. 44, 1960) [hereinafter cited as SERVICE COMMISSION].

In order to be qualified to teach in a private school in Ohio, a person must hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university. OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3301.071 (Page 1960). Thus Amish teachers in Amish private schools are not qualified by state standards.


See, e.g., IOWA CODE ANN. § 275.1 (Supp. 1966) (school consolidation as the declared policy of the state). In Iowa this policy has led to a series of nationally publicized controversies. See, e.g., Newsweek, Dec. 6, 1965, p. 38; U.S. News & World Report, Dec. 6, 1965, p. 15. Two one-room schools, attended by Amish children, but staffed by certified public school teachers, were closed pursuant to this consolidation policy. The Amish, as owners of the buildings, continued to
operate the schools, staffing them with uncertified Amish teachers, and refused to send their children by motorized bus to the consolidated school. This refusal resulted in prosecutions under the Iowa Compulsory Education Act, IOWA CODE ANN. § 299.1 (Supp. 1966), and the county school superintendent sought an injunction to close the Amish schools. The injunction was denied. Jorgensen v. Borntrager, No. 22904, Buchanan, Iowa, Dist. Ct. (Nov. 1962); cf: State ex rel. Chalfin v. Glick, 113 Ohio App. 23, 177 N.E.2d 293 (1960), aff’d, 172 Ohio St. 249, 175 N.E.2d 68 (1961) (injunction to close private substandard Amish schools in Ohio denied). Although the Amish parents who resisted sending their children to school were jailed and fined and their petition to exempt their schools from the teacher certification requirements was denied, In re Miller, No. 23163, Buchanan, Iowa, Dist. Ct. (Oct., 1963), the Amish so far have won their point. A temporary compromise was worked out whereby the private philanthropic Danforth Foundation paid the salaries of two certified teachers to teach in the Amish buildings. As a result, the schools were considered part of the public school system without involving the expense to the public schools that consolidation was intended to eliminate. During 1967 the Iowa Legislature is expected to devise a permanent legislative solution. See Scalise, The Amish in Iowa and Teacher Certification, 31 ALBANY L. REV. 1, 3 (1967). See generally Littell, The State of Iowa vs. The Amish, 83 CHRISTIAN CENTURY 234 (1966); Mather, Amish Controversy: Temporarily Settled, 83 CHRISTIAN CENTURY 474 (1966); Note, The Amish School Controversy in Iowa, 10 ST. LOUIS U.L.J. 555 (1966).

For example, in Ohio there are 94 standards required for private high schools. See SERVICE COMMISSION 24-29. In 1959-1960 there were 31 Amish “high schools” in Ohio. Nine of these schools were checked against the state standards and were found to violate 77 of the 94 requirements. Id. at 26.

Id. at 31-33.

Id. at 32.

The Ohio Civil Liberties Union report on the Amish and compulsory education noted that one Amish father “wants his son to be able to read the Bible, write a letter, and read the crop prices, but no more.” Haight, The Amish School Controversy, 31 OHIO B.J. 846, 850 (1958).

MILLER, op. cit. supra note 48, at 11.

Littel, supra note 79, at 235.

The Amish have seldom challenged the school laws since their pacifism extends to a disapproval of litigation. See MILLER, op. cit. supra note 48, at 12:

The plain people do not believe in going to court, and avoid law suits if possible; although many many times they have been forced into the courtrooms here in America to compel them to send their children to high school. . . .

Mrs. Miller is, as far as can be determined, the only member of an Old Order Amish church ever to have published a book attempting to explain her people to the non-Amish, or “Yankees.”

OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3321.01-.99 (Page 1960). For an early prosecution under these laws, including an Amish family, see Byler v. State, 26 Ohio App. 329, 157 N.E. 421 (1927).


Id. at 192-93, 144 N.E.2d at 697.

Ibid.

In re Sammy Hershberger, No. 2835, Wayne County, Ohio, Juv. Ct, Jan. 29, 1958.

In the original trial for contempt Hershberger testified only that his religious convictions would not permit him to give up his child. State v. Hershberger, 77 Ohio L. Abs. 487, 150 N.E.2d 671 (Wayne County Juv. Ct. 1958). The court rejected Hershberger’s argument and upheld the contempt order. At the hearing on amended motions for a new trial, “learned counsel for the defendants stated in argument that they were not making any claim that the defendants’ constitutional rights were in any way infringed.” Id. at 491, 150 N.E.2d at 675. The court found that no religious question was involved, and that even if there were, compulsory education was unquestionably constitutional and did not interfere with defendants’ religious rights anymore than would the surrender of their children. Id. at 491-92, 150 N.E.2d at 675-76. On appeal, the convictions for contempt were reversed, since the court found that the parents honestly did not know where the children were. State v. Hershberger, 83 Ohio L. Abs. 62, 168 N.E.2d 13 (Wayne County Ct. App. 1959) (per curiam); State v. Hershberger, 83 Ohio L. Abs. 63, 168 N.E.2d 12 (Wayne County Ct. App. 1959). For a general discussion of the Hershberger cases and the Ohio Civil Liberties Union report on their significance, see Haight, supra note 83.

Interview with James K. Leedy, Prosecuting Attorney for Wayne County, Ohio, in Wooster, Ohio, Jan. 11, 1965.
In some cases the constitutional question has been raised but not reached by the court. See Gingerich v. State, 226 Ind. 678, 83 N.E.2d 47 (1948) (violation of freedom of religion cannot be raised for the first time on appeal). In general the state of Indiana has not appeared receptive to alternative proposals by the Amish. Agricultural-vocational training for Amish children under sixteen has been suggested, but the Attorney General of Indiana ruled that the plan would not, in his opinion, provide “equivalent instruction” to that received in public schools, as required by law. See 28 OPS. IND. ATTY GEN. 140 (1959).

KAN. GEN. STAT. ANN. § 72-4801 (Supp. 1965) reads in part:

That every parent, guardian or other person in the state of Kansas, having control over or charge of any child, who has reached seven years and is under the age of sixteen years, shall require such child to attend continuously a public school or private, denominational or parochial school taught by a competent instructor. . . .

The Garber child had also enrolled in an accredited Chicago correspondence school, which the Kansas court found did not satisfy the statutory requirement of a public, private, denominational or parochial school. 419 P.2d at 900.

At this time the Amish resisted any education, even in Amish schools, for children over fourteen.
Id. at 438. Since the exemption was passed to aid the Amish, the court felt that such a regulation governing the issuance of the permits was unreasonable where it would defeat the very purpose of the exemption. However, the court decided the case on other grounds. Despite the misgivings of the court in Petersheim, the deputy attorney general ruled that the exemption should be narrowly construed, even though he recognized that this result will necessarily bring disappointment to our Amish and Mennonite neighbors. They solicited and secured from the General Assembly of 1939 the amendment which they believed would grant them power to exempt their children above the age of 14 years from the operation of the compulsory school laws.


108 See note 51 supra.


110 70 Pa. D. & C. at 442.

111 Ibid.

112 The state appealed the result, but the appeal was dismissed on the ground that the Commonwealth cannot appeal the acquittal of a criminal defendant. Commonwealth v. Petersheim, 166 Pa. Super. 90, 70 A.2d 395 (1950).


114 Id. at 465, 79 A.2d at 135.

115 The Beiler court noted that the Amish Dordrecht Confession only spoke specifically against university education. See note 51 supra. But since the Amish Bishops had testified that their religion forbade education beyond the eighth grade, the court was willing to accept that as the true position of the faith, declining to decide for a religious group the specifics of its own ideology. 168 Pa. Super. at 466-67, 79 A.2d at 136.

116 Id. at 467, 79 A.2d at 136.

117 Id. at 468, 79 A.2d at 137.
Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

Stansbury v. Marks, 2 U.S. (2 Dall.) 213 (1793).


Ibid.

268 U.S. 510 (1925).

Commonwealth v. Beiler, 168 Pa. Super. 462, 470, 79 A.2d 134, 138 (1951); accord, Commonwealth v. Smoker, 54 Lanc. 181 (1954), aff’d, 177 Pa. Super. 435, 110 A.2d 140 (1955) (Amish beliefs do not provide constitutional grounds for exemption from compulsory school laws). Another Pennsylvania case demonstrates that the Amish are capable of a certain degree of ingenuity, even when they have nominally accepted public education. In Commonwealth v. Schrock, 77 Pa. D. & C. 258 (1951), the issue turned on day-light savings time, which the school observed. The school started at 9:00 A.M. daylight time, and the bus came for defendant’s children at 8:20 A.M. daylight time. Schrock refused to let them take the bus, since it was not there at 8:20 standard time, to which he adhered. Hearing that he was to be prosecuted, Schrock brought his children to school himself at 9:50 daylight time (8:50 standard time). This was a tardiness, and he refused to sign absence and tardy slips for his children on the ground that “there is no school yet according to God’s time, therefore I will not sign.” Id. at 266. The court upheld both the conviction and daylight time, but remitted the fine.

Compare People ex rel. Shapiro v. Dorin, supra note 124. In Shapiro parents were prosecuted under the New York Compulsory Education Act because they sent their children only to a Jewish religious school. The sole teacher did not have the minimum qualifications required, classes were not conducted in English, and no English reading, writing or spelling, arithmetic or American history were taught. The parents' unique interpretation of Jewish law was that it forbade all secular education.

The court commented at length upon the state's interest in a well-educated citizenry, noting that the education a child receives will have bearing on his later ability to take his rightful place in civil society. Next it went on to ask whether it was more important "to our total society, that all children within the realm of our democratic society shall receive a basic secular education . . . than that parents whose religious convictions preclude compliance with our secular education laws, shall be permitted to rear their children exclusively in conformance with their religious conviction." Id. at 651, 99 N.Y.S.2d at 837. The court held that the state's interest must be paramount, taking notice of the fact that it is not possible to place the clerical dogma of all sects above all secular law, particularly when the secular law involved is of such crucial significance to society.


See People ex rel. Wallace v. Labrenz, 411 Ill. 618, 104 N.E.2d 769, cert. denied, 344 U.S. 824 (1952). The court there held that blood transfusions for a child whose life was threatened could be compelled by the state despite the parent's belief that the Bible forbids blood transfusions.


374 U.S. 398 (1963) (unemployment compensation for Seventh Day Adventist who refused to work on Saturday).

It has been suggested that there is a valid distinction to be drawn between laws that require passive acceptance of social norms at odds with religious scruples and laws which require affirmative acts counter to such scruples, with religious scruples "not a defense to the former, but . . . valid as to the latter." Note, 10 ST.
Compulsory vaccination is cited as an example of the passive principle. Compulsory education, however, is affirmative in nature.

Some South Carolina Conservative Amish Mennonites, a group related to the Old Order but allowing their members to have cars, have recently had a South Carolina legislator introduce a bill to exempt them from the requirement of a photograph on drivers’ licenses. Most Amish and Mennonite sects regard the Biblical injunction against graven images as forbidding photographs. Wash. Post, Feb. 16, 1967, p. A-9, cols. 1 & 2.

See notes 52–54 supra and accompanying text.


Ibid.


Ginerich v. Swartzentruber, 22 Ohio N.P. (n.s.) 1, 10 (Holmes County Ct. 1919).
Other Thoughts on the Law

Administrations come and go, politicians’ stars rise and fall, but the work of government goes forward, carried out by professional staffs surprisingly (to those cynical about bureaucracy at least) dedicated, competent, and hard working. To the extent government policy is informed by an institutional memory, it is essentially the memory of the Staff. To the degree there is continuity and consistency in the rulemakings and statutes that emerge from legislative committees and agency hearing rooms, it reflects, to a large degree, the presence and efforts of career employees. Insofar as the “regulatory expertise” to which reviewing courts so often defer actually exists, it resides in the Staff.

These professionals are, often, all that stand between the country’s unsuspecting citizens and their elected representatives or appointed regulators, mindful only of Everett Dirksen’s maxim that the politician’s first duty is to get re-elected. Playing for the next election, the next vote, the temptation to make policy with a view to the popular sentiment of the moment is great indeed. The complexity of the subject, the technical knowledge required to legislate or regulate wisely, the history of an issue, and the long-term consequences of the law or rule or policy at stake often present problems of a sophistication exceeding that of those temporarily in charge, who may well have come to the task by political appointment or by accident, rather than by virtue of experience, training, or formal qualification.

No area of our collective governmental experience demonstrates this reality as well as energy. Highlighted today by the wave of re-
structuring that rippled across the country beginning in the 1990s, the economic complexity of the energy supply, demand, and resource relationship has overwhelmed politicians and regulators in a variety of ways. The results to date—worst in California—are not encouraging. Electricity should not cost ten times more in the wholesale markets of the West than in those of the Midwest and the East. Natural gas, in plentiful supply to meet the needs of decades of future use, should not be subject to volatile prices and extreme spikes. Oil—simply because much of it must come from abroad—should not be a weapon of foreign policy blackmail in the hands of its suppliers and domestic hysteria in the minds of American consumers. Conservation and “green” energy and nuclear power should be exploited, not for political purposes, but to meet realistic economic and environmental objectives. To the extent these issues are addressed and resolved sensibly, we as a people will be indebted to those who, without much public recognition or even awareness, educate and discipline and restrain those decision-makers who appear in the news media to take credit for happy results and lay blame for unhappy ones.

Today’s gasoline-pump prices and rolling blackouts are only the nightly news’ focal point, a kind of media-minimalist take, on the complex and interwoven issues the “energy problem” represents in sum. Consumer expectations and reactions may highlight the news, but the real issues involve the often seemingly irreconcilable interests of the producers (and producing regions) and the consumers. Not merely our own Eastern vs. Western problem, but domestic vs. foreign considerations, from the market manipulations of OPEC and the politics of the Arab world, to the investment alternatives and tax incentives available to American capital, figure in the energy equation. The need to meet the demand created by fuel-guzzling, exhaust-emitting SUVs owned by a public that also wants (or claims to want) pristine natural preserves, reminds the thoughtful that the economics of energy conservation, properly assessed, require a balancing of the costs and the benefits of increased production to meet increased, and sometimes frivolous, demand. How we measure the full cost of the
incremental barrel of oil or kilowatt-hour will also reflect how we, as a people, truly value nature, convenience, and comfort.

Vito Stagliano’s book addresses not only these questions, but also the political implications of resolving them. Why, for example, did the hands-off approach of administrations as different as those of Presidents Reagan and Clinton seem to succeed, while the well-intentioned activism of the Carter and Bush I regimes saw “crisis” only as part of a two-word phrase beginning with “energy?” Bad timing? Regulatory lag? The story told here helps makes sense out of what, on the surface, seems counter-intuitive.

It is also a story both interesting and useful on a variety of levels. Very specifically, it is a history of the National Energy Strategy, finally developed under Secretary of Energy James Watkins in the late 1980’s and legislatively transformed into the Energy Policy Act of 1992, but actually the ultimate response to the Arab oil embargo of 1973. As Stagliano demonstrates, however, the need for such a strategy, and the “crisis” declared in 1973, had even earlier and deeper roots, and our failure to develop a coherent policy before 1973 explains much of what came after including, in part, the Gulf War and its aftermath. This story is a compelling one, compellingly told.

Those interested in energy matters will find it both informative and instructive, a cautionary tale of the dangers of inaction, reaction, and overreaction, specifically illustrated by detailed pictures of those people, moments, and events that led to our present day uncertainty. The still-raging debates include those over the impossible dream of petroleum independence, the need for drilling in the Alaska Natural Wildlife Refuge, as well as under Lake Erie and offshore Florida and California, the renewed development of nuclear power resources and, fittingly enough, the future of windmills. The energy novice and specialist alike will both learn from and be entertained by this unfolding saga of the shaping and mis-shaping of our present energy posture.

But this is not a book for the energy specialist alone. In fact it would be a remarkably good text for political science courses. It is, by analogy, the story of how government policy and regulatory decisions
are often made. It is the story of the interplay of foreign and domestic policies, of external events with profound internal implications. It is the story of political appointments, political ambitions, grandstanding, special interests, and entitlements: the “sausage-making” aspects of legislation Bismarck warned against exposing to the public view. It is also, however, the story of the hard work, intelligence, and dedication that professional staff and enlightened political leaders can bring to bear on difficult subjects, and how those virtues can affect—and effect—national policy.

Most of all, this is the story of the necessity of compromise in public life and political action. Without it, little would happen, and most of that unfortunate. Such compromise is the result of the need to recognize a wide variety of legitimate civic objectives, and the need to reconcile and respect multiple interests and positions. Such a process is necessarily shaped by the personalities—the human qualities—of the participants. Here, too, Stagliano serves us, and history, well. Thus, his book is not only an excellent history of energy policy, and an illuminating case study of the political process, it is a personal record of real people, of how they conducted their professional lives, and used their skills and talents, and were limited as well as freed, by their natures.

One of the small ironies of our time is that for every hundred people who remember that “those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it,” only one can tell us who George Santayana was. So it is too often with the work of dedicated public servants, the fruit of whose efforts we all share, but whose names we do not know. With this book, however, many who will benefit from an expanded understanding of how government works, who will be better informed about what our national energy policy should and can be, will know, with gratitude, Vito Stagliano.

Paul T. Ruxin
Chairman, Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue
Energy Industry Practice Group
Chicago, Illinois, May 2001
[In the following email passages, Paul engages with some of his classmates about certain legal issues and principles. Where his remarks are in direct response to a shared news article, the source is so indicated.]

[Re: “When the Justices Alter the Language of a Decision,” NY Times, May 28, 2014] Scalia is an “originalist” in the sense that he does look to see if the drafters’ original intent can be discerned and applied, but he is neither a fool nor intellectually dishonest, and, with the help of his always brilliant clerks, has become a pretty good historian. He doesn’t make up “original intentions” where there are none to be found, and he doesn’t apply them when it doesn’t make sense to do so. There is no doubt in my mind that if the evidence demonstrated that he had previously been mistaken about a determination of “original intent,” and as a result reached a mistaken decision, he would do what he could to correct it when the opportunity arose. I know him slightly, both as a former member of my law firm, Jones Day, and as a professor at my law school, U VA, and I have talked with him and read many of his opinions, both on the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

It is a gross and foolish error to treat him as some closed-minded ideologue . . . he is a brilliant analytical thinker, with strong opinions, and, like us all, doesn’t reach answers we agree with about everything. As for the letter to the editor . . . well, the writer is an uninformed fool. Supreme Court opinions are not written for the public, they are written for expert professionals, and whether laymen think they are “transparent” or not isn’t very important. Literature also is susceptible to reinterpretation in light of all kinds of things, but, child of the New Curriculum that I am, I try to be a close reader of the text, and seek to understand what the author meant, rather than what feminist theory now tells me it should mean. That makes me an “originalist,” as well as an amateur, reader of books, I guess. (May 28. 2014)

[Re: “Final Word on U.S. Law Isn’t: Supreme Court Keeps Editing,” NY Times May 25, 2014] This is a “dog bites man” story. The changes, about which lawyers have always known, are something like
what happens in publication going from manuscript to galley proofs to page proofs, and everyone knows they are coming until the US Reports volume is finally published. I have never heard of any substantive change in any previously announced result or “holding” of the Court in any opinion (or dissent) due to these generally trivial emendations. This is the kind of irresponsible reporting of a non-problem that makes me so suspicious of the media.

In addition to reporting on a phenomenon the article itself admits has been extant for two-hundred years as if it were newly-discovered evidence of dishonesty, it suggests something malicious about catching and fixing errors or slightly tweaking an argument to make it stronger (but not change its direction), and illustrates it with a picture of the media’s second favorite arch enemy conservative Justice, Scalia (evil second only to Clarence Thomas), when it could have used a picture of the full Court (they all do it), or the Court as constituted when the first official portrait of all the Justices was taken (the 1870s maybe).

(May 28, 2014)

“. . . And in thinking through these considerations, how much should our answers be influenced by evidence and how much by ideology? Is it ever possible for an ideological conclusion to actually be influenced by evidence? The current debate over minimum wage for instance is filled with all kinds of claims and counter-claims, but do you see a way of sorting through this thicket by using actual empirical data (helping workers versus eroding employment)? . . . Answers that don’t fairly account for both ideology and evidence will always be suspect. It is important to have principles but it is also important to face facts and reality, and not cut off your nose to spite your face (or your neighbor’s face). Most problems like the “right” minimum wage are soluble by first determining what it is you want to accomplish, and then examining the best way to do that, no less and no more. Party politics and rhetoric muddy many waters that by themselves run pretty clear. (May 28, 2014)
OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE LAW

[Re: “Reason #1 SCOTUS Will Regret Hobby Lobby,” DailyKos, July 3, 2014] Lawyers can make arguments about anything, and this kind of argument by these kind of people helped propel me into retirement. The first amendment runs both ways, but secularists only think about the establishment clause, and resent the free exercise clause. Hobby Lobby is a very narrowly written decision by five Justices who respect and practice religious beliefs. None of the dissenters do, but the scope of the decision is so particularly focused on the free exercise clause that thinking it pierces the corporate veil is a distortion of its plain meaning. This argument is nonsense, which, unfortunately will not prevent many lawyers from using it to clog court dockets with meritless cases. There are literally hundreds of cases recognizing the right to be exempt from any number of laws which would violate the first amendment rights of individuals, which is what this decision actually says. (July 7, 2014)

Yes, I saw the movie [Boyhood], and enjoyed it, especially for the time-lapse, but found it pales beside Michael Apted’s 7 Up, which, starting in 1964 has filmed the same people every seven years, tracing their real-life path from childhood to late middle-age. As to Ms. Arquette’s education, I believe she is a high-school dropout, although that neither limits her right to express her opinion nor, in and of itself, disqualifies it from deserving a hearing. I meant only that given the limited time we all have, and interest, and attention, listening to her view of a subject—the original intent of the drafters of the Constitution, which the justices of the Supreme Court can’t even agree on—so complex the most profound and authoritative scholars of it cannot agree on answers is a waste of time.

I do believe that everyone is entitled to his opinion across the board, but also the corollary that the rest of us are under no obligation to listen to or consider its expression. Movie award shows as building blocks of important political speech—gender equality, immigration policy, Native American rights (pace Marlon Brando)—is an absurdity. As Justice Marshall said in its early life, we ought not forget that
the Constitution is a living organic thing; this does not, of course, mean we are free to ignore its plain meanings, or distort its words, only that they be reasonably interpreted in light of changed circumstances, and amended, as it provides, if circumstances become incompatible with the existing text. Ms. Arquette’s world view is her own, but I choose not to adopt it as a guide to the need for constitutional reform. (February 24, 2015)

When I was at Amherst, I was, or so I was told, a “conservative,” but when I went on to Charlottesville for law school, without changing any of my positions, I was deemed a “liberal,” although those specific shorthand designations weren’t really in use then. I don’t think of myself as either, although it’s clear from our exchanges that some of you see me as a “conservative,” mostly those who seem happy to self-identify as “liberal,” or, more current jargon, “progressive” (perhaps because to me many who so identify seem neither “liberal” nor “progressive” (at least within the classic, i.e., eighteenth century, definitions of those words)).

Thus I find these labels mostly useless, a lazy way to avoid articulating in any depth deeply held positions. And that is what bothers me, the willingness of both sides to demonize the other for disagreeing, to assume that it, and it alone, is the receiver of revealed truth, that the other side lacks intellectual integrity or a consistent set of moral principles. Even the way the same question is framed differently by both sides is often suggestive of this assumption of bad faith or evil intent.

The easiest example of this is abortion. The secularists/liberals/progressives/feminists/libertarians (pick your label) insist that this is a matter solely between the pregnant woman and her doctor, and, perhaps, her partner. The conservative/religiously orthodox/life-itself-is-sacred believe, deeply, that there is a God who is the creator, that human life begins at conception, that “sin” is real, that human obligations to God’s laws trump (sorry—the former sense of the word) the “right to choose,” which to Scalia-thinkers stems from a series of judicial activism, wrongly decided, constitutional misreadings that first
created a “right to privacy” (not mentioned in the Constitution) and then proceeded down the slippery slope to the (also not-mentioned) “right to choose.”

The problem is that neither side can concede that arguments about this (and about taxation, government regulation, climate change . . . the list goes on) are complex, have no simple answers, and that an opposing view can be held both in good faith and with intellectual integrity. Labels are unworthy of the education we were privileged to receive. Substantive discussions, not arguments, are worthy indeed, and reason for the once-fairest college to resume some sort of curriculum discipline and impose it on those remarkably diverse students, no matter how they resist being told what they need to know. (March 9, 2016)
PART IV

A Miscellany of Paul Speaking His Mind
A Miscellany of Paul Speaking His Mind

These ten pieces cover an array of Paul’s concerns and interests, especially his strong affection for his alma mater, Amherst College. The form here is often epistolary and, in the instance of chapters 27 and 29, a series of emails that Paul composed over the last several years has been organized to reflect his most recent critiques of events in our society and the shape and demands of curriculum at the post-secondary level of education. Here he took an important leadership role in helping galvanize the views of his 1965 classmates regarding how their education might inform current learning requirements at the College. Finally, included are Paul’s “self-reflections” written for his twenty-fifth and fiftieth reunion celebrations.
Sarah Ruhl

2008 Robert Frost Library Fellow

The Robert Frost Fellowship program was the inspired idea of the Friends’ extraordinary founder and Chairman Emeritus, Jack W.C. Hagstrom ’55, in 1971. The first fellow was Charles Carrington in 1972, and the original notion was to bring a noted scholar to the college for a brief residency—usually a week or two—and extend the benefits of a one-way lecture to a series of dialogues among and with students, faculty, and staff. Sponsored by a faculty department, in alternating years, the Fellow was intended to bring to various academic disciplines an outside perspective not easily seen by those fortunate enough to be resident at Amherst. Originally the Frost Fellows were all nominated and sponsored by the English Department, but Jack Hagstrom’s successor, Sam Ellenport ’65, Chairman Emeritus, opened things up, and Frost Fellows have since included among others, Mariane Constable, an authority on interdisciplinary legal scholarship, renowned artist Michael Mazur and printer Robert Townsend, and economist Franco Modigliani, in addition to first magnitude stars from the universe of literature, including James Merrill and Helen Vendler.

The 2008 Robert Frost Library Fellow was, however, a first—or rather two firsts—in this long tradition. For the first time a dramatist was invited, sponsored by the Theater & Dance Department. And Sarah Ruhl, born in 1974, is surely the youngest Frost Fellow. She is, however, among the most distinguished. A graduate of Brown, (A.B. 1997, M.F.A 2001) she has also studied at Pembroke College, Oxford. The range of her work is extraordinary, including the romantic com-
edy, The Clean House, which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2005, Dead Man's Cell Phone, with a comic premise that turns into something very different, and Passion Play, an explanation in different eras of what a passion play might be and mean. In The Next Room (or The Vibrator Play) opened this year at Berkeley Rep. These and other plays represent an extraordinary body of work for a playwright of any age, to say nothing of one so young, and recognition of her gift has come from The MacArthur Foundation, which awarded her one of its “genius” fellowships in September of 2006. Perhaps even more extraordinary given the brief length of her career, the plays are the subject of a lengthy retrospective by the critic John Lahr in a 2008 New Yorker study.

During her stay at Amherst the Theater & Dance Department produced Ruhi’s play Eurydice, written while she was doing graduate work at Brown, and first produced in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003. Her take on the Orpheus myth, described by Charles Isherwood in 2006 as “devastatingly lovely,” considers loss, and death, and love in an extraordinary contemporary—and timeless—moment. Amherst’s production, arranged by Professor Suzanne Dougan, was performed in the Holden Theater for three nights, November 13-15, following Sarah Ruhl’s residency during the week of November 8. Eurydice’s father was played by Peter Lobdell, ’68, currently Senior Resident Artist in the Theater & Dance Department. All the other parts were taken by current Amherst students, including Lisa Smith ’09, in the title role, in a performance the playwright herself said fulfilled her own vision of the role. Orpheus was portrayed by Kalan Rutstein ’11. Making this an even more complete Amherst production were the costumes and sets by Scott Dougan, ’04 (and son of Prof. Dougan) and lighting by Kathy Couch, ’05. The playwright was also a consultant to the final polishing of the production before its opening.

Friday night, November 14, the Friends were privileged to hear Sarah Ruhl give a moving address after our annual dinner. While she began by saying she would have a few remarks about “poetry, playwriting and the strange pathway between them,” she talked, too, about her father, Patrick Ruhl, ’63, “who went to Amherst, and who loved this
place dearly.” *Eurydice*, she told us, was written while she was “moving from poetry,” a love which she shared with her father, “to playwriting,” a love which must in part have come from her mother, Kathy Kehoe Ruhl, Smith ’64. *Eurydice* began with a poem Sarah Ruhl wrote at age 21, called “Advice from a Father to His Daughters,” and that poem became a monologue from father to daughter in the play. Knowing more about the genesis of the play, and seeing it in Amherst no doubt contributed to the emotional impact it surely had on Friends and the rest of the Amherst audience.

In creating the Robert Frost Library Fellowship, Jack Hagstrom had, no doubt, great hopes that this ongoing project of the Friends would contribute to one of his original goals for our group, “to encourage in every way possible gifts of books and manuscripts—gifts in kind—to the library.” He did not likely anticipate what has happened this year. Sarah Ruhl much enjoyed her time on the campus—she found the students “both smart and nice! A rarity in the modern world.” But she also found the experience more than “the great honor” she felt it was; it was also something that inspired her to want to give something back to Amherst in honor of her father. Rejecting other possibilities she decided that “something without monetary value might be [best], like some early drafts of *Eurydice* and some early manuscripts of poems of mine to go to the library.” Ever modest, she went on to say, “I feel presumptuous even offering, as I’m very young to have a file at the library, but I would be honored to give the first set of my papers to Amherst if you would have them. And I know that it would have made my father happy to think of them there.”

With help of Will Bridegam and others, the Robert Frost Library, long a repository rich in the working papers of giants in literature and the arts, including theater, will now house the beginnings of the Sarah Ruhl archive. As we hope the delivery of the original installment of her papers will be followed by more, it will become a great resource for the study of this brilliant star of American Theater, a young woman who feels she owes something to Amherst, but to whom Amherst, and the Friends, now owe a great deal more.
A Fan’s Note

Conversations with a craftsman are, with the right craftsman, wonderful opportunities to be both entertained and informed. That opportunity provides even greater rewards if the craft under discussion is one in which the listener (for the conversations reported here are really more monologues than dialogues, although the speakers answer many questions you would ask) is profoundly interested. The conversations with Sam Ellenport and Ron Gordon, the craftsmen who speak in this book, are thus likely to be of especially great interest, and will provide very great reward, to bibliophiles everywhere. By bibliophiles, of course, I do not mean merely those who love books. This is not the place to engage in that tired faux-Manichaean debate over whether e-books mean the end of printed books. Of course they do not. But this is a place for those whose love of books extends to books as objects in themselves, and fascination with how those objects are made.

Books can be made carelessly and poorly, but they can also be beautifully made, and made to be beautiful, quite apart from their content. The hand binder and the designer/printer who speak in these pages have much to tell us, for they are master craftsmen indeed. We ought to recognize at the outset, however, that although their work is indeed often beautiful, they choose not to refer to it as “art,” let alone “Art,” but instead to refer to their crafts, and to themselves as craftsmen, not artists. This choice is not an insignificant or unpremeditated way for the two of them to think and speak. And it is representative of what makes what they do, and the way the two
of them in particular do it, worth reading.

Our time is marked not merely by advances in technology, but also by how that technology has changed not only the way we do things, but also the way we expect things to happen, the experiences of life. “How fast,” is now an element of most choices; faster is usually assumed to be “better.” Better or not, so is louder—music, movies, everything is amplified and accelerated, and, as a result, we have more, but we also have less. Mies van der Rohe was right; in the book world the slower pace, the quiet solitary workmanship of the binder and designer result in a product that demands our attention, and holds it in the same peaceful contemplation as that in which the work was done. As you read what follows you will no doubt be struck by the similarities that emerge. I believe that these similarities are tied in their essence to both the subject of their work and the two workers themselves. First, of course, is modesty, the modesty that constrains them from describing themselves as artists, or artists as much as craftsmen. While our culture seems to rank artistry above craftsmanship, in fact at their level craftsmanship combines utility with aesthetic achievement, and by combining the two surpasses common notions of the relative standing of either. Then too, books are inherently modest objects, made of simple materials—paper, ink, leather or cloth. It is craftsmanship that can elevate these common things into beautiful, useful objects that provide both intellectual and sensual pleasures.

Both Sam and Ron also remark on the challenge of identifying and solving a problem in an efficient way as one of the sources of joy in their work. Ron, for example, found ways to adopt new technologies in the interests of efficiency and commercial demands, without compromising his standards of beautiful design and composition. Both also speak to the pleasure they have found in teaching their crafts to the next generation, and the one after that. They are, and they see themselves as, stewards of traditions now hundreds of years old, and they each emphasize how understanding these traditional practices is both necessary to, and an element of, meeting the highest standards of their crafts.
A FAN’S NOTE

On a personal note, for readers who do not share my good fortune in knowing them (in my case for more than fifty years), it is worth recognizing here that they are good, gentle and soft-spoken men. They share many of the same pleasures, and bring to their lives and those of their families the same careful devotion, the same focus on the moment, the same gift of time carefully spent, and most of all the same generosity of spirit and sharing of knowledge that has so enhanced their work over the years. It has been a pleasure to “collaborate” with them, as Ron says, from time to time as a participatory client, and an even greater pleasure and privilege to see the results of their craftsmanship and to begin to appreciate the processes of hand and mind that produce them.

[Chicago, 2011]
29 December 2006

Dear Sam—

We found your lovely surprise waiting for us in San Francisco, having spent the plane ride out reading Lillian de la Torre. Your thoughtfulness knows no bounds, and the babies had not the slightest objection to dressing like their elders. Our visit was wonderful, if again too brief. Joanne seems to grieve every time we leave them. And so we return so frequently. We’ll all be together again in February in Cabo San Lucas [their time share in Mexico].

Wonderful as your gifts are, I trust you know I value your friendship even more. Thus I hope and believe I know that your own family, especially Vivian, brings you the same joy ours does to us. The compensations of age may be few, but family and friendship are chief among them, all improving with time.

With great affection,

Paul
Dear Sam,

We found your lovely surprise waiting for us in San Francisco, having spent the plane ride out reading Gillian de Lannoy. Your thoughtfulness knows no bounds, and the babies had not the slightest objection to dressing like their elders. Our visit was wonderful if again too brief. Joanne seems to gripe every time we leave now. And so we hate so frequently. We'll all be together again in February in Cabo San Lucas.

Wonderful as your gifts are, I trust you know I value your friendship even more. Thus I hope and believe I know that your own family, especially Vivian, brings you the same joy ours does to us. The compensations life may be few, but family and friendship are chief among them all, improving with time -

With great affection,

Paul T. Ruxin
29 December 2004

The trip Paul refers to is a visit to his son and family in San Francisco just before New Year’s. I had printed a number of t-shirts with the text “EX LIBRIS/GRAMPA PAUL.” They were a hit with the family and, on a later visit to Paul in Chicago, the picture on the previous page shows him with his grandson wearing the t-shirt as I looked on. — SBE
Dear Sam—

There is no adequate way to thank you for Foliomania, except to acknowledge that friendship, like true craftsmanship, is rare and beautiful. If our friendship is a source of your beautiful work, which you so graciously have shared, then the combination is even more rare, and more precious. Of course I will treasure this always.

And while I will carry out your charge to deliver it to Gail, probably at our October meetings, it will be hard—dishonest, nearly—to represent it as a gift from the wider Folger family. It is, uniquely, yours, and I am sure she will treasure it for that reason all the more.

You are as good and generous a man as I know, and my gratitude extends to every aspect of our deepening friendship.

May get to the Friends in October; long odds, but I’ll try.

Paul
“This second letter dates from a time when Paul was Chair of the Folger Board. Gail Paster was retiring. In her last year, the Folger produced a book entitled Foliomania (see previous page). As the name implies, it was all about the first folios in the collection. I secretly bound two copies, one for Paul and one for him to give to Gail as a gift from the Board.” — SBE
Attending Paul's talk on "Boswell's Books," given at the Grolier Club in 2006, are Ron Gordon, Umit Dugha, Sam Ellenport, Paul, and Jack Hagstrom, all members of the Friends of the Amherst College Library.
Beginnings of the Johnsonian News Letter

[Note: “Those who have known of the impending revival of the Johnsonian News Letter have been exceedingly generous in offering contributions. One contribution has arrived in the form of a letter from Paul Ruxin of Chicago, a member of the Johnsonians and a collector of Johnsonian books and manuscripts. We are most grateful not only for the information but also for the highly encouraging salutation offered the new editors as they begin their turn at the helm of the ship designed by Jim Clifford some sixty-three years ago.” — Robert DeMaria, Amherst ’70]

Dear Sir,

As you know, I recently acquired a complete set of the Johnsonian News Letter. Having perused numerous issues, I wish to make the following report on the history of this distinguished publication.

The JNL was born at the business meeting of an MLA Group called “English VIII: Literary Tendencies during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century” (10.15-10.45, December 28, 1940). Presumably, it was sometime shortly before then that James Clifford, then of Lehigh University, circulated a single mimeographed page entitled “A Proposed 18th Century News Letter.” As chairman of the research committee for this group, Clifford proposed a newsletter “designed as an informal medium for exchange of ideas among eighteenth century research scholars.” At “irregular intervals, a minimum of four or five times a year,” he suggested, he would distribute mimeographed sheets
of information. “Scholars interested in receiving each issue would be asked to make an annual payment of $1.00 (or 50¢).”

Professor Clifford proposed that the contents might include such things as requests for aid in research, reports of discoveries of items of interest, auctions of unprinted manuscripts, news about the progress of W.P.A. and other projects, reports from English scholars, and “personal news of our own members.” Such an undertaking, he noted, would have to be a “cooperative enterprise,” its value depending upon “the numbers and importance of the queries and news items sent in by subscribers.” He therefore solicited indications of a “willingness to cooperate.”

The responses must have been encouraging, because, as the *PMLA* for 1940 reported, the project “was undertaken” in the aforementioned meeting. Clifford acted immediately, producing a volume dated for that very month, although he could not have returned from the site of the MLA meeting in Cambridge to his home in Pennsylvania before the night of December 28th. Volume I, Number 1 consisted of four single-sided 8 ½ x 11 mimeographed pages, two of which contained a list of topics of ongoing research by members of Group VIII (only four of twenty-eight dealing directly with Johnson). The other two pages, typed in double column, contain ten “articles,” varying in length from 1 ½ columns (describing several W.P.A. projects under way, including guides to various manuscript collections and depositories), to just a few lines of “Eighteenth-Century Repartee”:

When “Athenian” Stuart once said, “Painting is my Wife, I think, and Architecture my Mistress,” Frank Hayman replied, “What pity ’tis then, Sir, that you have no living issue by either!”

Other items included nostalgia for the good old days of a smaller MLA and marathon discussions of literary matters; reports on books in progress; a contest offering a free subscription to the News Letter “to the person who submits the most amusing error of fact in the DNB account of any Eighteenth Century figure”; information about
manuscript material offered by Quaritch; and requests for original letters of Anna Seward. In short, the first issue reflected closely what the prospectus had envisioned.

So it continued, through Volume LIII (1993). This volume and LII (1992), a total of five numbers, are contained in a single issue of 112 pages. Volume V, Number 4 saw the adoption of the 5 x 8 octavo size; 1946 saw the switch from mimeo to veritype; and the 1950s, the change to offset printing. As editor, Professor Clifford was followed by John H. Middendorf, and the JNL grew to include an increasing number of reviews, reports on conferences, and Johnsonian groups and activities.

Throughout the years of publication, beginning during World War II when the future of England was itself in question, the JNL has been, obviously, a labor of love. The eighteenth century, for readers and contributors, has been affectionately, even passionately, perceived as a time when civilization (at least in certain strata of society) was at its most civilized. As for the JNL itself, the first series, as perhaps in this new incarnation, represents the achievement of an ambition expressed best by Robert Frost, who wrote:

My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future’s sakes.
[“Two Tramps in Mud Time”]

So, it is to be hoped, this too will, like the original, be a “cooperative” effort of contributors and readers, for all of whom Johnson represents the unity of vocation and avocation, where love and need are one, and the work is indeed play for mortal stakes.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL T. RUXIN
Every-body must allow that our Newspapers (and the other Collections of Intelligence periodically published) by the Materials they afford for Discourse and Speculation, contribute very much to the edification of Society; their Cheapness brings them into universal use; their variety adapts them to every one’s taste...
TO THE EDITOR:

James Boswell’s father, Alexander, who was the equivalent of a Supreme Court justice in 18th century Scotland, believed that James Macpherson had in fact “translated” the poems of “Ossian” from ancient manuscripts in the “Gallic language.” This was a belief held by a man professionally expert in assessing evidence, a belief held despite all rational evidence to the contrary.

And so it is with John Paul Stevens (“By the Book,” April 6), committed denier that William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon and London wrote the plays “attributed” to him by his own contemporaries, including his fellow actors Heminges and Condell and Ben Jonson, and by all serious scholarship since. Justice Stevens ought to read “Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?,” by James Shapiro, but perhaps even that would not change his mind. One is thankful not to have to appear before either Lord Auchinleck or Justice Stevens in a case where reasonable doubt is the issue.

PAUL T. RUXIN

Chicago, Illinois

The writer is the former chairman and a current member of the board of governors of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
To the Editor:

JOSEPH Epstein is, as always, engaging, provocative, and articulate in his ruminations on his, and our, ultimate demise. Samuel Johnson said, “Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight it concentrates his mind wonderfully,” thus permitting the man time to ponder, rather than merely panic about, that end point.

Johnson also offers support for Mr. Epstein’s conclusion that for most of us there are merely a few “people who will truly mind, genuinely mourn” our deaths. When asked by Boswell if he would eat dinner on the day that one of his “intimate friends” were to be hanged, Johnson replied: “Yes, Sir; and eat it as if he were eating it with me. Why, there’s Baretti [an intimate friend of both of them], who is to be tried for his life tomorrow, friends have risen up for him on every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind.”

Mr. Epstein’s essay goes far in establishing sympathetic feelings that, rather than depress, comfort us with the universality of our predicament.

PAUL T. RUXIN

Chicago, Illinois
Reflections on Professor Theodore Baird

22 January 2006

Jack [Hagstrom ’55],

You have been much in my thoughts, wondering as I am about your Charlottesville experience and your health, first, and this week especially about your reaction to the Baird book edited by Bill Prichard, *English at Amherst: A History*. In particular, of course, I am curious about your reaction to Baird’s various reminiscences of Frost, and his obvious ambiguity of feelings toward a man he seems to have both disliked and yet respected. My own memories of Baird are mostly tinged with bewilderment shades. He and his wife were kind to me and a freshman year friend when he caught us one evening snooping around his famous Frank Lloyd Wright house. They invited us in for tea and a tour, and were all warmth.

In class he was distant, sour, stuck in an ironic mode that sometimes seemed artificial. His comments on my English 1-2 papers were inevitably sarcastic, and, as I recall, seldom helpful. His insights have not stayed with me. Yet many years later and a few years before his death we began a slight correspondence—now at the Frost—and his letters were warm and inviting. For all that, this book, and the other—*The Most of It*—thrill me. I recognize the voice, and it is clear and deliberate and controlled. Flashes of subtle humor, of brilliant connections and shrewdness fill it, or rather both of them.
Almost more than anything else Baird’s books make me wish I had paid more attention, taken greater advantage of those four years, of that place, and those people. I spent too many hours indulging whatever whim I had about what I wanted to read, or hear or do. I spent too little energy in an intensity of study that would, I now believe, have served me better than my self-indulgence. Baird makes fun—sort of—at the notion that Amherst (or any school) is a place that “teaches you to think,” but even for slackers like me, who didn’t actually try serious thinking until later, that was its gift, and received subliminally or not, I am grateful.

In any event I am anxious to hear your reaction to this new book by that iconic ironic irascible inventive man. And, of course, to hear good reports of your health.

Joanne joins me in sending best wishes for the new year.

Paul

[Note: See Appendix II for Prof. Baird’s letters to Paul.]
[Until early in the 21st century, Paul was an enthusiastic supporter of Amherst College, an institution he loved and worked hard to support. Indeed, he was awarded the Medal for Eminent Service by the college in 2007. However, his feelings began to change during that first decade and by 2013 Paul’s growing disillusionment with the choices being made by Amherst’s Administration came to a head. Some college decisions were attributed to the consequences of the crash of 2008, where financial pressures forced the reconsideration of campus building plans which would have made a new Library a priority. A squeeze on college finances was also the reason given for the freeze on faculty hires. Yet the Administration continued to grow rapidly with additional layers of bureaucracy and new, non-faculty programs and staff. Paul had committed much time pressing for a modern Library as well as defending upgrades to the existing one. Through his role as Vice Chairman of the Friends of the Amherst College Library as well as through direct contact with the Administration and Trustees, Paul made a strong case against the creation of a proposed Humanities Center within the Library. Over the objections of Paul and a large number of faculty, students and alumni, the Center was ultimately placed within the Library at the expense of many faculty and student carrels and study spaces. Another result was that tens of thousands of books (mostly from the holdings in the Classics) were relegated to off-site storage, inaccessible for browsing.

During this period, Paul was Chairman of the Folger Library’s Board of Governors. The goal of bringing the College and the Folger closer together, encouraged by the Trustees and the Administration, also proved frustrating.
when no concrete steps were taken. Building bonds between the two related institutions proved to be lip-service only. Paul was also dismayed at the watering down of the academic aspects of the Folger Fellowships which he had been instrumental in founding through his role in The Friends of the Amherst College Library.

In 2013, the compounding of these dissatisfactions led Paul to take a strong stance in opposition to a College policy. Throughout his career, he was profoundly committed to free speech at the College, especially at the level of addressing ideas foreign to one’s own. Paul stepped forcefully into the debate, coming to the aid of Paul Ehrmann who held the position of Class Secretary ’65 for decades. His class notes, written with insight and wit, contained material which the editor of the Alumni Magazine believed overstepped the bounds of political correctness. Ehrmann was returned to his rightful post, however, as a result of arguments Paul made in his letter to the editor and other pressures put on the Administration.

Ms. Boutilier [Editor of the Alumni Magazine],

You have, no doubt inadvertently, started a firestorm by deleting a few humorous and harmless, and in fact very clever lines from Paul Ehrmann’s last submission of Class Notes. It is no exaggeration to say that a very substantial number of class members are outraged by what is variously characterized as censorship, editing, extreme and absurd political correctness, and utter humorlessness. It may well be all of these on your part, but those sentences of Paul’s were not the kind of mean-spirited personal opinion or disparagement or bigotry the class agents’ guidelines, which you invoked, are intended, correctly, to prevent. You probably do not know Paul, nor members of our class, or the great esteem, affection and gratitude we hold and feel for him and for his efforts on our (and the College’s) behalf. Even the most “progressive” members of our class, eager to share in the celebration of the matters President Martin referred to in her letter, have been disappointed and angered by the deletions proposed from what all of us saw as simply clever and entertaining, the kind of writing Amherst
taught, and the kind of thinking it taught us to respect, whether or not we agreed with the conclusions. If the *Class Notes* in the *Magazine* are to be anything more than bland reports of death and divorce and progeny, that is, if they are to mean anything about our ties to each other and our education, you must reconsider, or risk alienating from the College they love, a very large number of some of Amherst’s most loyal sons. I hope you will be willing to take another look and admit that your proposal was both unnecessary and unwise. Thank you.

Paul Ruxin
*(September 20, 2013)*

*[In June, 2014 the Amherst College administration under the direction of President Biddy Martin distributed a preliminary version of a document meant to encourage discussion of the future direction of the institution ([Strategic Planning—Amherst College, 2014](#))]. Numerous alumni came forward with a variety of critiques and suggestions. Along with many members of his Class of 1965, Paul believed this to be an important opportunity to voice concern about Amherst’s “open” curriculum, a curriculum in which students had no course requirements or pre-requisites. He was convinced that a thoughtful re-examination of teaching and learning would strengthen the campus community by incorporating common courses of inquiry. Such common courses would capture the rich diversity among the student body, faculty and administration; they would also create a common intellectual experience shared by each Class of students. The following selections from Paul’s emails outline his curriculum ideas and his attempt to engage in a dialogue with Amherst’s Administration.

Paul’s preliminary thoughts addressed classmates as well as several Trustees. Criticisms of the College proposals were many, though these writings show more than a critique; they show a path towards positive and practical commitments to the formation of an educational philosophy that could put Amherst, once again, at the forefront of American Colleges and Universities. Many of these ideas formed the basis of the introduction to the
Some of my classmates and I are working on a response to the invitation to comment on the strategic plan. If we can agree, we may begin with an introduction something like the following, with specific comments on the various sections of the proposal. In general, though, the astonishing use of clichés, standard “plan-speak,” and content-less phrases suggests an Amherst where learning to read and write is not only never taught, but has ceased to be valued. While there is some material with which we agree, obviously, our over-all reaction is that this is not worthy of the place we love.

A strategic plan for Amherst must make an initial choice between two paths. It can either project an Amherst that is a better version of what it is, and define what would make it better, and how to achieve those improvements, or it can present a plan for an Amherst that is fundamentally different, that focuses on both different inputs, with expectations of different results and outputs. The plan we are asked to consider has chosen the latter course. Rather than asking what is necessary to insure an education that is most likely to produce graduates capable of intellectually rigorous analyses of a variety of evidence in a variety of fields, and how to attract both the faculty and student body capable of producing that result, and then defining the resources and curriculum and pedagogical processes necessary to enable that final product, the plan focuses on producing more narrowly focused graduates who have less of a shared and disciplined background, and a narrower vision that puts the cart of specific “research” before the horse of learning to apply critical thinking in a broad array of traditional humanities studies, the traditional role of an undergraduate liberal arts college. It envisions an Amherst where your origins are more important than what happens once you arrive, where marginal concerns about non-substantive matters and vague, largely undefinable values such as “communication,” and “diversity,” unsusceptible to rigorous definition or study, overwhelm the importance of
hard work, intellectual struggle and concrete results. We reject this vision of an Amherst become something else, something different, rather than something better.

We may never agree, and may never submit any comments, but I wanted you to know that the focus on “research,” “internationalization,” and other vague concepts seems to come at the expense of a detailed discussion of curriculum, classroom engagement, and a commonality of intellectual experience, including not least of all some core curricula (in fact, the plan seems to intentionally, and even proudly, disclaim any analysis of the value or content of the curriculum, “open” or otherwise). I leave to others whether “liberal arts research college” is an oxymoron, but I know that many of my classmates went on to distinguished careers in science and medicine, as well as academia and the professions, having understood that their grounding was in the humanities, and that Amherst did not need to be some minor-league MIT or Harvard to permit that result. Should not a plan for the College address directly the value of the humanities in providing for a richer intellectual and emotional life after college, and how to shape four years of residence to maximize that impact? (To Classmates and Trustees, June 5, 2014)

The materials we have seen are not a draft of a strategic plan at all, but a messy, undisciplined, poorly written discussion of issues. A strategic plan, and I have worked on many in both the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, must be very specific to be useful at all—a set of focused, achievable goals, with the necessary specific strategies, timetables and budgets to reach them. If what we say doesn’t recognize that we understand the distinction, it will not get much attention. And it may not in any event. If 1% of the alumni respond, that will be about 220 responses, and I would guess the number will be higher. To get attention, responses will have to be pithy, concise (sorry if that is a redundancy) and specific. I want a plan that identifies a goal for e.g., class size, curriculum, distribution requirements, the integration of the “diverse” student body in meaningful ways, achieving excellence
in intellectual work, faculty-student interaction, the creation of a Library worthy of Amherst. . . . I want a goal for each of these, and a strategy and timetable and budget to get there, and metrics to measure whether these goals have been achieved. But I confess I don’t yet have way to convey this that will get any serious attention. Still thinking. Responding in detail to each of the points within the four broad topics would be ideal, but it would be too long, too complicated and too frustrating and would be ignored. Short of that, I’m struggling. (To Classmates, June 10, 2014)

Perhaps you remember, with me, Dean C. Scott Porter addressing us during freshman orientation. He said something like “You boys (yes, boys) know so little you don’t even know what you don’t know, and so your parents sent you to us to teach you . . . that is why, for two years at least, we’ll tell you what you need to know, and you’ll just trust us.” [This proclaimed] an appropriate assessment of how dumb we were, an assertion of authority over, rather than deference to, us, and a dedication to the very “disruption” about to be imposed on our smug, high-school star selves. And the faculty agreed, and acted accordingly. [Professors] Baird and Arons and Zeigler did not suffer fools, and it was their mission to educate us, not to use us to further their interests. That Amherst, I guess, is gone. No strategic plan likely to be proposed will even consider bringing any part of it back. (To Classmates, June 11, 2014)

[From these emails among Classmates, Paul’s ideas began to coalesce and form an increasingly coherent argument for the type of education he felt the College should be offering. Comments through the summer of 2014 not only rejected the idea of Amherst as a “research college” but also moved towards constructive proposals of what a Liberal Arts education meant and how it might be accomplished in the twenty-first century. The following email, addressed to the Administration, is a summation of Paul’s writings to Classmates. Paul then began to draft a foreword to what would become a much more detailed curriculum proposal crafted by]
We have a mixed reaction to the preliminary discussion of potential strategic planning issues that has been presented for comment. Understanding that what has been presented is not a draft Strategic Plan, we hope that what is finally produced will be a set of clearly stated Goals, with very specific action steps or strategies for achieving them, timelines, budgets, and metrics for measuring progress. Without such apparatus, there will be a list of desiderata, of no real use. What disappoints us now is that we do not know who has written what parts of this disjointed, undisciplined, vague, cliché-ridden, redundant and predictable set of discussions, or why they failed to address seriously what Amherst needs to do to remain a model for education in the Humanities and Science, i.e., training in both the substance of, and analytical skills necessary to, evaluate evidence of all sorts in the context of rigorous thought and a knowledge of our cultural, historical, and shared past. An Amherst education must stand for something specific and concrete, and we believe that something must be training in how to read, write and think about society’s problems in ways most likely to lead to the best solutions available in our times. . . .

We do not pretend to know what a “research college” is, although it sounds ominously like an oxymoron. We recognize that there is now, as there was not when we were students, a lamentable “publish or perish” cloud hanging over the academic job market. That said, and understanding that research in various forms is an essential part of scholarly and intellectual work, we believe that in a strategic plan, Amherst should clearly have as a goal not some “unequal partners” relationship between faculty and students, where students learn in part by helping faculty, but the reaffirmation of a relationship where faculty must disrupt the students’ notions of what they know, and need to know, challenge them, teach them how to learn, and what to learn. The great non-publishing faculty of the past—e.g., the Bairds, the Arons, the Zieglers—did not need or want the help of their students to pursue their own profound intellectual achievements, and the ones who were
prolific—e.g., the DeMotts, the Pritchards—no doubt would have looked askance at student contributions to what was inevitably and inimitably their own work.

Central to much of what a Strategic Plan should be is what resources, what assets, are necessary to achieve the goals. It is distressing indeed, to us, that there is no suggestion that the College build a Library that is the Humanities equivalent of the much-need Science Center about to be under construction. A Library worthy of Amherst will pay proper respect to physical books, to special collections and archives, but it will—it must—also be the most advanced home for technology that facilitates learning. Classrooms, study spaces, meeting places, equipment of the most advanced types must be identified and, planned for and properly used. A Strategic Plan for the College will lay out the details of what such a Library/Humanities Center will be, and how to build it.

Finally, what we want is a document that rather than focus on the difference among those who come there, specifies as a Goal that those who leave will have had an Amherst education that means they have had shared experiences enough while they were there that they feel bound together, as we do, not by specific expertise, but by a way of approaching thinking, and life itself. That way will have been informed, among other things, by a common familiarity with the best that has been thought and written and created in a variety of disciplines. The ultimate Plan must at last address the shameful failure of the College for many years to impose on students who come knowing very little a set of courses which they will study together, and which will expose them in a disciplined way to a range of subjects without knowledge of which their later lives will be impoverished. An Amherst education once meant something identifiable to all who were fortunate to have had it, not disparate experience and learned modes of thought that reflected the difference they brought to Amherst, but, instead, the commonality they took away.

We hope for such a Plan. (To the Administration, June 18, 2014)
[The final Strategic Plan document submitted by the Class of 1965 dropped the notion of “research college.” Paul, among many others, continued to question the validity of such a label for a small liberal arts college such as Amherst. In this email to the Administration, Paul mentions the Folger Shakespeare Library Student Fellowships, a program which was one of the major accomplishments of a collaboration among The Friends of the Amherst College Library of which Sam Ellenport ’65 was Chairman, Willis Bridegam (College Librarian), Prof. Richard Cody (an English Professor and member of The Friends who administered the Alpha Delta Fund, whose purpose was to foster independent student research), and Professor Greg Call, the Dean of Students. The Folger Fellowships initially gave access to the Folger Shakespeare Library to three Amherst undergraduates. It was viewed as a premier academic fellowship because the Folger Shakespeare Library was otherwise closed to undergraduate research. At first, students were Seniors working on honors theses, though this was expanded to Juniors working towards honors awards. After the Friends of the Amherst College Library was summarily disbanded by the Trustees 2014, the program continued with College support. However, many were surprised to learn that the College no longer saw these as academic fellowships but as motivational experiences; since 2014 most students awarded the fellowships have been Sophomores and Juniors.]

Although it is not clear to me what a “research college” is, a strategic plan for an Amherst that aspires to such an identity might consider as a Goal taking full advantage of its close affiliation with the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. As some faculty, and fewer students, know, the Folger, one of the great research libraries in the world, is administered under the auspices of the Amherst trustees. For many years the Friends of the Amherst College Library have offered two weeks in January at the Folger to Amherst students, to do “research.” This unique opportunity for undergraduates to do scholarly research in one of the finest collections of Early Modern materials extant is little publicized on the campus, and sometimes has fewer applicants than there are places available. Moreover, the faculty itself
has few members who have ever visited or used the Folger for their own research, and few who nominate or encourage their students to apply for the fellowships at a place which is itself a part of Amherst’s institutional structure. Those who know of it, and have taken advantage of it, often regard it as one of the truly unique assets and offerings of Amherst and an Amherst education. Optimizing coordination with Folger and its collections and superb staff of scholars ought to be an indispensable aspect of a strategic plan for an Amherst that truly aspires to excellence, whether as a “research college,” or only as that seeming anachronism, a four-year liberal arts institution devoted to the rigorous teaching of and study by undergraduates. (To the Administration, June 22, 2014)

It’s not very useful to generalize about “colleges,” or “universities” as if Amherst and Morehouse or NYU and Southern Florida were even in the same business. . . . the fear is education seeking its level, and the dumbing down of elite institutions whether by political correctness, and obsession with “diversity,” or “equality” or an unwillingness to accept that everyone is not equally talented or equally able to benefit from any educational offering, and what has become an embarrassment about talent, intelligence and work ethic that overwhelms rigorous demands of even the best. (To Classmates, July 27, 2014)

I see no discussion of the question of what happens in society when equality of opportunity does not lead to equality of outcome. . . . isn’t that the underlying problem we have been unable to resolve, and isn’t it, in part, so intractable because whatever else we think about equality, we must admit that there is no universal equality of ability . . . and trying to ignore or deny that (e.g., asserting that “college” should be the favored path for all) isn’t going to improve equality of outcome. (To Classmates, July 28, 2014)

Remember when MAD magazine used to do parodies of other magazines? Or was it the Crimson? That’s what this issue [of The
Amherst Magazine, Summer 2014], except for Pritchard, seemed to be. Pritchard’s melancholy, so well-named by Sam [Ellenport], reminds of the last lines of Frost’s “The Oven Bird,” i.e., “The question that he frames in all but words/Is what to make of a diminished thing.” (To Classmates, August 8, 2014)

It’s hard, from this distance, to judge whether Amherst no longer presents and encourages the kind of personal relationships in learning we had with each other and with faculty members but we can hope, even as the silly talk about a “research college” continues. For all I know, a “research college” may merely suggest the need for such relationships in pursuing something intellectually worthwhile—in which case, hooray. I think of us as continuing relationships—or at least one—with someone at Amherst, and it is not an exaggeration for me to say that Bill Pritchard continues to shape my reading life, which is to say, my life. (To Classmates, August 18, 2014)

I guess I’m not part of the “Amherst community” either, but, increasingly, I’m ok with that, since a common, rigorous intellectual experience isn’t what shapes that community anymore; now it appears to be a commitment to diversity in all its shapes and sizes as an end, not a means, and a shared obsession with undergraduate “research,” faculty publication, and everything except what happens in the classroom and between students who need to be taught and teachers who want to teach, and therefore are unafraid to be demanding, critical, and uncompromising. As we approach our fiftieth, it appears that more than time has passed. (To Classmates, September 17, 2014)

[After September, little was heard from the College about creating a new Strategic Plan for curriculum reform. It was understood that the committees working on various phases of the plan were active as well as secretive. On March 18, 2015, the College released a 49-page document covering aspects of a newly revised Strategic Plan. Along with the document was a request for comments to be given within an 18-day window, ending on April 6th.}

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Almost all comments that were received referred to specific aspects of the 49-page plan; correspondence with members of other Classes attests to the fact that there was little time for others to do more than choose an aspect of the new document to comment upon. However, Paul and his Classmates found themselves in a unique position. Howard Bloch, Sterling Professor of French at Yale, had been working for years helping to organize the curriculum and educational philosophy of the new Singapore University. Paul had already defined a cogent set of ideas as to the relevance of a Liberal Arts College that encompassed the entire student body and Amherst community; other Class members included Gordon Pradl, Sam Ellenport and Sherman Katz who helped in the subsequent formation of a complete plan. This plan was sent within the deadline to the Strategic Planning Committee, President Biddy Martin, the Trustees and select faculty. Before the plan was submitted, Paul wrote the following email.]

... [This] is an admirable project to accompany the 50th Reunion Gift. ... The only thing that has any prospect of getting meaningful attention is a fully drawn alternative to the “open” (i.e., whatever) present lack of focus or discipline or rigor ignorant 18-year-olds are free to choose.... Whatever we ultimately offer, I would like to suggest some prefatory material, along these lines (although, ..., getting faculty buy-in, the most critical issue, will also be the most difficult):

The Trivium, grammar, rhetoric and logic, and the Quadrivium, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, were the “original” Liberal Arts, elements of all of which were in the New Curriculum which nourished and bedeviled us from September of 1961 until June of 1963 (we even had a one-credit-hour required course called “Rhetoric,” although it was really public speaking). While what is so far past is irretrievable, an argument for some directed or required course of study is supported by a minimum of three, we believe irrefutable, legs to the stool. They are:

1) Familiarity with certain aspects of knowledge, both substantively and with respect to their processes, are essential to virtually all successful post-graduate and professional study. It shouldn’t need repeating,
but it does, that the acquisition of such skills as “close reading,” “clear writing,” and “scientific method,” and a basic familiarity with how to apply them to the knowledge that goes before us, will make graduate study in the humanities and hard sciences, law school, medical school, and other schooling leading to careers easier, and will provide a lifetime of advantage to practitioners of all disciplines;

2) The study of the humanities (not traditionally identical to the liberal arts) and sciences now will enrich life outside of career and profession later, in ways difficult to measure but very difficult to achieve after formal schooling has ended; autodidacts can read and listen and see and learn, but their ability to absorb and place in context our cultural heritage, and, more important, apply it to the circumstances of their daily lives, is always much diminished from what is only possible through studying our culture with others, faculty and fellow students, and exchanging analyses and reactions and ideas while engaging with the text or work of art directly and with expert guidance. Yes, for example, lawyers are better readers of statutes when they also know how to read poems, and lawyers are better lawyers when their familiarity with literature, psychology, architecture, chemistry enables them to understand their clients and their clients’ concerns, but they are better people, with fuller lives, when familiarity with those things helps them understand their children and their government, and their charitable work and their recreational activities, and the way to live their lives after the law. The same is true of doctors and developers and painters and engineers, with appropriate amendment, all of who will benefit greatly from knowledge that may contribute to, but will always contribute beyond, their professional lives;

3) “Unique” is a much abused word, but our Amherst experience was, if not unique, at least very rare. We came to Amherst almost all superficially much alike in education, age, gender, race, economic circumstances, but very much 250 individuals, diverse in ways that matter much more than race or parental circumstances. We left with a sense of community that manifests itself even now, in many ways, from the financial support the College seems to value most, to active
engagement with the living Amherst, to, most significant, our shared feelings for each other, the product of our shared experience and life together from 1961 to 1965. We studied the same things, in the same ways; we ate together and played together and learned together in an atmosphere of rigorous intensity that drove each of those aspects of our lives there. Of the many gifts Amherst gave us, the gift of friendships, of knowing that we speak to each with a certainty of mutual understanding, about anything, may be the most valuable. Valuable to Amherst because it binds us to her; valuable to us because we continue to enrich one another’s lives.

With all this in mind we urge the Administration and faculty to assert its authority and expertise, to require those whom it is charged with educating to follow a defined course of common study, to listen and to learn what they do not know, and do not know they need to know. Most of all, we ask the Trustees of Amherst to assert their authority to ensure that the faculty’s primary function is understood not to be to pursue individual accomplishments either as scholars or as members of a particular discipline but instead to ensure that those who are entrusted to them are exposed to the best that has come before, so they are best able to manage what comes after. (March 22, 2015)

[The Class of 1965 Plan, entitled An Amherst Curriculum for the Twenty-first Century, was submitted, with Paul framing most of the initial arguments. This is perhaps the clearest example of Paul’s educational philosophy, dedicated to a College he loved and served so well, even if during the last two years of his life he was an insistent and productive critic. While the Plan went to various members of the College, it was felt that maximum exposure would find support from many graduates. The cover letter to Alumni/ae was the same as to the College. Paul’s drafting, based on his earlier emails, is obvious in the first four pages of the following document. As of this writing, no decisions have been made about any changes in the current curriculum, and little has been forthcoming from the Administration. Over a cover letter sent out by Samuel Ellenport (April 3, 2015), this Plan was circulated to various members of the faculty and administration, Secretaries
Dear Alumni:

Last year our College began a process to articulate its mission in the 21st Century and asked for comments from alumni. Several in the Class of ’65 responded with a number of thoughtful contributions. We continue to believe with others that the Liberal Arts—Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences—are the jewels in Amherst’s educational crown. These are the bedrock of a classic yet contemporary undergraduate education. They fulfill the core mission of American colleges, which is to pass knowledge of the past to future generations.

On March 18, 2015 we received the draft of a strategic plan, inviting comments by April 6. This 49-page document is better than before yet still vague when it comes to implementation. Its goal is to keep Amherst as a beacon of excellence; it stresses creativity, diversity, access, affordability and communication skills. These are goals we all embrace . . . and so does every other college and university. Are these sufficient to keep an Amherst education unique and exemplary as a College in the 21st century? Little in the strategic plan that went out to Alumni distinguishes Amherst from its peers, nor is there a definition of what a Liberal Arts education should look like in the 21st century. This penultimate draft fails to outline how Amherst might remain at the forefront of education, much less take the lead.

Instead of commenting on individual parts of the Amherst draft, the Class of ’65 has built on its strongest points, and developed an energetic and cohesive plan for the core element of an Amherst education, the curriculum. We are submitting a “Proposal for a Global Common Curriculum for Amherst in the Twenty-first Century” to the faculty, administration, and Trustees. This plan is visionary yet doable, combining the best of the past with the excitement and challenges of the future.

We urge you to read the proposal. We hope you will be as excited about this plan as we are, and will send it to and discuss it with your
classmates. If so, please tell the Trustees, the Administration and other faculty members. This plan will make Amherst the unique and exemplary educational leader it has been, and catapult the college well ahead of the rest.

Class of ’65 Committee for An Amherst Curriculum for the Twenty-first Century Representatives: Howard Bloch, Paul Ruxin, Gordon Pradl, Sherman Katz and Samuel Ellenport

April 3, 2015
Class of 1965 Committee for an Amherst Curriculum for the 21st Century

An Amherst Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century

Members of the Class of 1965 have read with keen interest the Strategic Plan for Amherst College sent to all alumni. Welcoming the opportunities and challenges outlined in this Plan, we have formulated a concrete proposal based upon the “Conclusions” (p. 33) of this preliminary report. Our proposal—for a “Global Common Curriculum for Amherst of the twenty-first century”—emphasizes the liberal arts as Amherst’s defining educational mission. Further, it affirms Amherst’s commitment to access, diversity, and affordability, while addressing the issues of a global outlook on education. Finally, it assesses the open curriculum in terms of refinements and alternatives moving forward. What follows is in keeping with the last paragraph of the Strategic Plan, where making more effective use of alumni expertise is encouraged.

Much in the Strategic Plan for Amherst College is to be praised, and is effectively summarized in the “Conclusions.” Yet, little in this long letter to alumni distinguishes the future goals for Amherst from the ambitions of almost every institution of higher learning in the U.S. Whether a big state university or a small liberal arts college, every institution seeks to encourage in its students the activity of thinking
carefully, critically, creatively. Every institution seeks: (1) a more diverse student body and faculty, (2) a college education that is more affordable, (3) to promote respect for difference, (4) to build community, (5) to make its campus safe, (6) to foster international experience and global perspective, and (7) to act in ways that are sustainable for the planet. The Strategic Plan is a laudable document, a good beginning for thinking about the future of Amherst College. It remains, however, purposefully vague when it comes to implementing its stated goals, especially when it comes to the core mission of the college: defining what is taught and how to an increasingly talented and diverse student body. It is for this reason that members of the Class of 1965 from many different walks of life offer our proposal. We seek not only to distinguish Amherst from its peer institutions, but to place it at the forefront of American liberal education.

It is time for all concerned to think about how an Amherst education might provide greater coherence and substance in terms of curriculum. The openness of the Amherst curriculum may lack sufficient structure to fulfill this central purpose of college. Although various informants and pressure groups impinge on the shape and requirements of any curriculum, at the center of a college’s course of study lie four crucial elements: (1) the student, (2) the teacher, (3) the endlessly expanding compendium of human knowledge and technique, and (4) strategies of inquiry (modes and processes of questioning and learning). How one construes these four elements and the various transactions among them determines the essential features of any curriculum so designed to achieve particular outcomes. Definitions of each element will, of course, vary, but, with respect to the current Amherst circumstances, each might be considered in terms of whether it is filled with, or devoid of, meaning and value. When those in charge—namely the faculty—take a “meaning and value” stance toward each of these four elements, they are claiming their authority for the curriculum and, accordingly, their responsibility to enact it.

The Trivium—grammar, rhetoric and logic—and the Quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music—were the founda-
tion of the “original” Liberal Arts. Elements of all were found in the New Curriculum which nourished, bedeviled, and delighted us from September of 1961 until June of 1963 (we even had a one-credit-hour required course called “Rhetoric,” although it was really public speaking). While what is so far past is sensibly irretrievable, an argument for some required, directed course of study is supported by three crucial arguments:

1) Familiarity with certain aspects of knowledge, both substantively and with respect to their processes, are essential to virtually all successful post-graduate and professional study. It shouldn't need repeating, but it does, that the acquisition of such skills as “close reading,” “clear writing,” and “scientific method,” and a basic familiarity with how to apply them to the knowledge that goes before us, will make graduate study in the humanities and hard sciences, law or business school, medical school, and other schooling leading to careers easier, and will provide a lifetime of advantage to practitioners of all disciplines.

2) The study of the humanities (not traditionally identical to the liberal arts) and sciences now enriches life outside of career and profession later. It may be difficult to measure such influence, but it is especially difficult to achieve it after formal schooling has ended. Autodidacts can read and listen and see and learn, but what of their ability to absorb and place in context our diverse cultural heritages? More important, their ability to apply them to the circumstances of their daily lives is much diminished compared to what is possible through studying our cultures with others, faculty and fellow students. In a common course of study, reactions and analyses and ideas can be exchanged directly under expert guidance, as students actively engage with the text or work of art. Lawyers, for example, are better readers of statutes when they also know how to read poems, and they are better lawyers when their familiarity with literature, psychology, architecture, chemistry enables them to understand their clients and their clients’ concerns. They are better people, with fuller lives, when familiarity with those things helps them understand their children and their government, their charitable work and their recreational activities—all the
ways to live their lives after the law. The same is true of doctors and developers and painters and engineers. All benefit greatly from knowledge that may contribute to, but will always contribute beyond, their immediate professional lives.

3) “Unique” is a much abused word, but our Amherst experience was, if not unique, at least rare. We came to Amherst all superficially much alike in education, age, gender, race, economic circumstances, but very much 250 individuals, diverse in ways that matter much more than race, gender, or parental circumstances. We left with a sense of community that manifests itself even today, in many ways. We offer financial support to the College, energetically engage with the living Amherst, and, what is most significant, continue our shared feelings for each other, the product of our shared experience and life together from 1961 to 1965. We studied the same things, in the same ways; we ate together and played together and learned together in an atmosphere of rigorous intensity that drove each of those aspects of our lives there. Of the many gifts Amherst gave us, the gift of friendships, of knowing that we speak to each with a certainty of mutual understanding, about anything, may be the most valuable—valuable to Amherst because it binds us to her; valuable to us because we continue to enrich one another’s lives.

The word “university,” derives from the Latin universitas, meaning “entirety,” “whole,” “whole world,” “universe.” The university is the place and the vehicle for transferring a common culture and knowledge—originally both humanistic and scientific—that constituted and expanded a common human experience. For a long time, of course, women and many ethnicities and religions were excluded, but those who were included were assumed to belong to a single community. That community has grown since World War II to include women, Jews, minorities, and students from around the globe, yet the sense of a common purpose has not broadened in keeping with demographic expansion. Nor has the advent of the research university and its increasingly specialized disciplines—with the integration of science and technology alongside theology, philosophy, Classics, and the arts—
thickened the thread of shared resolve.

With this background in mind, we urge the Administration and faculty to assert their authority and expertise in the area of curriculum. This means requiring students, whom they are charged with educating, to follow a defined course of common study as a portion of their degree requirements. Integrating agreed upon requirements within the framework of the current “open” curriculum is to encourage generative educational tension between the individual and the group, so that students come to listen and to learn what they do not know, what they need to know, and what, in most cases, they do not know they need to know. We ask the Trustees of Amherst to encourage faculty to understand that their primary role, both in and out of the classroom, is to work alongside the students entrusted to them, so all are grappling with the best that has come before, in order to best manage what comes after. We realize, of course, that what goes on in the classroom is a function of a teacher’s scholarly accomplishments as members of a particular discipline. Indeed, teaching and research are not opposites; rather, they are mutually nourishing activities. The great advantage of Amherst’s size and its reputation has always been to attract accomplished scholars, who are also superior teachers, and collectively these scholar/teachers benefit from ongoing dialogue across their realms of expertise.

To our mind, a common curriculum is uniquely suited to the demands, present and future, of a globalized world. For instance, areas now segregated by colonial and postcolonial studies, or Near Eastern or Asian studies, along with the canon of the West, can be considered in terms of what unites rather than what separates them. Then we might imagine a liberal arts education oriented around a set of common questions and forms. Although these forms/questions may not be present everywhere at all times, they surely are sufficiently enduring to constitute a core of common inquiry. Almost every culture to be brought under a large tent of a common curriculum, for example, shares in musical forms that include collective and individual instrumental performance, lament and song; visual artifacts that include
two-dimensional representation, sculpture, and architecture; literature that includes some version of lyric, epic, and theatrical performance. What we consider to be philosophic speculation is somewhat more problematic in that it may be a function of systems of broad and efficient social organization. Still, the place and questions of philosophy may be taken up elsewhere by the matter of religion, in which case the intersection of the two becomes its own foundational question. No culture lacks some way of recounting its past, whether that be oral or written, legend or chronicle, universal history or local record, official charter or journal entry account. No culture lacks a version of what constitutes scientific inquiry and truth, even what constitutes its myth of origins.

No matter how good the system of advising, a completely open curriculum is a daunting prospect for students making the transition from the rigorous requirements of high school to the bewildering array of college electives. Most students in their first two years are not equipped to make wise choices from among the College’s 850 course offerings. For this reason we propose a common curriculum and offer but one possible example which consists of eight broad-based courses to be taken before students move on to more narrow specialization as part of their major.

There is no better way of building community among the members of Amherst’s diverse student body than the shared intellectual experience of grappling with a common store of books, works of art, and music from a variety of traditions. There is no better way of building connections among the increasingly diverse subjects that make up the university than a well thought out interdisciplinary plan of study, one that integrates the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. There is no better way of broadening intellectual and cultural perspective than study within a comparative framework of the works and creations of the best minds around the globe throughout human history.

[The Plan then “simply offered as one example of an organizing common course of study” sections on: (“1) Comparative Social Institutions, (2) Current Issues, (3a) Foundations of Science, (3b) Integrated
Science, (3c) Scientific Inquiry, (4) Historical Analysis, (5) Global Literature and Humanities, (6) Modern Social Thought, (7) Philosophy and Social Thought, and (8) Quantitative Reasoning.”

In addition to the subjects studied in common core courses as outlined above, Amherst has a responsibility to educate students intensively in “the language arts.” Specifically, this entails making sure students are proficient in: (1) the modes of grammatical, rhetorical, and logical inquiry essential to understanding written documents and other forms of human expression, (2) the modes of reasoning needed to make crucial distinctions and to formulate concise thought, and (3) the modes of expression necessary to articulate and communicate new ideas, regardless of the field. Language is not a transparent vessel through which thought merely passes unimpeded. It is the very stuff of thinking. And it is the sine qua non for the effective transformation of ideas into action. With this focus on linguistic processes, an Amherst education should foster: (1) the recognition of significant questions, (2) the making of crucial distinctions in the articulation of their terms/categories, (3) the drawing of consequential conclusions, (4) the assessment of conclusions in a human context, and (5) the communication of the procedures and results of such inquiry.

American high schools, where students once learned how to write effectively, have, with a few exceptions, largely given up the teaching of syntax and semantics. The result? Increasing numbers of students arrive at college without the linguistic tools necessary to read critically and write effectively. We are not, of course, suggesting that Amherst take on the task of teaching remedial high school English. Still, reading and writing intensive courses and foreign language courses are the only places where many students, especially those from underresourced high schools, learn the verbal skills foundational to whatever career path they may eventually choose. Writing skills should not be considered a separate subject, taught in a learning or writing center. Such skills are best promoted when they are an integral part of every writing intensive course within a common curriculum. Thus, in the first two years every student learns not only how to write, but the
vocabulary and modes of thought of the various disciplines that make up a university.

It is sometimes claimed that core or common courses are less accessible to first-generation students or students from under-resourced high schools. This issue is addressed by the predominant presence of primary works in the courses proposed above. In keeping with a long Amherst tradition, a student’s direct understanding of reading assignments counts much more than knowledge of historical, literary, or philosophical background. Everyone is on the same plane when encountering primary materials.

Finally, there may also be some objections from students for whom the open curriculum is synonymous with free choice, or freedom itself. Yet, Amherst is a grand place, and it should offer something grand to students who at this critical point in their lives actually want, and have every reason to expect, something bigger, better, and wiser than themselves. The argument that required courses impinge upon freedom of choice is itself a specious one in that every choice of eight courses eliminates the other 842 courses that make up the Amherst open curriculum. Even in the midst of this example “Global Common Curriculum,” time would be organized so that students can exercise a range of personal choice regarding courses and/or other educational experiences. However, students lost among the wealth of course choices in their first two years would find in the common curriculum a unified and comprehensive course of study on which to build further inquiry in the humanities, sciences, and/or social sciences—an intellectual resource for framing the rest of their education as well as the rest of their lives.

[The Plan concluded with the following.]

For Amherst to rethink and implement a course of study along the lines of a “Global Common Curriculum” will take imagination, commitment, lots of hard work, and, above all, courage. We are very aware that some might find such a radical directing of educational purpose to work against the departmental structure of the liberal arts college. Here, it is worth remembering that many of the academic depart-
ments at Amherst and elsewhere were put into place either at the end of the nineteenth century or beginning of the twentieth century. What better time to reconsider the configuration of the humanities and social sciences along the lines of the reconfiguration of the life sciences over the last thirty years? For at Amherst we have an opportunity to reconfigure academic categories to reflect new knowledge and, in the case of the sciences, the changed relation among biology, chemistry, and physics.

One of the advantages to accrue to faculty under such a proposal is its potential for fostering community among professors across departmental lines. Team-taught courses are the most powerful agents for the mentoring of younger faculty by more seasoned teachers, who share their experience on a day-to-day basis around a common educational enterprise. Further, our plan is one that, with the Trustees and the administration supporting it enthusiastically, will serve to encourage greatly alumni connections to the college, including alumni giving. Also as Amherst commits to playing a leadership role in the common curriculum dimension of American higher education, it is reasonable to expect that foundations such as Mellon will seriously consider offering support. In short, a common course of study, such as a “Global Common Curriculum,” represents something positive and forward-looking, something students and graduates alike can believe in. Not only the older alumni, but those on the cusp of fortune, will want to buy in once they understand its merits for contributing to Amherst uniqueness.

[As discussions about a new curriculum continued, Paul addressed Dean Epstein directly with his views after the various documents authored by the 1965 Curriculum Committee seemed to be falling on deaf ears. No response to this communication has been found.]

Dean Epstein—With apologies for intruding further on what I know must be a busy schedule, let me make a simpler point than my more sophisticated, and professionally experienced, classmates, Profs.
Bloch and [classmate Bill] Newell. It is the view of many in the Class of ’65 (the “Old Curmudgeon Class”) that Amherst’s present much-vaunted diversity of student body demographic, unlike our dreary, homogeneous, all the same, boring group of boys who spent our days together, has, at least from the outside, resulted in small groups of students who appear to feel themselves to be isolated, segregated “outsiders,” excluded from some more amorphous, comfortable, welcomed majority. Of course none of us felt that way, because of our homogeneity and lack of individualism, no doubt.

It seems obvious to us that a common intellectual experience would bring some unity and sense of belonging to the present generation of students; at the least it would enable them to bring to bear on a set of common curricula-centered studies their own “unique” and “varied” perspectives. They could address from their own backgrounds and experiences how they learn from, and learn about, say, scientific inquiry into climate change, or abstract impressionism, or even (dare I say) Shakespeare. They would have to talk, and listen to, each other inside and outside the classroom, about something they were studying together. The educational benefits of bringing a diverse group of students together would be enhanced, perhaps even maximized. They might develop a sense of community that could carry over into the rest of their lives, as it has in ours, for their benefit and for that of those who follow them.

We are urging some common, required curriculum not out of a sense of nostalgia, but because we understand, fifty years later, how we, and the college, benefited from that experience of being required to study and learn the same things together, to live them and talk about them, however pitifully our abject sameness limited those discussions. With the now multiple backgrounds today’s students have, think how much more they might benefit than we did. Curriculum reform, some required courses, interdisciplinary or not, ought to recognize at least two things that benefited us: we came together as ignorant eighteen year olds, who did not know what we should know, nor how to choose it, and studying at least some of the same things helped us not only to
learn from each other, but also to respect each other, and to recognize that we had more in common than we knew, and more in common when we left than when we arrived. Thanks for reading this far, if you have. Paul (February 12, 2016)

[In the fall of 2015, student unrest at the College focused around the matter of Lord Jeffery Amherst as the College’s unofficial mascot. This “great” debate included many participants, but it was Paul’s significant contribution that continued to tie the issue to education. Here was a grand opportunity to “teach the controversy,” but in the end he felt terribly let down when Lord Jeffery was abandoned, all without his case having been actually considered. This in turn left Paul feeling that the College’s Curriculum Committee may not be that receptive to reforming its current “open curriculum” policy.]

I wish I could be as sanguine as the rest of you about this, but I fear this committee will labor like an elephant and deliver a mouse, and feel satisfied the issue (pun intended) has been buried. The silly fight over Lord Jeff, which could have led to a real exploration of what actually happened, what was in fact possible with a live virus, the obligations of a war general to his king in 1753, and many other serious questions, has been ignored by both faculty and administration, thus neglecting a real and relatively painless opportunity for a common, campus-wide intellectual experience. In fact, Amherst is just emblematic of a society that values “diversity” for its own sake, and elevates victimhood to an exalted position, trumping everything including free inquiry, wherever it might lead. Dean Epstein’s contempt for nostalgia ignores the possibility that a fondness for something in the past may, in fact, be because that something has been replaced by something worse. My Amherst may be dead, but what it gave me enriched my life with skills and gave me friendships and commonalities that I doubt are replicable today. And it wasn’t because I sang Lord Jeffrey Amherst after touchdowns. (To Classmates, November 3, 2015)
Among the many sad aspects of this mostly absurd discussion, one of the saddest is the lost opportunity it represents. Perhaps the two things in which the present Amherst takes most pride are the “diversity” of the student body and the “open curriculum.” Neither, by itself, serves the educational or intellectual development of the students well. Lacking a common intellectual experience, the students learn nothing from their differences, and leave without the kind of intellectual community that could be fostered by examining common intellectual issues seriously.

Examining the circumstance of Lord Jeffrey Amherst’s role in the French-Indian wars provides a teachable moment, now being ignored. The mascot issue itself is trivial; the questions it raises are not. For example: Lord Jeffrey was also General Amherst, “a soldier of the King.” In his time (and the standards of his time, not ours, must at least be recognized in judging him), what were the obligations of a soldier to his commander (no Geneva Convention then to limit them)? The moral authority of the King James version (an eye for an eye) was, then at least, sole. How did its strictures apply to warfare against tribes of natives whose culture varied greatly, and whose conduct of war including, routinely, torture, rape, cannibalism and other conduct against not only soldiers, but also captive women and children? And what of the scientific questions the issue raises? What was the period in which smallpox virus was infectious? Could it in fact be transmitted by delivering blankets? How soon after the blankets were infected? And what of the population which had seen wave after wave of smallpox? How vulnerable was it?

These and other religious, scientific, governmental and historical questions could have been addressed by the entire college community, but that does not appear to be happening. The diversity of student and faculty experiences and expertise could have been brought to bear on these questions, but has not been. The students could have been engaged in the pursuit of meaningful answers and engaged in rigorous, common analysis. And that would have been part of their Amherst experience, one that might give them a life-long sense of how to ad-
dress issues. Instead there is ahistorical ranting. In fact, General Amherst never ordered that the indigenous enemies he was sent to fight be infected. It didn’t happen. Read the comments; a lie is accepted as truth, without any reference to what is knowable through rigorous study and thoughtful analysis. And Amherst College is turned inside out by uninformed debate.

It is unfortunate for the ongoing discussion, and, much less important, for me personally that this message misrepresents the major issues now confronting the College that gave us all so much. For well over a year, my classmates and I have been presenting a plan, and arguing for, some common intellectual experiences that would take maximum educational advantage of the diversity among the student body of which we hear so much. The “Uprising” and other evidences of dissatisfaction on campus were foreseeable and at least partially preventable had Amherst paid as much attention to what happened to those privileged to attend as it did to extending that privilege.

Small groups, self-identified by race or sexuality or ethnicity, or otherwise, were increasingly self-segregating and isolating themselves by housing choices or academic focus or social activities. Lacking a common engagement in academic and intellectual experiences, they did not communicate with each other or share how their diverse backgrounds affected their readings, their studies and their engagement with the educational experience Amherst offered. The Class of 1965 worked to push a discussion among the faculty and the alumni about curriculum reform and moving away from the completely open curriculum as one method of taking maximum educational advantage of diversity.

The Lord Jeff controversy was a minor distraction. I never suggested that a mascot or song was anything other than a trivial issue. My point, and that of others engaged with this for a considerable period of time, especially Don MacNaughton ’65, was that the Lord Jeff controversy could have been used as a teaching opportunity for the entire student body and faculty to explore serious questions, including the actual historical events, the role of a general of the British forces, his
duty to his King, the nature of warfare itself 250 years ago before the Geneva Convention, the appropriate way to evaluate events of long ago and other cultures, and many others.  

This opportunity for common intellectual endeavor was bypassed, and the discussion focused on distorted and false and incomplete depictions of what happened and why and in what context. The alumni were largely excluded from meaningful participation until well after the de facto decision was made. The moment has passed. Neither I nor anyone I know believed a song or mascot could bring the campus together or solve any of the unaddressed issues that really matter. Going forward I hope those of you who continue to care about the substance of an Amherst education will let the Faculty Committee on Curriculum Reform, chaired by Dean Epstein, know your own thinking about the importance of commonality, interdisciplinarity, and rigor in what happens in the classroom and elsewhere on campus. I will continue to sing one of the great college songs with my classmates and friends, but I do not care whether anyone else does so or not. I do care that the alumni engage in the resolution of the important substantive issues that require ongoing attention. (To Classmates, December 1, 2015)

[While the mascot issue was coming to a head, there was a burgeoning student protest movement which found fertile ground on campuses across the country. In many instances it revolved around an emphasis on the “Black Lives Matter” movement. There was a sit-in by the students at Frost Library, and a list of demands was given to the Administration along with an ultimatum. Paul considered President Martin’s response statement as “predictable,” and saw it as another lost opportunity to display genuine educational leadership.]

In one place she says, in effect, she would apologize, as asked, but she lacks the authority to do so. Then she shares the pain of those whose feelings have been hurt (although the specifics of these seemingly infinite incidents of hurtful conduct are nowhere specified), and she proceeds to list all that will be done. The list reads like the agenda
of an institution with the mission of curing the wounded. Amherst is now a hospital for the emotionally violated, not an institution of higher (forget rigorous and demanding) learning. This is what the college is now about; making people, most of whom are attending for free, or at greatly reduced cost, feel better about themselves, and justifying their thin-skinned-ness.

Only in the last paragraph is there the vaguest reference to an intellectual mission, to education; nothing about the benefits of responding on an intellectual, and not an emotional level to experiences and ideas that may be new, and even unpleasant. Who are these people? Why are they going to Amherst if it is so awful, and so painful for them? How did they become so privileged and so hyper-sensitive? Why are they so indulged by the very people they were sent to learn from, not to be pandered to by? And why should I offer continued financial support? I can only imagine that if Arons or Baird or Zeigler were teaching now in the manner they taught us, and with the assumptions they and we made about our relative levels of knowledge and our respective roles, they would probably be arrested, if not tarred and feathered. This is indeed a lynch mob, and it is reason and education being hanged from the noose. (To Classmates, November 15, 2015)

[Of Paul's various ties to Amherst College, perhaps the one that gave him the most satisfaction was his membership on and service through his involvement with the Friends of the Amherst College Library. Since it was founded in the 1960s, the Friends played an active role in helping the Library achieve its mission. Unlike many other Friends groups, the Library group was independent, though its purpose was to promote programs benefiting the Library and the Amherst Community with a wide latitude of activities and fund-raising. In 2008, a controversy arose over whether Honorary Membership should be extended to the then librarian, Sherre Harrington. In addressing this matter, Paul helped articulate the status of the Friends, its connection to, but separateness]
It seems important to keep several things in mind here. First, that The Friends and the Frost are not the exactly the same, and second, that personal feelings, while an essential part of a decision like this, ought not be the sole or even primary determinant. Sherre, perhaps understandably, did not begin at Amherst with much sense of the role of the Friends, or the historic relationship between its members and the incumbent Librarian. The Friends’ agenda was not high on her own agenda, and even if that was appropriate, it led, in my view, to a period where the cooperation between the Friends and the Frost was not what it could have been, and traditionally had been. Although this improved, communication from the Librarian with the Friends never achieved the level of open and full disclosure that would have been optimal.

A most serious consequence of this contributed, I believe, to the incalculable loss of John [Lancaster] and Daria [Darienzo] [Library employees who ran Special Collections and Archives, both of whom were fired] from our ranks, and, more important, from the resources of the library. Many people have put many years of service and much effort into building the Friends, and serving the Frost, and while it is not possible to know another person’s thoughts, manifestations of appreciation for those efforts, and cultivation of those people and others for the ultimate benefit of the library, was, too often, inadequate. It seems to me that whatever her service to the Frost, and I do not intend to demean it, the Friends mean much more to its members than it does to her, and the honor proposed is one we ought properly bestow on only our own best friends.

In short, it means more to us than I imagine it might to Sherre. The circumstances of her departure also reflect a decision by the College administration that would seem inconsistent with the honor proposed here, and might cause questions in Converse offices about the Friends’ judgment and intentions. I write this in response to brother Woodhouse’s [Thomas Woodhouse ’62 was a Friends’ Council member]
inquiry, and not out of malice. (January 16, 2009)

[Several of Paul’s classmates served with him on the Friends’ Council for more than 25 years: Sam Ellenport (Chairman for 20 years), Ron Gordon, and Steven Young. During that time the Friends grew to more than 650 members, almost all Alumni/ae. After almost 50 years of service to the College, The Friends was summarily disbanded by the Board of Trustees in 2014. Both Paul and Sam, among others, felt strongly that the Trustees and Administration had caused great harm in alienating so many graduates from their ties of loyalty to Amherst. New programs which had proved so successful were ultimately swept away by the College, thus breaking the close connection many had to the College through the Library. Further, there were distinct losses of funding for various programs, along with a diminishment of gifts in kind from which the Library so greatly benefited. Another area of loss was more subjective: the morale among the Library staff to whom the Friends’ largesse often extended. Paul, for example, had established a fund for the cataloguing of books in honor of his mother, who had been a cataloguer, an area which usually received little attention but was critical to the library’s function.

In a secret vote at their October meeting in 2014, the Trustees moved to peremptorily disband the Friends. There was no announcement to this effect, and has been none to date. It has not been mentioned in the Alumni Magazine, nor the Amherst Student newspaper, nor has there been a mailing to former members who, in some instances, continued to pay dues to a defunct organization. The two formal letters that follow document the situation, the first to the President of the College and the second to the Head of Development.]
Jan. 8, 2015

Dear Biddy,

We are writing about the decision by the Trustees to dissolve *The Friends of the Amherst College Library*. Until now others have received the brunt of comment about this decision, especially Cullen Murphy [Chair of the Trustees, and a personal friend of both Paul and Sam]. The real issue now is beyond Development or the Library, it is about the culture and community of Amherst vis-à-vis its alumni. The blanket of silence surrounding the decision and its aftermath continues almost three months, and you can change this. While the College has maintained a wall of silence about how and why this happened, there is enough information to create this plausible scenario.

1. The demise was planned by Mike Kelly [Head of Special Collections] and Bryn Geffert [College Librarian]. Since 2013 each dropped long-established programs, and warned in vague terms that undefined administrators wanted more severe changes. The *Friends* were seen as a drain on Library resources compared to what they provided. The assumption was that, once disbanded, old Friends would return to a new group—where else could they go?

2. Other factors helped. A new Dean and Asst. Dean were appointed in the summer, both of whom work intimately with the Librarian. Prof. Sarat took some heat from the *Friends* over siting the Humanities Center in the Library. It is not clear if this played a part, but the quest for dissolution could not have advanced without his approval.

3. Development has tried for years to capture funds going to the *Friends*. Our new Director undoubtedly saw a chance to streamline fund operations. Overlooked was an Amherst culture of building alumni loyalty, developing a habit of giving and a sense of giving for a purpose. Overlooked was the yearly $400,000 worth of gifts in kind and services, not bottom line items in themselves.

4. It is telling that in Bryn’s letter announcing the Trustees’ decision he looks to create “a new, vibrant community of supporters…"
[whose] most pressing goal is to develop the best-possible campaign for the library, a campaign that attracts multiple donors…” This letter, and Cullen’s letter to former Council members, was sent through Development.

5. This confluence of events could not get on the Trustees’ agenda without you seeing it. Nor could the Friends be disbanded without a vote of the Trustees. At the time it hit your radar, you had the power to stop any forward progress. At best you also gave tacit approval; at worst, you acknowledged that this was a positive step and supported it.

6. The Trustees, after a hurried investigation of the issue with little organized input from the Friends, dissolved the group.

It is apparent that Development and the Library have fought their corners for what they felt was right. Yet they are subservient to the greater goals of Amherst. In this sense we feel Amherst has been poorly served. Surely you and the Trustees could have anticipated the reaction and the consequences. Ties with alumni have been severed. A loyal group representing almost 5% of those giving money to the College each year, has been marginalized. Many feel that their years of service have been brushed aside as unmerited and that they are now looked upon as pocketbooks. And all this was done with an air of arrogance and a clumsy callousness that will be remembered. Since President Stanley King proposed the idea of a Friends’ group, all Amherst Presidents up to you have supported it; every librarian up to Bryn has supported and encouraged it; every Dean up to the present has embraced it and joined our membership; every Development officer up to the present has worked with the group and, at times, used it to coordinate efforts for specific projects. You have the power and the responsibility to start reversing the effects of this decision.

We have written at length to Cullen and Betsy Canon-Smith [active in Alumni affairs] with some suggestions you might pursue, realizing that the Friends won’t come back as they were and that the institution will survive long after present personalities and situations change. We are sure they would be willing to talk to you about these. One necessity is to simply tell the members that the Friends no longer
exists, and the reasons why. We also urge you to break silence as time will not make these issues fade. There is much mending to be done, and it won’t succeed by making a few anodyne visits to larger donors. You are the key now, and can direct positive action. We hope you have the courage and foresight to move in this direction. First, though, break the silence.

Terras Irradient

Sam Ellenport and Paul Ruxin ’65

[A somewhat different letter was written to Ms. Morey on approximately the same date.]

Ms. Megan Morey (Development Office/Amherst College)

Dear Ms. Morey,

This letter is in direct response to your role in the vote taken in October by the Board of Trustees to terminate the Friends of the Amherst College Library. We have been intimately involved with the Friends since 1982. Lack of transparency and communication has led to speculations that have served little purpose. There has been suspicion and silence surrounding this drastic decision, which is why we are circulating copies of our letter.

The Development Office along with Bryn Geffert, Librarian and Mike Kelly, Special Collections Librarian share in the responsibility for the elimination of the Friends. This was a carefully considered campaign. While the idea may have been initiated by the Librarians, Development helped forward the idea and at minimum acquiesced in its acceptance. For years Development has tried to limit and control how funds were collected and used by the Friends; raising money has never been the main purpose of the group. Our dues funded Library sponsored programs and supplemented the Library budget; other ac-
tivities led to contributions of about $400,000 per year in gifts in kind and donations for specific Library sponsored projects. All past Librarians enthusiastically worked with the Friends, as have all past College Presidents. For almost five decades 600–800 loyal members paid dues that benefitted Amherst. In the face of this decades-long history of giving by so many, your help in disbanding the Friends remains incomprehensible to us.

We could understand that streamlining all fundraising can be a virtue at a large institution. However, you are working at a small College, which has loyal alumni who have always given generously. In fact, I know of no financial goal that has not been met. Without question, success has been based on personal relationships built over time. Participation in giving, already very high, has been a linchpin in Amherst’s past regardless of amount given. Surely Amherst has the staff and skills to continue these personal relationships with donors. The termination of the Friends ignores this tradition and has needlessly alienated a large, consistent support group. Giving to the Friends has not dissuaded any from giving to the College. I cannot fathom why you would choose to alienate so many.

From your viewpoint, you must anticipate a larger benefit in terminating the Friends than what is being forfeited. Yet the impact of this dissolution has been consistent and dismaying. The handling of the termination, both before and after the Trustees’ vote, ranged from clumsiness to callous arrogance; current efforts to smooth ruffled feathers have been civil but ineffectual. You may feel that you have acted in the best interests of the College and that you have served the College well. We have written to the Chairman of the Trustees, Mr. Cullen Murphy, as well as President Martin, suggesting otherwise. We believe you have not understood the benefits provided by the Friends nor the positive role it played. Your vision, even considered as well intentioned, has been myopic and destructive.

Actions have consequences. This termination has done harm. You, Bryn and Mike have alienated loyal and consistent contributors to the Library; you have broken trust between Alumni and the College; you
have denied the College a steady stream of support and service; and, most importantly, you have broken ties among the former members, faculty, students and staff which has left alumni feeling marginalized and dismissed. We sincerely doubt that the loyalty you and the Librarian envision that might energize a new Friends group will be fruitful. In our case, we find that other institutions where we have affiliations are eager to accept what we can offer, and other members of the Friends are already reaching the same conclusion.

As a result of your actions, we are doing the following:

1. In this, our 50th Reunion year, we will contribute to our Class gift out of respect for our friendships and ties to our classmates and the College

2. We will no longer offer services and gifts-in-kind to Amherst

3. We had named Amherst as a beneficiary of a bequest in our Wills. These have been revoked.

While our love of Amherst will always make us interested parties as to what occurs on campus, at this time we will stand back to wait and watch. It saddens us to write that your disservice to Amherst has been profound.

Sincerely,

Paul Ruxin ’65, Vice Chairman Emeritus
Sam Ellenport ’65, Chairman Emeritus
Friends of the Amherst College Library

Cc: Friends, President Martin, Trustees, Ms. Betsy Canon-Smith

While Paul took seriously the problems facing the College, he still believed in the institution and its potential for a great future. As an astute observer, Paul knew that the past could influence the future and be a useful guide to those willing to listen with an open mind. In one of his last
messages to his Classmates, Paul endeared himself to us with his vision of hope and good cheer.]

Rather than lamenting Amherst Present, let’s begin 2016 by celebrating a bit of Amherst Past, which survives. Bill Pritchard is still teaching, and has a new book out, Writing to Live, (Northampton: Impress, 2015). Many fine essays and reviews, but, for example, don’t miss “Frost’s Mischievous Grip: A Talk,” reminding us how Amherst gave the gift of close reading, analytical thinking and elegant writing, and “The Genius of Clive James,” criticism at its finest, and “Life After Amherst,” (res ipsa loquitur). And Happy New Year. (To Classmates, January 2, 2016)

NOTES

1 (June 16, 2014) Dear Amherst Alumnus/a,
The presence of more than 8,000 alumni, parents, family, and friends during Commencement and Reunion weekends vividly displayed the Amherst community’s passion and commitment. We would like to call on that commitment by asking you to participate in the strategic planning process in which we are engaged. One year ago, we announced that the College was entering a strategic planning process. We are at a critical point and seek input from across the Amherst community.

A significant number of Amherst faculty, staff, students, and trustees have spent this academic year doing background research and generating preliminary ideas about the future of the College in seven strategic planning committees—four devoted to the core mission and three to our financial, facilities, and technology outlook. The four core committees have issued draft reports and the strategic planning steering committee has formulated seven provisional college-wide goals that are designed to capture the likely directions of the strategic plan. Before we begin the work of formulating priorities for a strategic plan, we need feedback from the Amherst community.

... Your responses and suggestions will enrich our discussions and allow us to draw on the perspectives, experiences, and talents of the entire Amherst commu-
nity as we move toward the next phase of strategic planning. . . . We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance for participating in this planning process.

Sincerely,

Biddy Martin,
President

Bill Woolverton ’73, P ’17,'12, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council


Martin’s statement. November 15, 2015

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, and Families,

On Thursday night I attended a student-organized protest against racism and other entrenched forms of prejudice and inequality. The sit-in was held in Frost Library. It had started Thursday at 1 p.m. and there were several hundred people from all parts of the campus in Frost when I arrived from out of town. The gathering of students continued throughout the day on Friday and into the evening and through the weekend. Students have continued to gather through the weekend.

Over the course of several days, a significant number of students have spoken eloquently and movingly about their experiences of racism and prejudice on and off campus. The depth and intensity of their pain and exhaustion are evident. That pain is real. Their expressions of loneliness and sense of invisibility are heartrending. No attempt to minimize or trivialize those feelings will be convincing to those of us who have listened. It is good that our students have seized this opportunity to speak, rather than further internalizing the isolation and lack of caring they have described. What we have heard requires a concerted, rigorous, and sustained response.

The organizers of the protests also presented me with a list of demands on Thursday evening. While expressing support for their goals, I explained that the formulation of those demands assumed more authority and control than a president has or should have. The forms of distributed authority and shared governance that are integral to our educational institutions require consultation and thoughtful collaboration. When I met yesterday in my office with a small group of student organizers, I explained that I did not intend to respond
to the demands item by item, or to meet each demand as specified, but instead to write a statement that would be responsive to the spirit of what they are trying to achieve—systemic changes that we know we need to make. I also talked about why apologies of the sort that were demanded would be misleading, if not downright dishonest, suggesting, as they implicitly would, that I or the College could make guarantees about things that are much larger than a single institution or group of people. Reacting immediately to strict timetables and ultimatums and speaking in the names of other people and for all times would be a failure to take our students seriously. I was asked to read this statement to students today in Frost Library and did so at noon.

....

Amherst has committed itself to equal opportunity for the most talented students from all socio-economic circumstances. That commitment involves more than assembling a diverse population of students. It includes a duty to provide a learning environment that is equally welcoming to all our students and one that is supportive of all students, faculty, and staff. When staff and faculty of color leave Amherst because they do not have faith that they can thrive here, it is a serious loss for our students and for the campus as a whole, and requires greater attention to the conditions and cultures we need to change or to create.

....

Those who have immediately accused students in Frost of threatening freedom of speech or of making speech “the victim” are making hasty judgments. While those accusations are also legitimate forms of free expression, their timing can seem, ironically, to be aimed at inhibiting the speech of those who have struggled and now succeeded in making their stories known on campus. The shredding and removal overnight of protesters’ postings, which were reported to me this morning, is, on the other hand, unacceptable behavior according to the student Honor Code.

....

We agree with the students that racism and other deeply entrenched forms of prejudice and inequality continue to affect our institutions and our culture as a whole. And we acknowledge that our efforts to achieve a more inclusive and egalitarian environment are insufficient. I could not be sadder about the pain that many of our students are feeling or more determined to meet their demand for change. We are committed not only to continuing the efforts we are already making, but also to stepping up the work that needs to be done in order to:

1) build a more diverse staff and faculty, with more aggressive recruitment and effective hiring and retention strategies;
5) consider what messages our symbols send;
6) provide more opportunities for conversation, collaboration, and shared responsibility in the classroom and in residential life for students from different backgrounds;
7) make sure that students, staff, and faculty find a mix of physical spaces and opportunities for social interaction, some of which will provide comfort and familiarity and others of which will put us in a position that challenges us and guarantees our growth; and
8) as we did in response to disclosures about sexual assault and the College’s handling of it, establish a multi-constituency committee charged with studying issues of race and racial injury and making recommendations to the administration and the Board of Trustees.

This is a list of some, but not all of what we want to do.

What is going on at Amherst right now is not at odds with our educational mission or an aberration from its course. It is part of a struggle in the direction of greater awareness, understanding, and freedom from ignorance, prejudice, and narrow ideologies. On urgent questions ranging from race to gender to war and peace, members of the Amherst community have been deeply engaged for as long as there has been such a community. The complexity of the issues is challenging, yes, but also energizing at institutions like Amherst—which is certainly flawed, as any human institution is. Like other colleges and universities, however, Amherst is also openly committed to getting better at what we do, for our students, for the larger society, and for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Biddy Martin

[Full letter available at https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/president/statements/node/620480]
25th & 50th Reunion Self-Statements

Amherst Twenty-fifth Reunion

PAUL T. RUXIN
NORTH POINT
901 LAKESIDE AVENUE
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114
216-586-7225

January 29, 1990
Mr. John Sansing
c/o Washington Magazine
1828 L Street, NW #200
Washington, DC 20036

Dear John:

Why has it been so hard for me to sit down and write this, and why have so many of our classmates sent you nothing for the 25th Reunion Book? My guess, for them and for me, is that after twenty-five years we are, mostly, strangers to each other. Few of us are willing, or able, to disclose anything important or private to a group of 240 vaguely remembered guys with whom, increasingly long ago, we shared a place and a time. In fact, even at Amherst we disclosed very little, except to a few, and then only reluctantly or inadvertently. Much of what we said
and did then (and now?) was pose and posture, as we tried to make others (and ourselves) believe we were someone we weren't sure we were, or could be, or even wanted to be.

Things haven't changed much, for me at least. There still isn't much important that I really know or think I know about myself and want to disclose. Gossip, though, and curiosity about who did or does or is what, are relatively harmless forms of entertainment. Since I hope to get some of that about others from the book, it's only fair that I buy my ticket with some objective facts—and perhaps a subjective conclusion—of my own.

You know that Joanne and I got married three days before commencement in 1965, and remain that way. You know too (since you were there) that our three years in law school in Virginia were happy and relatively carefree, and that from there we went to Chicago. Marc was born in 1969, Sarah in 1973, and in 1974 my law firm decided that I was “ready, or nearly so” (in the words of the senior partner) to be a partner. In 1977 Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue persuaded me to come back to Cleveland to run the energy/public utility area of practice. The reasons I finally decided to change one good firm and city for another don't seem very important now, but I'm still here. Jones Day today has about 1200 lawyers in seventeen offices around the world, but, honestly, for me it's still just the place where I work. Being a lawyer has always been what I did because I didn't know what else to do.

In fact, if I've changed in some ways since Amherst (I don't think so; Joanne thinks I'm just more of what I was, good and bad) (at least I think she thinks there's a “good”), in one way I haven't. I still expect something—I don't know what—to happen. I haven't quite accepted, not that being a lawyer is what I do, but that it is probably all I'll ever do. What makes this all right is that it is the rest of my life, the non-lawyer part, that's real. Joanne and Marc and Sarah are important; it's not just that I love them, which is easy, but that they matter. Fortunately I'm too old to be a yuppie, but I do like our old barn/house in what was until recently a small country town outside the city. And, of course, my books are a real source of pleasure. In the past five years
or so my collecting and reading has focused on Samuel Johnson and James Boswell and their circle of literary/artistic/political friends in 18th century London. Of course I don’t have enough time or energy for my family or house or town or hobby, but the fact is that I’ve got to make a living, and doing so makes the rest of my time seem even better because it’s just mine and my family’s.

This brings me to your page limit and my conclusion, which, although very personal, I feel no need to protect with invocations of privacy. I am, more than anything else, happy. Why all the good fortune that has come my way has come my way I do not know. It doesn’t seem to matter. The fact is that nothing really bad has ever happened to me or the people I care about, and my life therefore could scarcely be better. Does this sound pompous or boastful? Honestly I don’t mean it to, and certainly take no credit for living right or being good or working hard or “deserving” what I have. I have lived no better, been no better, worked no harder and been no more deserving than millions who are miserable. Life I guess, is not fair; you do have to take what it gives you. If that’s the main rule though, it’s better to be lucky than to be good. And, I’m glad to report, lucky, and therefore happy, I have been.

See you in June,

Paul

Amherst Fiftieth Reunion

Joanne and I married three days before commencement, then moved to Charlottesville and law school. In 1968 I joined the law firm founded by Abraham Lincoln’s son, in Chicago. Our son and daughter were born there, and I became a partner. In 1977 I joined another firm, Jones, Day, in Cleveland, and in 1996, still with Jones Day, we returned to Chicago. I retired from the practice of law in 2008. The first
of our five grandchildren (three now in San Francisco and two now in New York) was born in 2003. This is the generic history of my post-Amherst life. Change some names and dates and places and it could apply to hundreds, maybe thousands, of boys born in 1943. Nothing about it suggests that going to Amherst, rather than Williams or Ohio State, had anything to do with what followed.

Yet it did. At Amherst I learned (as well as I could) how to read critically and to write carefully and to think skeptically (and how that differed from cynically). Those skills made the first year of law school easy, or at least easier than it was for the vast majority of my classmates. Thank you Bill Pritchard and Theodore Baird and Hugh Hawkins and Gordon Levin and many others. I learned the value of friendship, and the ones formed at Amherst have enriched my life. Thank you Lew and Bruce and Sam and Ron and Chuck and Chris and Michael and Don and Jack and so many of the rest of the Class of ’65. Amherst gave me a sense of belonging I never had before; it let me take away a sense of community that has only grown over the years, built on shared experiences that created what the Senior Song describes as “. . . now we’re bound by ties that will not sever, all our whole lives through.” And it gave me Robert Frost’s message, that the “purpose of college is to teach you that there’s a book side to everything.” And that, perhaps, has meant even more than the other gifts.

Early in my lawyer life I learned that that was my job, nothing more, never would be. Other than my family, books became my real passion. Over the years I built a collection of the works of Samuel Johnson and James Boswell and their circle, with an eye toward creating my own library in which to read and research and find material for writing and speaking and even living. As time passed books became more than their contents, and I began to learn and think about them as objects that could be poorly or beautifully made, that could be objects of historical value, vehicles for informing the past and the lives and thought of not only their authors, but also their designers and printers and binders and, perhaps especially, their prior owners. I found bibliophilic clubs, Caxton, Rowfant, Grolier, Odd Volumes, Association
Internationale de Bibliophilie. Now in retirement I find that the book side of life fills mine, as I continue to collect, to study, to write, to speak regularly about Johnson and Boswell and collecting, and even to publish, utterly lacking in academic credentials, but confident enough in the lessons of Amherst to expose the results of my reading and writing and thinking to others interested in this small niche of literature and history.

The “book side” has also given me the gift of participation in institutions that now fill the time no longer devoted to lawyering and not taken by the great pleasures of family. Last June I stepped down after seventeen years on the Board of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the last seven as Chairman; Folger of course being the corporate sibling of Amherst, administered by the Trustees of the College. That splendid place, with its great collection of not only Shakespeare but also early modern material enabled me to learn much more about books and history and literature, and about the world of research and not-for-profit organizations. It introduced me to a world of scholarship and scholars, to a way of thinking about and approaching life that a very large law firm, with very large corporate entities, never suggested. And Folger then led me to other bibliophilic Boards, the Newberry Library and the Poetry Foundation, here in Chicago, and Dr. Johnson’s House trust, in London, and library groups not only at Amherst but at the University of Chicago and Case Western Reserve.

Would any of this have happened if I had gone to Ohio State or Williams? Perhaps, if with different groups and people. But I don’t know that. What I do know is that it all followed those four years at Amherst, with you, where we were all, as the song says, “boys together.”

[Note: Paul was most reluctant to include any pictures in the Amherst 50th Reunion Book. As he argued in an email to Classmates, January 7, 2015: “Pictures? I struggled with text. . . . nothing to see anyway but a short fat bald old man, available in person in May. . . . pictures just ain’t gonna happen.” We are thankful that in fact he ended up including three pictures!]
Further Views and Opinions

[The following letter which begins this section provides an early record of the strong, principled views Paul stood for throughout his life. The Amherst Student of October 24, 1963, reported Amherst College’s preparation for President Kennedy’s visit to help dedicate The Robert Frost Library. As part of its recognition of this event the Student Council co-sponsored a letter of support for President Kennedy’s Civil Rights bill. By a narrow vote, 338-324, the student body had affirmed the sending of this letter, but as a leader of those on the Council objecting to such action, Paul drew a line stating he could no longer be a member of a group that he believed did not have authority to speak for the entire campus on this matter. Paul’s “Letter of Resignation” was published in the Amherst Student. As classmate Don MacNaughton recalls, “It was a stunning move insofar as Paul was one of the stellar members of the Council. Many were surprised that Paul would do this as he clearly enjoyed playing a leadership role on campus. Similarly, many were impressed that Paul would ‘sacrifice’ this position for this reason and applauded his principled position. I recall discussing this with Paul at the time and that he had no doubt whatsoever that he had done the right thing.”]

To the Amherst College Student Body:

The resignation I hereby submit is necessitated by the fact and the results of yesterday’s referendum. I take this referendum to be a directive from the student body to the Student Council that the Council
act, now, and in the future. as spokesman for the student body in moral and political Issues. I do not wish to be a moral and political spokesman for anyone but myself. And I do not feel, and did not feel when I ran for office, that this was one of the Council’s functions. If such were the function of the Student Council organizations like the ADA, the Young Republicans and the SRE would be unnecessary. But because there is no clear-cut consensus of such issues here at Amherst. we have, and need, these different organizations, able to express such highly personal opinions. But Student Council members do not run on platforms concerned with such Issues and opinions. Thus I feel that they have no right or obligation to serve in such a capacity.

Further, I am disturbed that the authors of the infamous letter did not hesitate to institute a referendum to accomplish only one thing—the prostitution of their noble cause. They achieved this by acquiring for their letter an unwilling signature, the signature of a body who had previously demonstrated their unwillingness to sign. Now they can present President Kennedy with this letter, awe him with the power and weight of the Amherst College Student Council’s signature, a meaningless one, and representative of other than the members of that August body.

I do not wish to serve on a Council which must now expect to consider and declare upon moral and political issues, and to reach decisions which are binding only when agreeable—I feel no obligation, and no right, to do so.

Paul T. Ruxin ’65

[Re: Thomas Piketty, Capital in the Twenty-First Century, Harvard University Press, 2014] Piketty wants to blame unrestrained capitalism or insufficient government, but as a social Darwinist it seems to me that even if returns on investment do over the long term exceed warned income growth the problem is not too much at the top but
too little at the bottom. Two smart parents with good work ethics will produce smart hard working kids, whether the parents are rich or, like mine, poor. And those kids will find places like Amherst, especially from poor families, falling all over themselves to give them a place on the up escalator. I sort of agree with [David] Brooks, but I think both competence and confidence matter, especially the belief that you are good enough to succeed if you work hard enough. Income inequality will continue to grow as long as lazy dumb people continue to reproduce . . . and government can’t do much about that since rejecting Oliver Wendell Holmes decision upholding a decision to sterilize a retarded woman after she had had several children. . . . He said something like “three generations of morons is enough.” Enough political incorrectness there to satisfy even me. Income inequality is a problem now, as our Joe Stiglitz ['64] keeps reminding us, but except for outright confiscation and redistribution, I don’t see how we can keep talented hard workers from bettering themselves, whether or not they start out with advantages. Returns on inherited wealth haven’t kept lots of third generation rich kids to go broke out of laziness and stupidity. (To Classmates, May 13, 2014)

[Re: Abby McCloskey, “No, it’s not the end of capitalism. An alternative to Thomas Piketty’s ‘terrifying’ future,” AEIdeas, April 15, 2014. https://www.aei.org/publication/no-its-not-the-end-of-capitalism-an-alternative-to-thomas-pikettys-terrifying-future/ ] With little training in economics and less in math, it may be my own bias that makes [Kevin] Hassett [economist at the American Enterprise Institute] more convincing to me than Piketty, and while I do remember reading Schumpeter at Amherst (was it Humanities I-II?) and being impressed, I now doubt I understood what he was saying. In any event, Piketty’s “wealth tax” is unlikely to be enacted anywhere, and even if it were, I doubt there is a country in the world that could redistribute efficiently and usefully enough to make a difference in the growth rate of inequality, which will inevitably result at least as much from smart people reproducing with other smart people sharing talent, work ethic
and gene pool, while the rate at which people with limited ability reproduce may exceed the rate at which the others do . . . if the average birth rate needed to maintain a population is slightly above 2.1 per couple, which I think it is, I know few of our peers (or now, their children), who have more than two children, while unmarried people of little education or income exceed that rate . . . should we spend more money on education? Sure. Should we make the tax rate on capital gains equal to the rates on earned income? Sure. Will that fix anything? unlikely. Do incentives and disincentives work? Absolutely, which is why tax policy can’t discourage workers (or non-workers) from working either too little or too much . . . will the ambitious not work so hard if the marginal rate is 75%? Not likely . . . and will the lazy work at all if subsidies provide all the beer they need? Not likely either. Whatever truth there is in Piketty, and I’m sure there’s some, inequality, its causes, and remedies, is too complicated a problem to have a single, simple solution, no matter how elegant. (To Classmates, May 28, 2014)

Still fascinating stuff for me though, but even more fun is engaging in all of this with you three . . . hope you don’t mind all my right-of-center ranting, but even if the answers to these questions are hard to reach, they are reachable, but only if both policy preferences and evidence of what really works and minimizes unintended harmful consequences are all reflected in solutions. (To Classmates Sam Ellenport, Ron Gordon, and Gordon Pradl, May 28, 2014)

[Re: “The Republican War on Workers’ Rights,” NY Times, May 18, 2014] Let’s assume this is accurate, and that it both reflects competing world views, and contributes to wage depression and inequality. What interests me is what you ask next: “All the relevant economic data suggests that the bigger pie is not leading to adequate distributions to many hard working folks, so perhaps not all hard work is created equal?” Tell me what an “adequate” distribution would be? An equitable one? And by whom and how would those things be determined? And of course not all hard work is created equal. My brother, a doctor works very hard indeed, and very long hours, but not as “hard”
as a manual laborer. Is being a teacher hard work? I suppose it is if you do it right, but not, I suppose, if you coast after your fifth year. So how should my brother’s income be determined? By what is fair to a construction worker? It does seem to me people still have choices, and hard workers, on balance, will do better than lazy people, and find a way to escape minimum wages if that is what matters to them. As for the point in the article that waiters and waitresses are 250% more likely to be in “poverty” than the general population, well, I was a waiter in law school, and you bet it was poverty, but part-time poverty; most waiters in New York are aspiring actors or painters or designers or writers, in short, part-timers . . . to know whether there is a valid point here I would have to know what percentage of waiters are part-time compared to the general population. If it’s two and a half times more likely, then the statistic proves nothing. Probably could raise the same kinds of questions about many of the other examples. The article has an argument to make—i.e., poor people are economically disadvantaged in a variety of ways, including by legislation—but its unspoken assumption (is this what professors call “sub-text”) is that they are helpless victims of a rapacious class of employers and their lackey minions of lobbyists and legislators. Oh the shame of it. (To Classmates, May 28, 2014)

[Re: “Science Standards Divide a State Built on Coal and Oil,” NY Times, May 19, 2014] Don’t know enough to evaluate the polling data, but the results are tautological. Of course people who identify as Democrat, Republican or Independent will think the way they reportedly responded . . . a useless poll, it seems to me . . . like asking me, “Did you spend your childhood in Cleveland?” Then, “Are you a Cleveland Indians fan?” 75% of the people who answer yes to the first question will answer yes to the second, and the other 25% are girls.

I don’t know if what we were taught was shaped by particular ideologies or not . . . if so, it wasn’t obvious, as it is now in a curriculum heavy on victim-oriented (or gender, or sexuality, or race, or . . .) views of history, literature, art, even science for all I know. But it
seems the world was less politicized, less subjective then, in education and all things, perhaps because there was more real black-and-white and less grey about things that mattered. For example, the fossil-fuel/climate story does have two sides, even though one is pretty weak, but I don’t see why both can’t be taught, just as evolution and creationism or intelligent design could both be taught, the purpose of education ultimately being the power to analyze, think, reach conclusion, rather than teach conclusions . . . but then would I favor teaching Holocaust denial as a way to learn to distinguish real from phony history? Guess not. But, as Emerson said, it is only a foolish consistency that is the hobgoblin of small minds. And, by the way, of course burning fossil fuels has a climate down side, but so does going without usable, available and affordable sources of energy in the 21st century. Teach all of that, and someone will figure out the right balance. . . . (To Classmates, May 28, 2014)

Have to admit to almost never reading [Paul] Krugman . . . no need to, because he is the most predictable of all the NYT op-ed writers . . . that he won a Nobel demonstrates how that prize too is now just another recognition by one kind of thinker of how others who think the same way must be worthy of a prize. Piketty might be worth reading, but not Krugman on Piketty. Life is too short. (To Classmates, May 28, 2014)

[Re: “Parsing Piketty: Is Wealth Inequality Rising in the U.S.?” The New Yorker, May 29, 2014] Good questions, and the ultimate one is to ask who determines what a “commitment to a social good” means, and once defined, how to achieve it. The problem is not really that Mark Cuban or the president of Suffolk University (never heard of it) or Charlie Munger have too much money, whatever amount that might be, but that so many people seem to have too little (which is not as hard to define . . . if you can’t afford food, shelter, medical care, education, you don’t have enough . . . although if you struggle with those and still have cable tv and McDonalds and weed and beer, don’t look to me
for your food stamps) . . . Sweden or US? For some people Sweden is the ultimate “social good,” but for others, it is the US. Neither is necessarily “right” or “wrong.” My problem is not with disagreement over this or anything else, but the tendency of those who disagree (not the four of us), to drift away from reasoned, evidence-based argument, and descend into self-righteous name-calling and an unwillingness to see that there are usually at least two sides to every important argument. Except, of course, whether Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid are just absolute idiots with evil intentions toward our civilization. (To Classmates, May 29, 2014)

[Re: Johah Goldberg, “Mr. Piketty’s Big Book of Marxiness,” Commentary, July 1, 2014. https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/mr-pikettys-big-book-of-marxiness/] Of course more spending on education, health, environment would be all to the good, and of course the money must come from those who have it, since it can’t come from those who don’t. There are indeed tax policies that can be changed, and should be, and while I am not Warren Buffet, none of those changes will benefit me or my heirs financially, but will benefit them as society is improved (assuming the funds are spent prudently—no small assumption). But I think Goldberg’s article is the best critique of Piketty I have read, and his criticisms are largely irrefutable. A better answer lies in the fact that the economy is not a zero-sum game, and the problem is not too much money at the top, but too little at the bottom—something education, for example can remedy. I also do not see tax minimization as immoral conduct . . . observing the law is what is right and moral, and if it allows lower tax obligations for off-shore investment or capital gains or inheriting money, conduct in accordance with those laws is not wrong. There is no moral obligation to maximize one’s taxes or refuse to file in accordance with the laws and regulations in order to pay more. If the laws and regulations are unwise, then change them, but no name-calling of those who observe them as they are. A more “Scandinavian” society? What that really suggest to me is one in which a completely secular, government-
provided set of social guarantees replaces a sense of individual, moral obligation, ultimately religiously based, to do good and help others. Scandinavian countries have very little private philanthropy, and while that may be an unintended consequence of tax policies that enable government to do everything, it would disrupt our system of arts and cultural support, as well as whatever residual sense still exists that we personally owe those who need help our best efforts. Off to two weeks of grandparenting in NY and CA. (To Classmates, July 6, 2014)

[Re: Benjamin Kunkel, “Paupers and Richlings,” LRB, July 3, 2014. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n13/benjamin-kunkel/paupers-and-richlings ] Doesn't do much for me . . . he summarizes Piketty, and puts him in context only to find him ultimately lacking for not being Marxist enough in applying the data he has amassed . . . this lacks any willingness to critique the data itself, or its interpretation. And neither Kunkel (whoever he his) nor Piketty have enough awareness of the real world to even acknowledge the growing problem from the current level of capital appreciation, i.e., there is now too much capital chasing too few opportunities for growth so that returns on enormous amount are now approaching zero, e.g., Apple's hundreds of billion dollars stranded off-shore, and hedge fund holdings of cash now yielding virtually nothing because their managers see nowhere to put it. All this suggests to me that income inequality is a pendulum which will swing back from \( r > g \) to \( r < g \) when enough excess capital has been created. . . . Wages will always be paid for labor but capital will not earn returns, and thus can't grow, if there is nowhere to invest it. (July 10, 2014)

I think we all share the same belief in the value of infrastructure, health care, education, research expenditures of tax dollars. (To Classmates, July 12, 2014)

Just finished actually reading Piketty, and find it even weaker than I expected . . . he demonstrates that inequality exists (no dispute there)
but doesn’t ever question his analysis of the data, address the cyclical-
ity it suggests, the lack of inclusion of, e.g., home-equity ownership
in “wealth,” and many other obvious questions, and then tacks on at
the end his “remedies” of different tax structures and a tax on capital
in relatively short discussions utterly lacking in any suggestion of how
they would be enacted, enforced or the proceeds distributed. Only
main-stream media with its need for black-and-white simplicity and
the superficiality of its reporting (see., e.g., Israel and Gaza, as if there
is no such thing as historical context, only civilian victims, i.e., the hu-
man shields used by Hamas), could make so much out of so little. (To
Classmates, July 24, 2014)

[Re: “What does it mean for the government (or tax system) to ac-
tually put targeted money in the hands of particular classes of people?”
Brookings Institute Blog, July 29, 2014] It means government is commit-
ted to trying to achieve equality of result, by providing what it regards
as “more equal” opportunity . . . the trouble with believing in and really
wanting a meritocracy is that merit wins out, and provides resources
to succeeding generations (who, by the way, may also possess intrinsic
merit). (To Classmates, July 30, 2014)

You ask more good questions than I have answers, and I am not, in
any event, a defender of unfettered capitalism or ineffective govern-
ment regulation (which is not always a redundancy). Yes, though, for
me the question of how disputes get settled has an answer, and it is our
democratic system in which majority rule is tempered by a variety of
constraints designed to protect minorities, including judicial oversight
of legislative action to ensure constitutional conformity. Ultimately
though, it is the responsibility of citizens to care enough about things
to vote, and vote intelligently. Since I believe in the ultimate wisdom
of the people, it does not bother me that the Koch brothers, for ex-
ample spend enormous amount to support candidates of their choice
(as George Soros does on the other side), because, as the 2012 election demonstrated, the electorate continues to distinguish between what it wants and what the Koch brothers want. In many states the largest contributor to state legislative election campaigns is the state teachers’ union, whether for good or ill. As to the disparity between CEO and floor-level employment compensation, it is important to remember that this is not a zero-sum game . . . more for the CEO does not for any economic reason require demonstrably less for the factory worker, and most high-level CEO compensation is tied to performance results, which benefit not only stock-holders (the largest class of which is usually union pension funds and retirees), but also employees, whose jobs are preserved by good performance.

As to where or whether something like creationism should be taught, I have no pedagogical expertise to answer, except to say that such subjects may have a role in teaching students how to weigh and analyze evidence, and come to rational conclusions based on the evidence. For each subject and at each grade level the answer is different, I suppose, and I continue to draw the line at “teaching” or otherwise using outright idiocies like Holocaust denial, phrenology and astrology.

I am not a Second Amendment scholar, nor expert on Scalia’s thinking about it, and wouldn’t even try to convince you of how or whether Scalia’s original intent argument (whatever it is) would satisfy you. I will venture to say though that at the time the Bill of Rights was drafted, state militias did not have stores of weapons or armories, and the weapons citizen soldiers would have been expected to use in a “well-ordered militia” would have largely been their own personal weapons. The individual right to bear arms read into the amendment, must, I guess, somehow relate to the fact that if individuals’ guns were confiscated, the militias the amendment contemplates would often be unarmed and ineffectual. (To Classmates, May 31, 2014)
My experience is probably unusual, but here it is: My elementary school experience included only two, yes, two, gentiles (who never mingled, at their parents’ preference); it was a Jewish neighborhood. The situation changed hardly at all in junior high, with the perhaps notable exception that there was one new gentile, who became my best friend (because we both thought Latin was fun). High school (3000 students) was about 40% Jewish, but my friend from junior high introduced me to a group of (of course all white) gentiles I became part of, boys and girls (one of whom I married). We were all middle-class, college bound, and scarcely any were “religious” except a few days a year of largely secular observance. I never met a black until college except for our cleaning lady, never met an Asian except in our Sunday Chinese restaurant, and never met an Hispanic except at Mexican resorts. The result though was that I believed everybody was alike. I had no experience with others to suggest anything to the contrary. I didn’t know anyone who was different from me in any way that seemed significant, until I was an adult and had learned about the unfairness of discrimination based on race or religion or color.

What I learned as a Jew about the Holocaust made it impossible for me to judge anyone simply because they differed from me in some superficial way. Now, of course, I judge people harshly all the time (my prerogative as a 71-year-old curmudgeon), and my judgments may be flawed because of a variety of biases I have developed, but never because of race, creed, color, class, occupation (except of course, avoiding that foolish consistency that would make me a hobgoblin, Arabs and especially Palestinians, until proven otherwise, and supporters of Jimmy Carter or Maya Angelou). (To Classmates, June 1, 2014)

Perhaps I should explain my hostility to Maya Angelou, which you may have picked up on in my response to Sam [Ellenport], although I’m sure I need not to anyone who heard her stupid, non-literary “poem,” really, just a list, read at the first Obama inauguration. Here’s a partial explanation, which somehow misses her fraudulent affection of a strange quasi/pseudo/aristocratic accent: http://spectator.org/ar-
Proud to be a not-quite-dead-yet white male, and a believer in the right and responsibility of each of us to make the most of what we have, and help others do the same, but without artificial criteria about who gets help, and how . . . nothing; after all, that I can see wrong about a meritocracy, even if that means it has a genetic predisposition to perpetuate itself. . . .

[Re: “Met Opera Cancels Simulcast of ‘Klinghoffer’,” NY Times, June 18, 2014] Thanks for sending these, Gordon. I have heard the opera, and there is no doubt that it more than suggests a moral equivalence between the Palestinians and the Israelis, which disgusts me. That is not the point though—I don’t care for the music either—give me Puccini any day, but that is not the point either. To me this is further demonstration of the fact that moral relativism has completely engulfed us. There are no more standards, no more rights and wrongs, no more judgments or opinions or works of art, whether music, painting, literature or theater, that are “better” in any objective sense than any other. The only thing that remains as an absolute “wrong” is to hurt someone’s “feelings.” How absurd. It is okay for Hamas to send rockets into Israel, but wrong to suggest Palestinians are at least in large part to blame for their own situation. It’s fine for rap musicians to shout about “hos,” and glorify drugs, but wrong to suggest they are largely ignorant, coarse, unmusical barbarians. I think the opera isn’t much as music or art, and certainly not as politics, but to cancel the broadcast because it hurts the Klinghofer children’s feelings, or offends Zionists (of which I am one), is to say artistic merit is beyond judgment, only the “feelings” of the audience matter. Grow up, I want to say; thin-skinned is your problem. [Peter] Gelb [General Manager, Metropolitan Opera], on the other hand, knows that many of those thin-skinned hands hold fat wallets, and that, no doubt, was worked into his decision. Just like the absurd fuss over Maya Angelou, the crappy, phony, all we care about is elevating “victims” to saintly status,
and giving them a veto over standards and taste and definitions of excellence. (To Gordon Pradl, June 22, 2014)

[Re: Review of Joseph Epstein’s latest collection of essays, A Literary Education and Other Essays. (https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/essayist-old-school/# ) Epstein, editor of the American Scholar magazine (1974–1998), later said that he was fired “for being insufficiently correct politically.”] [This review is] off the mark to me too (seems like he got lost in the trees he doesn’t like and couldn’t see the forest anymore). I’m an Epstein fan from way back, and have read virtually everything in his extensive oeuvre, and while I actually think his short stories are what he does best, he is a skilled essayist, not Montaigne, perhaps, but right up there with Phillip Lopate. He is also a professional curmudgeon, and the review seems to miss that this adopted (or, who knows, real) personality is part of the appeal of the essays. . . . there is a person there, writing, speaking, to the reader. Whether you are engaged rather than repelled (as [Sven] Birkerts is) may be in part a function of whether you share Epstein’s views (as I usually do). But a reviewer of personal essays ought not be either surprised or disappointed by a consistent point of view, nor suggest that it is repetitive to a fault. These were all published individually, separately and I doubt whether this particular reviewer would have the same reservations about a collection of essays (or columns) by astonishingly predictable, and utterly lacking in wit, writers like [Nicholas] Kristof and [Paul] Krugman, with whom he often shares pages. (To Classmates, July 25, 2014)

Don’t get NYRB; do get TLS, preferring my book reporting/reviews to be free of the tired predictable political opinions of NYRB writers, but happy to see what you liked there. Have ordered Epstein’s book from Amazon, but doubt there is anything in there that would contribute much to a discussion of Amherst’s failure/success in educating
the unformed minds it receives. And curious about what it is your
nephew [Amherst ’95] feels fondly about; just the nostalgia that besets
40-somethings for their departed youth? (To Gordon Pradl, July 27,
2014)

[John] Silber [President of Boston University] was a hero of mine.
Last paragraph, I think, simply says our society, or, better, our civiliza-
tion and culture, can function only if people voluntarily live lives
consistent with common decency, respect for law, the pursuit of cu-
riosity, intellectual integrity, Judeao/Christian traditional morality,
ideals which can’t be enforced en masse, and without which collapse is
inevitable. As we see around us. (To Classmates, August 6, 2014)

www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/11/08/midterms-why-republicans-
won/] Given the leftist—way, way leftist—publication, it is hardly
a surprise that this analysis blames the “devilishly shrewd” Mitch
McConnell (an insult to the devil), and the “cynical” Republicans for
results unpopular with its readers and writers, but does not for a sec-
ond even consider the possibility that the people who care enough
about the country to vote in mid-terms (as opposed to the lemming-
like support of non-voters this time around for a presidential candi-
date based solely on skin color with utter disregard of his experience,
abilities, or leadership skills, or lack thereof) made some rational deci-
sions about how things might actually be made better. (To Classmates,
November 13, 2014)

www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2015/03/09/ditch-sats-and-acts/
JmwHksSlyoMkxMdROX12H/story.html] You may recall that the
author was nominated by Pres. Clinton to be Assistant Attorney Gen-
eral for Civil Rights, a nomination Clinton ultimately withdrew as
FURTHER VIEWS AND OPINIONS

her views on racial quotas and redistricting (and “proportional” voting) to ensure the election of minorities became widely known (and disputed . . . she was of the “pay attention to what I mean, not what I say school”). Here is another example, most recently evidenced in Piketty’s book, of ignoring certain facts: Smart people generally marry smart people, good work ethics generally result in economic (and other) success, and both smart genes and work ethics are passed down to the children of such couples, who do better in school and in life. If the “rich” are better represented than the “poor” (a Guinier code-word for Black) in better schools and success later (however measured), it is because, in fact, all people are not created with equal ability, only born with equal rights, and all the elimination of standards and arguments against “competition,” and urging of “collaboration” as the ideal rather than individual achievement cannot negate the role of genetics and upbringing. That is, both nature and nurture matter and are determinative, not superficial measures of “diversity.” While of course I find Harvard the epitome of self-righteous moralizing, its faculty has recently distinguished itself by its outrage at having to pay for more of their health care benefits under the ACA, which it so vociferously supported (without reading), as it distinguished itself long ago by giving Prof. Guinier tenure and a platform. (To Sam Ellenport, March 10, 2015)

I don’t know if she really means to say collaboration ought to prevail over individual achievement as an educational context: perhaps she’s too smart to appear to be so blunt. But she clearly believes that judging individuals by their merits yields results unsatisfactory to her own notions of “equality” and “fairness,” and that group membership (and, thus, group effort) deserves to be primary in evaluating any system, education or otherwise. Diversity for its own sake is a meaningless phrase to me—what is its own sake? Our class of virtually all white 18-year-old boys had as much real diversity in things that matter as any subsequent class of girls and boys who self-identify as 43% non-white (a figure that suggests anti-white discrimination, based on popula-
tion statistics, except, perhaps, in CA). Have standards been dropped to accommodate diversity? Of course, and 850 different courses for 1700 students? Pandering. We used to hear about “rigor” when we were there . . . no what they teach is “respect for others.” The two are incompatible, but, see Oklahoma SAE, the latter now trumps free speech, however repulsive, but harmless to all but people’s “feelings.” As a Jew I have been bullied and discriminated against, but always felt the better response was to achieve, rather than cry about it. (To Sam Ellenport, March 11, 2015)
Remembering Paul (1943–2016)
PART V

Remembering Paul (1943–2016)

The following section includes a number of talks about Paul’s life and influence given during the Celebration of his life held at the Newberry Library in Chicago, June 12, 2016. In addition, other remarks about Paul have been gathered which recognize his many achievements, extending outward from his love of family to his role as a crucial benefactor of, and tireless worker for, numerous art and educational organizations, especially Amherst College. The obituaries which were published in The Johnsonian Newsletter and the Chicago Tribune are also included. Anchoring this section is a final tribute from The Rowfant Club, reflecting the thoughts of many in the organizations to which Paul belonged.
If I could speak to Paul now I’d tell him that some guys will do anything to escape this election coverage. And I would remind him that one of the benefits of being a Chicago resident is that this does not necessarily mean he won’t get a chance to vote.

Those lines would have drawn a couple of smiles from Paul but not an audible laugh. Paul was not your audience if you were in it for belly laughs. I made him guffaw once, in 2007, but we were both lit on single malt. So with Paul the laughs were scarce but that is part of what made them so valuable.

I asked Joanne: if I described Paul as having had a face like a cigar store Indian, would people understand the expression; is it still in common usage? She said no, and also that some might take offense. So let me say that Paul did not have a face like a cigar store Indian, but he did have a face that could discourage strangers on planes from chatting with him. Which is useful. You can ask Joanne because she has the exact opposite kind of face, one that fairly invites strangers to talk to her. Which is just as well since Joanne—as we say in Texas—can talk to a fencepost.

But I liked that Paul could be phlegmatic; I took it as evidence of his unfashionable depth and seriousness. And I liked that he and I could spend hours driving around Bellport, doing errands or ferrying the boys, without either of us feeling the need to fill the car with words. He had what I appreciated as a masculine love of silence.

And at any rate he would drop it all when confronted with his
grandkids. Like Hector, returning to the walls of Troy, he would re-
move his war-like mask so as not to scare the children, and so they
would know and love him. Whenever Paul and Joanne were with us in
Long Island, he and Bear, our seven-year old, would periodically slip
away to town, Huck Finn-like, principally to escape our schoolmarm-
ish regime of limiting sugar intake. Once they got to town they carried
on like sailors on leave, feasting on doughnuts, root-beer floats, can-
dy—really whatever they could get their hands on. Then they would
waddle home, nattering away to each other, wired on sucrose.

Paul had no choice about being my father-in-law but he did me
the honor of being my friend. But before he was either he was my
kinsman. I say that not only because he and my father were cut from
the same piece of Ashkenazi leather but also because Paul was like my
father, by which I mean they were the same kind of men: Twentieth-
Century lawyers, tough-minded, at home in the world of men and
handy at fixing its problems. Not immigrants themselves, but products
of the immigrant experience. Grateful participants in this American
experiment, dark though it may sometimes be.

But Paul was also like my father in his behavior towards me: He
experienced genuine joy in my successes and sorrow at my failures; he
was a source of wise counsel in matters vital and trivial; in trouble or in
celebration, he and Joanne were the first to appear and the last to de-
part; and he managed to regard me highly despite my slovenly nature.
For all these reasons you may sense how lucky I was to have them as
my in-laws, and how easy it was to grow to love Paul and Joanne dur-
during the last 13 years of loving Sarah.

There was a story Paul told at our wedding party (we eloped to
Reno so there was no wedding, per se, which is another reason Paul
liked me, but we had a party later, when we returned). The story in-
volved his realization, years after having first met me and having lis-
tened to me tell stories about my late father, that Paul had actually had
one, brief interaction with my dad in the late-60s, something to do
with an anti-trust matter. What Paul really liked about that story was
that he got to tell it at our wedding celebration; that these two men
could have had this brief interaction without knowing—as there was of course no way to know—that thirty-five years later, two of their kids, one yet unborn, would meet in a museum in New York City and fall in love and get married, and their families would be joined.

Paul’s life was a smashing success by any metric: He loved and was loved by five generations of his family. He earned great professional success and honors. He enjoyed the warm comradery of lifelong friendships, and Joanne’s love. He developed an extraordinarily rich interior life of the mind. It’s true, he wasn’t much for the natural world. One would describe him as a great indoors man. He enjoyed exercise about as much as a cat likes a bath, and engaged in it about as frequently. He was awful at ordering pizza but I took that to be a Chicago thing. I have him to thank for the fact that my boys are smarter than me, and more stubborn, too; and much else, besides. He had no tolerance for pedants, or fools. He was a little walking encyclopedia but he wore it lightly. And what a pleasure it was to be in the company of genuine erudition.

We love our irascible, silence-loving, duty-bound, work-obsessed, beautiful but flawed fathers, even as they remain somewhat mysterious to us. They cut the path into this world and its entirely appropriate that they cut the path into the next one. And we know that. And it shouldn’t be any other way. But still we miss them.
Sarah Ruxin

Today is a celebration of my dad’s wonderful life and an act of remembering how much we love him, and how much he loved us. The idea is to tell stories—today and everyday—so that we’ll always be able to keep him with us. I’m going to try to honor my dad, and share a few thoughts.

My dad’s life was rich. The kind of life I hoped to emulate. Whenever my parents would visit us at our cottage, on Long Island, I’d often ask my dad, “Why don’t you stay longer, while the boys aren’t in school and there is no 4th floor walk-up to contend with?” His answer was always the same: “We have a life too.” And they really did. “There’ll be plenty of time to sit on the back porch when we’re too old to get out of our rockers,” he’d say. Between trips going from East Coast to West, visiting Marc & Holly and the kids, and us on Long Island, my dad could be found chairing any number of boards he sat on, giving talks at one of his many clubs, road-tripping cross country with my mom to hit every film festival west of Chicago, (while showing off his new wheels), lunching with Lev, reminiscing about the Beta House, talking books with Sam, or politics with his brothers, bridge with the Bakers, Zip-Lining with the Squires, or at home just a phone call away always willing to talk, he indeed had a life well-lived.

While I’ve always been grateful to have had such a wonderful father, my gratitude only grew as I got older and had my boys because the love, support and advice he showered on me cascaded onto my three guys as well.
My dad was the kind of father and grandfather all kids want. He was devoted, loving, generous, involved, supportive, and fun. No one can help express some of the wonderful things we loved about Poppy better than my oldest son Bear, who like me, loved his Poppy so dearly. So here is Bear’s top 10 list of things he loved about his Poppy, followed by a few of my own.

**Bear’s Top 10 List:**

1. Poppy always let me drink orange soda.
2. Poppy has great, great jokes.
3. Poppy always buys me everything I wanted. I was happy with Poppy.
4. Pop played Board Games with me.
5. Poppy would take me to the library in Bellport.
6. Poppy was fun to sleep with [he wore a sleep apnea mask which was a hit with the boys].
7. I loved when Poppy picked me up from school.
8. Poppy and I made up our own high fives.
9. Poppy would always take me to Boomers even when my parents wouldn’t.
10. Poppy would always let me wake him up early to play together.

And here’s my list of a few fun things I like to remember when I think of my dad:

1. *Eating with my dad:* There was no better dinner companion than my dad. He’d eat anything, and ordered everything. Whether eating haggis in Scotland, sweetbreads in Italy, raw seafood in Mexico—he was fearless and enthusiastic. Even after getting food
poisoning two years in a row in Mexico he wasn’t deterred from hitting the seafood buffet a third time.

2. *Speaking of Mexico, there was our annual family trip to Baja:* which I suspect my dad and I loved more than anyone else. We loved the tradition and familiarity of going back year after year to the same place. He loved basking in the sun free of sunscreen, or concern for sun cancer, while his grandkids dug in the sand around him, Adam delivered quesadillas oceanside, and he was free to read and be with his family.

3. *The Cleveland Indians.* Baseball games with my dad were one of the few things I did growing up with just my dad & brother. Really, and this will not surprise you, the outing was just an excuse to eat stuff we weren’t normally allowed to eat, like cotton candy, soda, hot dogs, and soft pretzels. You may see a theme emerging.

4. *Driving.* My Dad bravely taught me to drive stick. We both survived, but just barely. He also took me to get my driver’s license, I’m not sure who was more disappointed when I failed the written test the first time, or more relieved when I passed it the second.

5. *Grammar (or, his life-long battle).* He couldn’t believe someone related to him would have such difficulty distinguishing between subject and object pronouns. But he finally gave up, and decided to love me as I am, about the time I gave up Grammar and entered the visual arts.

6. *Good Genes:* When I think of the traits I like to think I got from my dad, I include his open-handed generosity, his persistence, his mid-western work ethic, and my sailor’s mouth. Just kidding, that I didn’t get from him, and it made him crazy. That is until my 3-year old Theo started saying the F-Word, which both he and Pop thought was hilarious. It seems good grammar skips a generation: not only does my 3-year old say the F-Word but he conjugates it properly into the F-Worder when appropriate.
I want to thank my dad for the lifetime of love he gave to my boys and me, we’ll treasure it for the rest our lives.

And I want to thank everyone who has filled this room and filled my dad’s life with so much friendship and love.

So I’ll leave you with a quotation from Samuel Johnson, about Friendship, which my Dad read at my wedding party, and at Marc & Holly’s before that. It is about friendship and love, which was his wish for his children and one he achieved for himself with my mom and all of you.

FRIENDSHIP:

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both.

We are often, by superficial accomplishments and accidental endearments, induced to love those whom we cannot esteem; we are sometimes, by great abilities, and incontestable evidences of virtue, compelled to esteem those whom we cannot love.

But friendship, compounded of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other; and therefore requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgment, but that they should attract the affections; that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity; not only useful in exigencies, but pleasing in familiar life; their presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the gloom of fear and of melancholy.

[Johnson, Rambler #64, October 27, 1750]
I am willing to bet that everyone here has heard Paul give a talk—without slides—at one of his many bibliographic clubs, at various symposia, or even at our college reunions at which he spoke 3 times. He made it look so easy as he captured us and led us through complex ideas and intricate stories—usually with a dose of humor. In a wonderful talk simply entitled “The Club,” about the club Samuel Johnson established in 1764, is my favorite of all Paul’s opening remarks:

Science teaches that there are three biologic imperatives: nourishment, sleep, and sex. More nuanced scientists no doubt sense that there is a fourth . . . imperative: friendship. It is what brings us together.

I am not one of Paul’s oldest friends here, having met Paul only 50+ years ago when we entered Amherst college with 250 other young men. For most of us, it was humbling as it was exciting. We may have been bright boys on our own turf, but now we were one among many. What made Amherst special was that we all took the same courses in our beginning year, orchestrated by a rigorous faculty. We shared a common curriculum, from English assignments to history to physics—common experiences which encouraged us to get to know each other.

We spent another 3 years with professors who questioned us and challenged us to think critically, write clearly, and defend our own opinions. Classmates here today—Paul Ehrmann, Steve Farber, Lew Markoff, Chuck Bunting, Don MacNaughton, and those who could
not attend—all left Amherst with the sense that its motto—*Terras Irradiant*—meant something. *Terras Irradiant*: they shall enlighten the world. Our education was a privilege which carried a responsibility to somehow make the world better by example and by deed.

My loose friendship with Paul through the 1970s became much closer in the 1980s, when we were asked to join the council of the Friends of the Amherst College Library. I had become the owner of a bookbindery and a collector, as Paul gained stature as a lawyer and started his Samuel Johnson library. Another classmate, Ron Gordon, had become a master printer and was also asked to join. This was not a normal college fund-raising group, but one which actively created new programs for the library. Until the friends group was disbanded in 2014, it was a focal point for the three of us, a group within a group which Daria D’Arienzo, the special collections librarian, named “the Amherst book triumvirate, dedicated to beautiful bookmaking, scholarship and collecting.” This culminated a few years ago when Ron and I wrote a book about our careers and Paul wrote an insightful preface.

Our library connection at Amherst also brought about an uncommon rite of passage which Paul and I shared and talked about. One of my favorite professors, Alfred Havinghurst, was on the library committee. At my first meeting, he reached across the table, offered his hand, and said “call me Alf.” You have no idea how accepting this felt, even to an established middle-aged man. Paul told me he had a similar experience when, already a major collector and established lawyer, he and one of his most admired Amherst professors, Bill Pritchard, became Paul and Bill, a friendship blessed with decades of frequent meetings and lengthy correspondence. In a letter he sent me after hearing about Paul’s death, Bill wrote:

> [it] feels, at this moment, like a very large weight of sadness, a black cloud descending . . . he was very full of life . . . for some reason Paul was convinced that I had been instrumental in his learning to write. What could I have said but thanks.
Paul was so gifted and productive in so many ways, and behind it all was his life as a Beta at old Amherst. He could be very funny about that . . . I was privileged to know him.

Through the twice yearly meeting of the Friends, my friendship with Paul had ample time to flourish. Among other things, with the council in support, we sponsored fellowships for outside scholars, initiated digitization on campus, and published unique Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost documents, all with the encouragement of the long serving librarian, Will Bridegam.

Paul missed few meetings, even when he was working long hours at the law. I would often pick him up at the airport where our endless conversation would begin anew. We met away from Amherst too. In 2003—just like two mafia dons in the movies—Paul and I met at the Grolier Club. Then, over drinks, we discussed our new grandchildren, pipe-dreaming about the dynasty to be formed by the arranged marriage of his grandson Trevor with my granddaughter Vivian, both born that year.

As Paul’s law responsibilities started to lighten, he accepted the Chairmanship of the Folger Library Board of Governors. The Folger library has many Amherst connections, and Paul and I found funds to promote one of the high points of our collaboration: the Folger student fellowships, which every year since has sent several students to the Folger for research.

This past year Paul and I, along with classmates Howard Bloch, Gordy Pradl, Ron Gordon and others submitted a lengthy white paper suggesting some required courses be reinstated at Amherst for all students, as a way of uniting them and giving them a shared experience that had been so important to us.

As Paul disengaged from the law, he spent more and more time with his collection. He gave talks around the country, joining more clubs and organizations including the Johnsonian society, and produced some informative scholarship.

Let me end with a quotation from Samuel Johnson: “Life is very
short, and very uncertain; let us spend it as well as we can.” Paul’s life was too short, yet it was a life well spent—a life it has been our privilege to share. Truly Paul earned the words of our college’s motto: *Terras Irradient*. His life helped enlighten the world.
My wife Jodie and I met Joanne and Paul as duplicate bridge antagonists in a monthly bridge group in Cleveland. Paul wasn’t really very good at being an opponent in a social setting—not to say he was a poor bridge player—but his kindness, generosity, good nature and humility better suited him to be a good friend. So that’s what he became.

After we’d been friends for a while Paul showed me his library. He told me that he collected works of Boswell and Johnson but neglected to mention that his was a world class collection. For all I knew at that time he had a Penguin classics series, although the bindings looked pretty good. That was the way I saw Paul. He wasn’t a boastful guy. He didn’t, in any way, tout his many accomplishments. Later on he invited me to the Rowfant Club, a Cleveland book club, and introduced me to some of his friends there. I subsequently joined and discovered that Paul is a legendary member, a quintessential Rowfantian.

One of the many ways Paul supported the Rowfant Club was his participation in its annual fundraising auction of bookish items. For the past few years he could not be present for the auction so I volunteered to bid for him. Here’s the way it worked. On the eve of the auction he would authorize me to bid outrageous sums on a few of what seemed to me to be very obscure booklets. I consoled myself by thinking no one else would bid on the items he wanted and I could pick them up for a song. But in fact the bidding on Paul’s selections was always quite spirited. Nevertheless, I was rarely outbid and as
a consequence I have acquired a reputation for being a wealthy literary connoisseur.

Joanne tells me that Rowfant was Paul’s first book club. And I am here in part as an emissary of the Club. I have a message from our current president, Eric Kisch, on behalf of the Club.

Eric writes: “We wish to express our deepest sympathies to Joanne, family members and friends of our beloved member Paul Ruxin, on your recent sudden, tragic loss. While the many at Rowfant who knew and were friends with Paul grieve with the family, I want today to celebrate the life of our departed member, one who epitomized everything that the Club stands for in terms of celebrating the book in all its capacities to teach, entertain, amuse and otherwise stimulate the mind of man.

“Paul was a long-tenured member, having joined in 1979. He served on the Council of Fellowes from 1988–94 and gave numerous talks at our Friday luncheons. His talks were eagerly awaited events and attracted large audiences. A collection of them was published by the Club in a book entitled Friday Lunch. Paul was one of the world’s experts on Boswell, Dr. Johnson and their circle. I recall personally hearing several of Paul’s talks and marveling at his ability to conjure up that 18th century society and bring us into it in a matter of minutes. A review of the titles of the more than a dozen talks he gave at Rowfant over the years reveals him to be a man of boundless curiosity and wide-ranging interests.

“His bright cheerful personality won him many admirers especially among newer and younger members who were inspired by his erudition and dedication to books and knowledge, and his total lack of any lofty airs, which might befit a man of such learning and worldly success. Steeped as he was in the life and times of one of the literary world’s great curmudgeons, he never let any of this rub off on him personally.

“So, Joanne and family of Paul, though his presence will be greatly missed in the coming months and years, his influence will endure and continue to inspire us. In the coming months, we hope to have our
own celebration of Paul’s life in Cleveland. We shall not see his like again and so need to bask in the bright light he shone on us and on our bibliophilic and intellectual endeavors.”

I conclude with some words from the book of Joshua, “Be strong and of good courage.” May you be comforted by the support of friends and family and by the knowledge that your husband and father made such a significant contribution to the lives of the many many friends and colleagues that he influenced over the years. We have all been blessed for knowing him.
Robert Baker

I met Paul Ruxin on the first day of junior high school. Paul and I would be in the same homeroom throughout both junior high and high school. Because we were on what is now called the academic track, we had the same class schedules for the next 6 years except that I was in band and Paul was in the choir.

In Paul, I developed a friendship with someone who was brilliant and interested in so many things. We spent time together in each of our homes talking about family histories, current events, books and movies. I came to know Paul’s immediate family—his father and mother and his two brothers. They all were exceptional people.

At the end of junior high school, our class held an election for many categories of achievement. Paul was chosen as the boy “most likely to succeed” while I was selected as the boy “with the best complexion.” As you will hear from others who will speak today, the students of our junior high school class accurately forecasted Paul’s future success.

From junior high we went to Cleveland Heights High School, known as Heights High. This school was fed by four junior high schools and was a more diverse school than our junior high school. There were some students who were comfortable being friends with students in the different groups at Heights, and Paul was one of them. All members of one of these groups from our Heights class who called themselves the Squires are here today to honor Paul’s memory and to express their sympathy to Joanne who also was a member of our high school class.
One of my fond memories during high school was making apple cider each fall at a farm owned by the family of one of the Squires. It was quite an adventure from gathering the apples, working the cider press and then bringing the cider back. There were rumors that the cider was converted to hard cider. As a boy from a teetotaling family, it wasn't me, and I don't think Paul then had the necessary skills.

Paul had been in youth-theater and was interested in movies. At the Heights Arts Theater during high school we discovered Ingmar Bergman and his definitely non-Hollywood films—*The Seventh Seal, Wild Strawberries, The Virgin Spring* and *Through a Glass Darkly*. We spent hours talking about these films—their symbolism, the characters, but basically, what was that film about. We felt so sophisticated and avant-garde.

I had one experience with Paul in high school that deserves mention. An English teacher at Heights decided that the school should have a debate team. Paul and I, as seniors, were chosen to be the leaders of the team. We debated teams from many other high schools in the Cleveland area. The Heights team had a significant advantage over all of the other teams—Paul's amazing store of knowledge, Paul's ability to think on his feet and Paul's ability to speak clearly and persuasively. These skills would come in useful in his subsequent legal career. Over the debate season, we took both sides of the question “Is Peace the Absence of War” and were undefeated.

After high school we both went east to College. Others will speak today about Paul at Amherst and his service to Amherst throughout his life. We were close enough that we could occasionally visit each other. Paul was a Beta at Amherst, and it was said that the Beta house at Amherst was the inspiration for the movie *Animal House*. I would have liked to see Paul in a toga.

Probably for both of us one of the most important events during our college years was that we started dating our future wives. Although Paul and Joanne knew each other at Heights High, they started dating during one college summer when they met at a Heights Choir function. They both had been choir members. This relationship quickly
became serious. Meanwhile I met my future wife at a summer job. Paul, Joanne, Dalia and I started double dating. We both got married before starting law school and experienced marriage as law students with our wives working to help put us through law school.

After law school, Paul and Joanne moved to Chicago where Paul joined the firm of Isham, Lincoln and Beale. Their son and daughter were each born one year after our two daughters were born. During those years we spent time visiting each other and comparing our experiences as parents and as lawyers at large law firms. These discussions with Paul, I think, made me a better parent and lawyer.

After time spent as an official of the State of Ohio, I went back to the practice of law at Jones Day which at that time was a large Cleveland firm with a small Washington DC office. When I joined Jones Day, it was expanding by opening offices in the US. In coming years, it would open offices in Europe, Asia and South America so that now it has 43 offices in 19 countries. In those years, Jones Day had a large corporate practice including representing public utilities. Some personnel moves at Jones Day resulted in a need for a partner in public utility law in Cleveland. I suggested my friend Paul Ruxin who was still in Chicago and represented public utilities there. Jones Day reached out to Paul about coming back to Cleveland and being the lead lawyer in our utility practice. At first Paul said no to leaving his law firm for Jones Day, but the very persuasive Alan Holmes, then the Managing Partner of Jones Day, flew to Chicago and explained to Paul that saying no to a Jones Day offer “was unacceptable.” Paul and Joanne moved to Cleveland and this meant that we now had our best friends and their children living in the same area, and Paul working in the same law firm. In Cleveland, Paul grew the public utility practice and became a mentor and friend to many lawyers who are here today.

Since Jones Day was rapidly expanding, I was transferred to Los Angeles, to Tokyo (where I opened the firm’s office) and finally to Chicago. While I was in the Chicago office, the firm began to do more work for the big electrical utility, Commonwealth Edison, and Jones Day transferred Paul and Joanne back to Chicago. For us, our
best friends were now living two buildings away from us. We had an
opportunity to share much of our lives, our work, and watch our chil-
dren’s lives change as they were becoming young adults.

Then Dalia and I got a call from the national Presbyterian Church
asking if we would go to Albania and help manage the Church’s Koso-
vo War refugee effort. Paul advised against going to Albania because
I would be giving up my law practice that I had spent so many years
developing. Despite Paul's advice, Dalia and I decided to accept the
request of the Church and became humanitarian workers in Albania.
I ended up managing a refugee office in Tirana, Albania. Running
an office there had its challenges because of daily power blackouts. It
is difficult to run an office with computers and printers that has no
power. What we needed was a standby generator. To have a generator
sufficient to power a building required that money needed to be raised.
The first check, and a large check, that arrived for the new generator
came from Paul Ruxin who had counseled us against going to Albania.
Despite his own misgivings about whether we should even be in Alba-
nia, when we needed help, Paul Ruxin was there for us.

We also traveled together on several occasions. I remember one
trip to the Caribbean where we brought our daughters and the Ruxins
brought Sarah (Marc was on a school baseball trip). The first day we
were there, all of the girls got themselves beet red. Sarah says that her
father didn't say anything about it. I can't claim that I said nothing
about it to my daughters. One morning Joanne, the three girls and
I took our snorkeling gear and went looking for beautiful fish in the
ocean. After several hours of snorkeling, we decided it was time to go
back in. We looked at the shore to see Paul and Dalia frantically wav-
ing their arms and yelling, “Come back! Come back!”

Once the four of us met in London and decided to have breakfast
at Brown’s Hotel, one of the really nice hotels in London. During
breakfast Paul asked if any of us ever thought that we, just four kids
from Cleveland, would ever be having breakfast together in London,
much less at Brown’s Hotel. We agreed that when we were young we
had never even heard of Brown’s Hotel and that we were actually there
was unbelievable. However, the other diners at Brown’s Hotel that morning and the staff of the hotel thought we were just tourists or vacationers.

In 2014 the four of us went on a barge trip through the Burgundy region of France. This is a trip I recommend to everyone. The food and wine were terrific, but Paul, who organized the trip, went over and beyond in helping me. Paul insisted a wheelchair be put on the barge because it would make it possible for me to go on excursions. There were several excursions that my limited mobility would have prevented me from taking. Paul insisted that I go on the excursions and use the boat’s wheelchair. He would push the wheelchair. I am not the lightest person to push in a wheelchair, particularly on uneven ground and up a hill, but he did it. His willingness to push me in a wheelchair made it possible for me to enjoy all that the trip had to offer.

I have learned that I have many acquaintances and friends. In Paul, I had something truly very precious—a good and life-long true friend.
Unlike most who have spoken this afternoon, I have not known Paul Ruxin for a long time. Our acquaintance goes back only about a decade, and during most of that time he was a Trustee of the Newberry Library, where he played an important role as the chairperson of our Collection Management Committee and also helped instrumentally with building our Society of Collectors. He did a great deal to benefit this institution and the development of our collection, he got to know and cared about our staff, and he earned their and his fellows Trustees’ admiration and affection.

Before proceeding with my remarks, I must disclose two things. First, I did not go to Amherst College; instead, I went to the “other place.” This fact leads me to a brief story about Paul. After a meeting here one day, he approached me with a paper bag, saying that he had a gift. I opened the bag and found a T-shirt, whose front said, “Amherst Libraries.” I said to Paul, “That’s very nice, Paul, but you know I can’t wear this shirt.” He said, with a smile, “Look at the back.” I did. It read, “Williams Wibwawies.” I pointed out to Paul that the alliteration was not complete. He said, “But it is funny.”

My second disclosure is that, like Paul, I am an eighteenth-century person, which explains what follows.

Paul Ruxin was a man of letters; indeed, an eighteenth-century man of letters in the way his beloved Johnson defined the term: “To read, write, and converse in due proportions is . . . the business of a man of letters.” If that be so, then this was Paul’s business.
Reading, writing, conversation. These Johnsonian activities were central to Paul’s way of living, partly because they brought him so much meaning and pleasure, and partly because he sought ardently to foster them in others as sources of that same meaning and pleasure.

From what springs did these fundamental commitments of Paul’s arise? The opening phrase of a mid-eighteenth-century document provides an answer. “The Improvement of the mind being the proper employment of a reasonable creature”: so began the bylaws for an organization Edmund Burke invented—which he called The Club. Not Johnson’s later The Club, of which Burke became a member and about which Paul knew so much, but an undergraduate organization Burke founded at Trinity College Dublin in 1747. I can imagine Paul as a member of this group, precisely because his commitment to learning for himself and others was deep, sustained, pervasive. Hence his involvement with and work on behalf of Amherst College, its library, and its undergraduates; the Folger Shakespeare Library; the Newberry Library; the Poetry Foundation; bibliophilic societies; and other organizations with which he became associated over the years. Hence, too, his satisfaction in sharing his collection with students, and his mentoring of other collectors and young library professionals.

Along with this commitment to learning went a deep Burkean belief in the enormous, often untapped value of our cultural and educational legacy—to individuals and society as a whole. Although there were moments when he would have said, to adjust Johnson slightly, that our age was running after mad innovation, Paul strongly encouraged organizations like the Folger and the Newberry to consider untried ways of doing old things, and to explore new means of achieving our enduring missions. Even so, he wanted us never to ignore but always to cultivate our inheritance from the past, and to call upon its wisdom. He therefore was passionate about what Johnson called “the fitness of consulting other understandings,” the “sentiments and opinions of those who, however neglected in the present . . . had . . . knowledge and acuteness.” For he knew that avenues to the discovery of meaning lie in the open-minded willingness to consider ideas beyond those
merely ready to hand in one’s own time.

This brings me back to reading. Paul championed the reading that can be done in a library, and particularly in a special collections library. His leadership at the Folger and the Newberry grew out of his conviction that, as he wrote last year, “the point of special collections is to preserve their holdings for use, rather than simply for viewing in exhibition cases. . . .” These books and manuscripts, he added, “themselves are the past, not merely remnants or memories,” and as such they “are there to be used, not to be worshipped as relics.”

Out of reading, the act of using books, comes writing. Paul wrote and wanted undergraduates to write because with Johnson he knew two big things about it. By writing we subject our thoughts to “frequent examinations and reviews,” scrutinizing and refining our thinking. And in writing and literature our ambition is “to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by discovering and conquering new regions of the intellectual world.” Paul wrote learnedly and handsomely with these objects in mind. He was happy to support others in their writing, as people present today can testify. My own last exchanges with him about writing concentrated on his desire to see in a draft essay of mine more exposition about what value the humanities bring—to our human quest for meaning.

As for conversation, Paul could and did (like Burke and Johnson himself) talk well about most anything, in a way that attracted and sustained the attention of his conversation partners. Everyone here can cite notable examples of his conversational wit. Unlike Johnson, Paul did not talk for victory, except in debating club or later in court; instead, in such venues as the Rowfant and Caxton Clubs, it was for the sake of mutual benefit. There he and his fellow members could share the fruits of their reading and writing through mutually educative discussion.

The activities of the man of letters—reading, writing, conversation—offer much of what gives life richness and makes it worth living, along with and in conjunction with the love of family and friends. Of course, nothing here-below can do everything we want it to do.
Boswell reminded us in January 1783 that we cannot help but be “sadly impressed with a conviction of the transient nature of human life, with all its concerns and occupations.” Nor, as Johnson said, does nature provide us a remedy for sorrow, including the sorrow we feel at the loss of Paul Ruxin. As we join today in celebrating his life, let us recommit ourselves to remembering how as a husband, brother, father, father-in-law, grandfather, friend, colleague, and man of letters he brought so much meaning into all of our lives.
There are literally hundreds of people, many of them bibliophiles, who called Paul Ruxin their friend. He was a member of the Caxton Club, the Rowfant Club, and the Grolier Club. And he was the guest speaker for many of the other bibliophilic societies in the United States, including the Florida Bibliophile Society. His death has shocked us all.

I posted a notice of Paul Ruxin’s death on the Facebook page of the Florida Bibliophile Society. And I included an anecdote of how I first made his acquaintance in September 2004. For those FBS members who didn’t read my Facebook post, I will repeat the anecdote below. And I will add a few more anecdotes to show the kind of man my friend Paul Ruxin was.

In September 2004, Lee Harrer, a member of both the Florida Bibliophile Society and the Caxton Club, gave me a copy of the latest issue of The Caxtonian, which contained an article by Paul Ruxin titled, “Other People’s Books: Association Copies and Another Pleasure of Collecting.” Lee knew I’d be interested in reading the article because I too collected association copies.

I wrote Mr. Ruxin, introduced myself, and said I collected association copies and Samuel Johnson—but on a mailman’s salary (Paul Ruxin was a partner in the prestigious Jones Day Law Firm). I told Paul that I was about to buy a copy of his book, *Friday Lunch*, because I was going to begin giving talks before the Florida Bibliophile Society, and hoped to learn a thing or two by reading the talks he gave
before the Rowfant Club during lunch on Fridays.

Paul promptly responded and wanted to know where I had found a copy of his book. He said he was looking for copies to give to some of his friends. I gave Paul the bookseller’s contact information and told him to buy it for one of his friends because, at $75, it was really too rich for me. And I thought that was the end of the matter.

I decided to take off from delivering the mail the following Friday and was just sitting down to have lunch when my mailman came to my door with a package for me. It was a copy of *Friday Lunch*. And inside was this gift card:

![Gift Card Image]

I “surprised” Paul Ruxin a few months later. One of the thirteen talks published in *Friday Lunch* was about the poet and playwright Archibald MacLeish. I had just read MacLeish’s essay “The Reorganization of the Library of Congress 1939–44,” in the 1945 Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, and I thought Paul would enjoy reading it. I found an offprint of the article on Abebooks, ordered it, and had it sent directly to Paul Ruxin’s place of residence in Chicago.

Paul received the pamphlet, but he didn’t know who to thank! There was nothing on the invoice that identified who bought the pamphlet for him. So Paul called this friend and that friend, and yet another friend—Paul had lots of friends—but, thus far, no friend admitted to sending him the pamphlet. Finally, about two weeks later, I emailed Paul and asked if he had received the pamphlet I sent him. And Paul replied, “SO YOU’RE THE ONE!!”

Chicago was cold and windy in 2005, and Paul accepted my invita-
tion to be the guest speaker for the March meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society. He planned on spending a week or so soaking up the warm Florida sun after he gave his talk to us. “Soft-Hearted Sam” was the title Paul had selected for his talk. A day or two before the meeting, however, Paul contacted me and said he had to change his plans. He would fly in the day before the meeting, but he had to fly back to Chicago right after the meeting was over that Sunday. And that’s what happened. Afterwards, I learned that Paul had been in the middle of negotiating the sale of an oil company, and had to get back to Chicago to resume negotiations on Monday. To me, that says a lot about what the word “commitment” meant to Paul Ruxin.

I invited Paul to brunch at my house before the FBS meeting in March 2005. And the brunch was delicious as usual. We spent more than a few minutes beforehand in my library, mostly in front of the shelves containing the books formerly owned by Donald and Mary Hyde. Paul remarked to my wife that I was lucky to have an entire room for my books. He said that all his wife let him have was one small alcove for all of his books!

I had the opportunity to visit that “small alcove” in March 2011. I was in Chicago for the Caxton Club’s Book-Launch Party to celebrate the publication of Other People’s Books: Association Copies and the Stories They Tell. Both Paul and I had contributed essays which were published in the book. As for Paul’s alcove, after seeing it, and handling some of the books on his shelves, I regarded it as a great alcove! There were books formerly owned by Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, and their contemporaries—all of them looking down and out over Chicago. At thirty-eight floors up, Paul’s Great Alcove of Books was the closest I have ever been to book heaven!

I last heard from Paul on March 21st of this year. I had sent him the link to my recent blog post, “The Story of Spence’s Anecdotes.” And Paul replied, “Fascinating as usual . . . thanks.”

To you Paul, I say with all my heart,
“Thanks for being my friend.”
Michael Witmore

I have the privilege this morning of speaking about Paul Ruxin’s role at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, for which he was Chair of the Board of Governors from 2006–2013, during which time he led the Folger to independent governance and contributed to its growth in countless ways. The Folger is a place that Paul loved, for the obvious reason that it is a library of rare books and is also part of Amherst College, both of which Paul cared about deeply. He loved the Folger collections in spite of the fact that they predate his own interests as a collector which, in Paul’s case, focused on the world of James Boswell and Samuel Johnson. Paul was focused on the 18th century, which means that he was modern by Folger standards. Indeed, anyone who spent time with Paul and his magnificent collection of Boswelliana—as it is called—knows that he viewed the 18th century as the recent past, or even the present. Books have a tendency to speak to us from whatever distance they have to span; they spoke to Paul constantly, and in his hands, their authors were friends with whom he could converse freely. These are rare freedoms Paul wanted to share with others, and that conviction made him an inspiring presence on the Folger Board and in our community, something to which both I and my predecessor—Dr. Gail Kern Paster, also here today—can attest.

I enjoyed getting to know Paul. When I was living in Madison, Wisconsin, and teaching at the university there, Paul suggested that we get to know each other better, and offered to meet me at a local book
collector’s landmark: the Mars Cheese Castle in Kenosha, Wisconsin. (It was a halfway point.) There we could talk more about books, about collecting; perhaps I could educate my palate on the finer points of mid-western Brats. But of course, Paul really wanted to talk about books, about what they mean to us still, and what they can teach us. About a year later, when I had an opportunity to see his magnificent collection in his home in Chicago, I was reminded of the way in which certain Renaissance humanists would dress up in their finest clothes before entering their own libraries—preparing themselves, in effect, for a collegial conversation with friends from the past. Paul believed in the communion of like minds, and the power of books to bring us into the presence—maybe the candle-lit glow—of another person’s life and thoughts. That, of course, is the magic of books, but also the magic of the communities they create. I can think of no greater testament to Paul’s belief in the power of elevating, lasting connection, than this assembly here today. I will miss his friendship, his sense of humor, and his gift for finding connections among the things he loved. His was a mind that glowed, and I know that many of us will read by that lamplight for a very long time.
First of all, this doesn’t make any sense to me, because Paul was supposed to eulogize me, not vice-versa. I know he would have tried to make me look good to my friends and family, and I don’t know anyone who could have done it any better, such was his power with words and the careful precision of his thought and expression.

I met Paul on the first day of our Freshman year at Amherst. It was impossible for us to have missed each other, because his room was diagonally across from mine, and on that day all the doors to all the rooms on our floor were wide open, with parents coming and kissing and going, some crying, (my mother among them) and furniture, clothes, and books going in. Moreover, his desk was already arranged so that he could monitor the hallway; all one had to do was look out from my room, and there was Paul with a stack of paperbacks on his desk, none of which had anything whatever to do with the Freshman curriculum. This impressed me, because I was more than a bit apprehensive about the classroom work of the year that loomed ahead of us, and I could not imagine having time for recreational reading. Anyway, because we were in each other’s field of view, I eventually walked the 8 or 10 feet over to his room and we started a conversation mostly about the stack of books that sat between us on his desk, he and I both standing.

That’s the way I remember it; I also remember being a little bit in awe of the guy, because of his obvious poise compared to me. The way Paul looked that day is the way he always looked to me all his life. He
looked 40 when he was 18, and he still looked 40, save for some gray hair, when he was 70. The only thing that changed over time was that part in his hair; it just got wider as we aged. And for all I know, the black rimmed glasses he was wearing that day when we were 18 are the same ones he was wearing the last time I saw Paul, last September in Telluride. (Marc tells me Paul was sporting new designer frames at Telluride; I obviously didn’t notice.) Without those glasses, he often looked dazed and tired. Then he’d wipe his eyes, put them back on, and be Ruxin again. By the end of that first day in the fall of 1961 or maybe by the end of the first month, I knew more about Cleveland and its social mores, including which high schools were WASPy and which were not, which had the best sports teams, and what it meant if you were from Shaker Heights vs Cleveland Heights, than I had ever dreamed of knowing or caring about.

We all sense what was special and irreplaceable about Paul. He had an unforced, seemingly unsolicited influence on anyone around him. He never sought out the authority to affect other people that was regularly handed to him. You automatically trusted him, but he was no politician. Maybe in part we trusted him, because of his mature physical appearance when we were all so young. But he was also a good listener and an exceptional intellect was bursting out from him. He looked you right in the eye when you spoke, and his responses were low key, quiet, very calming and always supportive. He gave advice with seeming reluctance, but you took it very seriously when given.

I learned very early in Freshman year to stick with Paul when we went to mixers at Mount Holyoke or Smith, because he was not at all shy about approaching and engaging in conversation any girl I wanted to meet. I had only to point her out. He seemed to enjoy the matchmaking. After 5 minutes of conversation, he would turn around and introduce the chosen female to me, as if they were already old friends. [This is how I met my first wife, Ann Woodbridge, daughter of a Jones Day partner, but I hesitated to mention it with Cali present.] After we both joined the same fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, Paul was naturally elected first as Rushing Chairman, which ultimately assured Beta of
the best pledges from the next year’s class, and later as President of the fraternity. Meetings never ran better than when Paul ran them, yet they were also never more fun. As you all know, this was only the beginning of a long string of boards of directors, trusteeships, and chairmanships for which Paul was either chosen or to which he was elected throughout his later life. Such peer recognition came to Paul as naturally as iron filings come to a magnet.

All of us here have some sense of the monumental nature of this loss. For me I can only say that Rux was one of two or three people by whose continued existence I used to judge the state of my world. If Ruxin was “there” and if those other so and sos were also there, then I could deal with whatever was the current crisis or just whatever threatened to bore me. His loss is requiring a serious re-structuring of my universe. Cataclysmic changes in the crust of my share of the earth must be dealt with and reconciled, but I am waiting for the ground to stop shaking. I know that a new equilibrium will be reached, however long that may take. Right now, I can only offer my love and support to Joanne and the family.
What to say about Paul Ruxin? I keep searching for the words, but nothing sticks. This is similar to my frustration when thinking about Bach or Schubert. No words that I come up with begin to do justice to the music that so enriches my life. So it is for me with Paul Ruxin, my friend “Rux.”

As I have thought about him over the past few months since his passing, more often than not the phrase “beautiful mind” is about all that I can muster. Perhaps trite, but the more I conjure things, the more I come to believe that I am striking the right chord. I used this phrase with The New York Times reporter who had talked to each of us on several occasions over the past year, and she seemed to understand what it was that I was trying to say.

Paul was a natural—bright, warm, open, wise, articulate and with an instinctive leadership quality. He could engage anybody and everybody, and did so with enthusiasm. All of us at Beta looked up to him. Almost all of us at Amherst looked up to him. And, as we learned at his memorial service, this was equally true in grammar school, high school, law school, the legal practice and in the rare book world.

I keep coming back to one experience with Paul. We were appointed co-rushing chairs at Beta at the end of junior year. It was the summer of 1964 and I happened to come upon a soon to be freshman who was going to room with a very good basketball player. Both great targets for the two Beta rushing chairs. I was rather proud of this great “coup,” and in the Fall I showed up at Amherst just as freshman orientation
was concluding. I rushed up to Rux and told him about these two. In his modest way, Rux replied that he had been back at Amherst for the entire frosh orientation program, that he had already met these two guys, and, in fact, he believed that he had met every single incoming freshman over the past few days. He was confident that over the course of the year, we would bring in a great class. Needless to say, Beta sewed up one of its best classes ever, thanks to Rux, the real Beta rushing chair, with a little help from his assistant, me.

Just before he was taken from us, I happened to send Paul a short email in early March, expressing how “priceless” those years at Beta and Amherst were. He responded as follows, “It was a pleasure, a privilege, and it has stayed with me . . . I am truly glad.” As am I, Rux.
Loyalty was one of the traits most prominent in the character of Paul Ruxin. He was a native son of Cleveland, proud of his city and generous in giving back the support it gave him growing up. He returned to the city after law school and participated in many civic and private organizations including the Rowfant Club, a grand, old-fashioned book-collectors club in the heart of the city, so prosperous at one time that it had its own resident binder.

Paul graduated from Amherst College in 1965, and he never stopped being a contributor to the Amherst enterprise. He was, above all, true to the friendships he formed there with classmates and faculty, but he also was a dedicated alumnus, generous with his gifts and his time. He served for a great many years on the Council of the Friends of the Library (until it was dissolved by the College in 2014); he served on and eventually led and transformed the subcommittee of the Amherst Board that oversees the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. He helped formulate plans, as yet unexecuted, for a renovation of the libraries at Amherst, and he was at the time of his death speaking out on the need for curricular reform at the College. Having been in the last class to graduate before the core curriculum was dismantled at Amherst, Paul spoke eloquently about its advantages. The College recognized his intelligent, critical loyalty by awarding him its medal for eminent service in 2007. Seeing Paul at Amherst, at meetings of the Friends or at reunion, was always a pleasure because he so relished and respected the milieu and felt so very much at home on the campus.
After more than twenty years of working and living in Cleveland, Paul returned to Chicago, though he remained with the law firm of Jones, Day. He was a specialist in the field of energy and was clearly trusted with the most crucial and complex issues in that field. His firm also turned to him when recruiting new lawyers because he was so obviously a good judge of talent and character. On a few occasions I phoned Paul at his office, having been given the number of a direct line, presumably reserved for important clients and family (before the cell phone era). His serious, low answer “Ruxin” betokened a world of diplomacy and action utterly foreign to me. The return of his genial tones after I identified myself was always a relief. To his second city of Chicago Paul was as loyal as he was to his first. He was an active member of the Caxton Club, often giving talks and contributing to its newsletter. He made many other connections in the city, though those about which I know concern only books. He served on the board of the Newberry Library and the board of the Poetry Foundation. He connected with the University of Chicago Rare Books Library partly by striking up a relationship with Gwin and Ruth Kolb. The first time I visited Paul’s apartment to see his library it was in company with Gwin and Ruth, who were also there for the first time. Gwin and I stayed long in the library, almost brushing our eyelashes against the books and enjoying what we saw. Paul was delighted to show his finds to an appreciative audience. His rarest books and most inclusive collections concerned Boswell, and he had a special affinity for appreciating Boswell’s career in law, but he also had a fine Johnson collection. Paul developed great affection for Gwin and Ruth and helped enable Gwin to give his unmatched collection of *Rasselas* editions to the University of Chicago.

As a member of the Johnsonians (New York) Paul hosted the first birthday dinner held in Chicago. He arranged for the production of a superb keepsake and a memorable weekend, crowned by a visit to his library. It is pleasant now to think of Paul on that day, ensconced among his books as so many Johnsonians trooped through to see them and share a few words, or a great many words, about them. He was
in his element that day and entirely himself: making his bibliographical riches available to appreciative friends, communicating knowledge through books and taking it in.

Paul was also a Governor of Dr. Johnson’s House in Gough Square, a member of the Boswell Editions editorial board and a contributor to the *Johnsonian News Letter*. He often adapted talks given at various clubs for submission to the *News Letter*, and his own copies of rare books often figured in these essays. I think my favorite of Paul’s many contributions is “The Club” (September 2012). In this piece Paul quotes a Boswell letter in his own collection as well as *Annals of The Club, 1764–1914*, an exceedingly rare and fine book, one of one hundred printed by Oxford University Press in 1914. The rarity of this book is such that it eluded even the grasp of Pat Rogers, the most widely read of all eighteenth-century scholars, who was also writing on The Club. With thoroughly characteristic generosity and with real pleasure, Paul made his rare book available to Pat and helped him improve his work. The first sentence of Paul’s essay in *JNL* is also characteristic. It is broad but sharp, addressing the audience so as both to pique our interest and to welcome us warmly:

> Science teaches that there are three biologic imperatives: nourishment, sleep and sex. More nuanced scientists themselves no doubt sense there is a fourth, perhaps not biologically driven, but imperative nonetheless: friendship. It is what brings us together here . . . and it has been the impetus behind an enormous range of voluntary associations at least since classical times.

Paul ends the essay with the traditional toast at Johnsonian dinners, an adaptation of Paulo Sarpi’s final words: Esto Perpetua. Let it last forever. This is our wish for the memory of Paul himself.
Robert DeMaria, Jr.

[The following note about Paul’s contributions to the Yale Boswell Editions was written by Gordon Turnbull and appeared in the same John-sonian News Letter.]

To the warm obituary tributes now most deservedly being garnered by the late Paul Ruxin, the Yale Boswell Editions, in sadness and eternal gratitude, adds its own. Paul Ruxin, among his other bibliophilic activities and institutional service, was a fine friend to the Yale Boswell Editions over many years. He served as a member of the Editorial Committee (appointed to a six-year term at the Committee meeting of May 2003), donated generously of his time and indeed of his own funds, and in 2004 independently spearheaded a much-needed fundraising initiative. For that endeavor he produced a handsome keepsake, “Lord Auchinleck’s Fingal: A Keepsake in Support of the Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell,” as a reward for donors who reached a specific level. The keepsake drew on one of the most treasured items in his beloved collection, the copy of Ossian’s poetry—FINGAL, An Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books . . . composed by OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL—that had belonged to Boswell’s father, Lord Auchinleck, and had been an item in his fine library. On this book’s blank recto flyleaf, Lord Auchinleck had written an account of the authenticity of one of the details in the Ossian poems (to do with the use of deer horn in ancient burial rituals). The keepsake offered a facsimile and transcription (done by Robert DeMaria and the late Gwin Kolb) of these remarks, and an essay by Paul, which carefully weighted the specifics of Lord Auchinleck’s observations against Johnson’s well-known thunderous denunciations of James Macpherson’s general fraudulence. The essay—like all his writings on Boswell, Johnson, and other members of the Johnson circle (in the Caxtonian Newsletter and other venues), which gratifyingly brought the work of our authors to readerships outside the reach of the academy—moved with a deft blend the lawyer’s sense of clarity and evidence-marshalling and the energy and affection of the true amateur’s devotion. Paul more than once in conversation said of himself that the Law had
been his profession but Literature had been his passion, and glowed when recalling his English Literature courses at Amherst (he regularly named in particular a young instructor, William Pritchard, now the Henry Clay Folger Professor of English, Emeritus). He told the story often of how he was drawn to the Johnson circle: while on vacation on Cape Cod in 1976, he was distracted from a routine errand by coming upon a copy of Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* in a bookstore. “I started reading, and . . . I was hooked!” As many *JNL* readers will know, he was kind and hospitable, and loved to turn visitors loose to play among his collected treasures in his Chicago apartment. Along with his more official activities on the Editions’ behalf, he enthusiastically brokered speaking engagements at the clubs and institutions with which he was affiliated for members of the Yale Boswell Editions community. In the last email exchange between Paul and the author of these Yale Boswell Editions Notes, he cheerfully, and accurately, denounced a recent publication by Harvard University Press (“Boswell for dummies!”), and, less cheerfully but equally accurately, the general state of Humanities higher education. In response to an earnest request to rejoin, in these dire times, the Yale Boswell Editions Editorial Committee, he responded by return email with a characteristically determined ebullience, “of course, count me in . . . the work must, and shall, go on.”
Paul T. Ruxin ’65
*Amherst College Medal for Eminent Service (2007)*

Paul T. Ruxin ’65 is one of Amherst’s most dedicated alumni and one of the College’s most committed volunteers.

A resident of Chicago, Ruxin has supported his alma mater’s efforts in admission, fundraising, alumni programming and academic outreach. He has served as an alumni interviewer for prospective students, as a longtime class agent and as a participant in reunion planning. A bibliophile and collector, Ruxin has made a special mark at the College by combining his love for books with his love for his alma mater: He is a lifetime member of the Friends of The Amherst College Library, where he has been Vice-Chair for many years, and he served on the Folger Shakespeare Library Committee of Amherst’s Board of Trustees until it was reorganized into an independent board of governors. He will become Chairman of the Folger’s Board of Governors this summer.

Ruxin speaks widely about his books—one of the three largest collections of Johnson and Boswell materials in private hands—and other literary subjects. He is a member of the Rowfant Club of Cleveland, the Chicago Literary Club, the Caxton Club of Chicago, the Grolier Club of New York and the Association Internationale de Bibliophilie. He also serves on the editorial committee of the Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell.

A partner at Jones Day (Chicago and Cleveland), Ruxin concentrates his practice on the representation of natural gas, pipeline, electric and telephone public utilities before state and federal regulatory
bodies and in the courts. He is a member of the American Bar Association (Public Utility Law Section), the Energy Bar Association, the Cleveland Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association. He frequently speaks at utility industry meetings and seminars and is currently listed in the public utilities section of *The Best Lawyers in America* and in *Chambers USA: America’s Leading Business Lawyers*.

Ruxin earned an LL.B. degree in 1968 from the University of Virginia, where he was notes editor and a member of the Law Review and the Order of the Coif.
Paul Ruxin passed away in San Francisco, California on April 15, 2016—one day after his 73rd birthday—from injuries sustained from an automobile accident. He died peacefully, surrounded by his family and friends. His rich and productive life was remembered and celebrated at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois on June 12, 2016.

Paul came to Amherst from Shaker Heights, Ohio where he was educated with his life long friend Michael Pohl ’65 and his bride to be Joanne. We met Paul on our first day at Amherst in the fall of 1961 as cohabitants of the first floor of Stearns. Paul’s personality was magnetic-warm, brilliant. He was a great listener and confidant and a natural leader. These qualities were life long and made him a loyal and valued friend to many for 55 years.

At Amherst, Paul majored in American Studies, was an active member of the Student Council, SPHINX, and Beta Theta Pi. Immediately following our 1965 graduation, Paul married the love of his life, Joanne, with whom he had two children, Marc and Sarah.

Attending the University of Virginia School of Law, Paul stood out as a member of the Law Review and Order of the Coif. He enjoyed a distinguished legal career, both nationally and internationally, as a public utility lawyer in Cleveland and Chicago, starting with Isham, Lincoln & Beale and thereafter as a partner at Jones Day.

Paul was a dedicated and well-known “bibliophile”—a hobby which became his passion. As he stated in our 50th Reunion Yearbook, he knew that being a lawyer was only “my job, nothing more, never would
be.” Throughout his life, Paul pursued his love of English literature, collecting and maintaining one of the largest private collections of the works of Samuel Johnson and James Boswell. Paul was also a scholar of the works of William Shakespeare and, as such, served for many years as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. He truly loved the look and “feel” of real books against flat symbols of the electronic age—a passion he shared with us at class reunions.

Extremely active and generous to Amherst College, in 2007, the College awarded Paul the Medal of Eminent Service at the commencement ceremonies in recognition of his efforts in assisting the College in administration, admissions, fund raising, alumni, programming, and financial support. In particular, he was a major force behind the Friends of Amherst College Library. In recent years, he led the Class of 65’s effort to include a common core component to again be a part of Amherst’s curriculum.

Paul had many friends from diverse backgrounds and professions. His friendship had a warmth and glow of genuine courtesy, kindness and compassion. We will remember Paul’s ability to lift a person up when he or she was down. We were most fortunate to cross his path and will miss him.

Paul Ruxin is survived by his wife, Joanne, a son, Marc and a daughter-in-law Holly, a daughter, Sarah and son-in-law Adam, his five grandchildren, Trevor, Thalia, Tanner, Bear, and Theo, as well as his brothers, Jim and Bob.

[A version of this obituary appeared in Amherst, Summer 2016.]
Paul Ruxin, Lawyer and Bibliophile, Dies at 73
Chicago Tribune Obituary

Paul Ruxin, an attorney with expertise on energy and utility regulatory issues, was a scholar of 18th century English literature who became a well-known collector of material by and about Samuel Johnson and his biographer, James Boswell.

Ruxin, 73, died April 15 during a family visit to California after being struck by a chunk of concrete that smashed through the windshield of the car in which he was a front-seat passenger, according to his wife, Joanne.

Ruxin worked in both the Cleveland and Chicago offices of the Jones Day law firm before retiring in 2008. After beginning his law career in Chicago, he lived and worked in Cleveland for more than 20 years before returning to the city in 1999.

“He chaired the energy practice for the firm for many years,” said Tina Tabacchi, partner-in-charge of the Jones Day Chicago office. “Clients very much respected his counsel and entrusted him with a number of important matters.”

Ruxin was born and grew up in Cleveland. He received a bachelor’s degree from Amherst College in Massachusetts in 1965. He went on to earn his law degree at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in 1968.

He was recruited to Chicago by the since-dissolved law firm of Isham, Lincoln & Beale. He worked there for about nine years in the energy field, representing utility companies before regulatory agencies.

He joined the Cleveland office of Jones Day in 1977, concentrat-
Paul Ruxin, Lawyer and Bibliophile, Dies at 73

ing his practice on the representation of natural gas, pipeline, electric and telephone public utilities before state and federal regulatory bodies and in the courts. He returned to Chicago and the office of Jones Day in 1999.

“He was a wonderful role model,” Tabacchi said. “He was a dear friend and mentor to so many people at the firm, including myself. A very talented lawyer, very thoughtful but also pragmatic.”

He began collecting Johnson and Boswell writings and related materials in 1976 when he came across a small volume by Boswell in a bookstore on Cape Cod, his wife said.

“His collecting and scholarly endeavors became a second career after retirement,” she said.

Ruxin was active in a number of bibliophile organizations, including the Caxton Club in Chicago, the Rowfant Club in Cleveland, the Grolier in New York, the Club of Odd Volumes in Boston and even a bibliophile group in Paris.

Ruxin had a long involvement with the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, part of his alma mater, Amherst. He joined the Folger Library Committee in 1999 and became the chair of the board of governors in 2006, an office he held until 2013.

“Paul was one of the leaders in the process of creating a board of governors for the Folger itself,” said Michael Witmore, director of the library, home to the world’s largest Shakespeare collection. Witmore said that the change “did create a level of independence and self-determination that was important for the Folger.”

Ruxin brought a range of gifts to the Folger, according to Witmore, who called Ruxin a “passionate collector” with one of the most significant Boswell collections in the world.

“Paul felt very keenly that we can learn from history and we can learn from great writers,” Witmore said.

In 2007, Amherst awarded Ruxin its Medal for Eminent Service. He was also a trustee of The Newberry, Chicago’s independent research library.

Ruxin also is survived by a daughter, Sarah; a son, Marc; brothers,
Jim and Robert; and five grandchildren.
   Plans for a Chicago memorial are pending.

Graydon Megan is a freelance reporter.
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Sarah, Theo, and Paul
Paul Ruxin was a remarkable man. Born into one of Cleveland’s numerous working class neighborhoods, his family migrated to one of its inner ring suburbs where Paul distinguished himself in High School as a top student as well as a gifted singer and thespian. Following High School, Paul attended Amherst College, before earning a Law Degree from the University of Virginia.

After Law School, Paul moved to Chicago where he practiced public utilities law at the venerable firm of Isham, Lincoln and Beale, whose antecedents included Abraham and Mary Todd’s son, Robert Todd Lincoln. After several years, Paul returned to Cleveland, becoming a partner at Jones, Day, where he usually began his very early day at the office engaged in the quiet study of fine, rare or antiquarian books, often a book of either ancient or modern poetry. Moreover, Paul almost always managed to slip away for Friday lunch at The Rowfant Club, which he joined as a resident member in 1979, and where he quite naturally regaled others with his latest findings and insights.

While the Rowfant was Paul’s “first book club,” he went on to join many others, including The Caxton Club, the Club of Odd Volumes, the Grolier Club and other learned societies both in America and abroad. At the same time, Paul also became one of the world’s premier collectors and experts in several different domains, including the works of Shakespeare, Boswell and Johnson. Like Dr. Johnson himself, Paul was among the most clubbable of men.

The Rowfant Club in Cleveland, Ohio is a society for men who
gather socially “... for the critical study of books in their various ca-
pacities to please the mind of man.” It also serves for those who cher-
ish the companionship of others of like mind. These two goals are
shared by the membership of the other Clubs as well. At Rowfant,
Paul remained a “resident member,” (and a benefactor) even after he
transferred his practice to Chicago in 1997. As such, Paul continued
to recognize his obligation to speak to the membership on one Friday
Lunch per year.

At these “Friday Talks,” Paul showed us how to approach, appreci-
ate and analyze both literature and poetry as he taught us in 30 min-
ute segments about the likes of Juvenal, Shakespeare, Boswell and
Johnson, and even about such “moderns” as Robert Frost for whom
he was democratically willing to mount a spirited defense against
both simplifiers and detractors. The Rowfant Club compiled and pub-
lished in 2001 some of those learned “Friday” talks into a book called
Friday Lunch.

Here was how Paul described Rowfant: “the wonderful meals, the
feel of our old house, the gracious furnishings and lovely art, the warm
glow of candle-light, and the even warmer glow of friendship. Best
of all, perhaps, is that within these walls we do not have to explain
our passion for books, nor, therefore, do we have to explain ourselves.
We are at home here. ...” Naturally, Paul was himself essential to the
atmosphere he described.

There was a solitary side to Paul. Paul the collector was never
more alive and transported than when—as he wrote in Other People’s
Books—he was “sitting in my library, surrounded by various editions of
Johnson’s dictionary, and holding in my hands the very volume that
Johnson himself consulted.”

Paul, the Bookman’s Citizen, played a major role in eleemosynary
foundations and libraries, notably chairing the Board of Governors of
the Folger Shakespeare Library, and serving as a Trustee to the New-
berry Library in Chicago, in order to protect, preserve and celebrate
some of our culture’s finest books and artifacts. As many knew, Paul
was one of the world’s experts in the realm of Johnson and Boswell,
among other niches in the Western Canon. As such, Paul collected a fine library of rare books and bindings, including a world-renowned Boswell collection, but he also possessed an even more extensive collection of carefully studied “reading copies.” And he collected exemplars of Rowfant’s varied and storied candlesticks, as well as finely-made photographs.

Paul’s friends and colleagues across the civilized world have been shaken by his untimely death, but should be consoled that some more of his work will now survive and educate readers through this memorial volume. We can only hope that his wife, Joanne, as well as their children, Marc and Sarah, will realize how much we have treasured the privilege of sharing Paul with them.
Wonderful was the long secret night you gave me, my Lover,
Palm to palm, breast to breast in the gloom. The faint red lamp
Flushing with magical shadows the common-place room of the inn,
With its dull impersonal furniture, kindled a mystic flame
In the heart of the swinging mirror, the glass that has seen
Faces innumerable and vague of the endless travelling automata
Whirled down the ways of the world like dust-eddies swept through a street,
Faces indifferent or weary, frowns of impatience or pain,
Smiles (if such there were ever) like your smile and mine when they met
Here, in this self-same glass, while you helped me to loosen my dress,
And the shadow-mouths melted to one, like sea-birds that meet in a wave—
Such smiles, yes, such smiles the mirror perhaps has reflected;
And the low wide bed, as rutted and worn as a high-road,
The bed with its soot-sodden chintz, the grime of its brasses,
That has born the weight of fagged bodies, dust-stained, averted in sleep,
The hurried, the restless, the aimless—perchance it has also thrilled
With the pressure of bodies ecstatic, bodies like ours,
Seeking each other’s souls in the depths of unfathomed caresses,
And through the long windings of passion emerging again to the stars . . .
Yes, all this through the room, the passive and featureless room,
Must have flowed with the rise and fall of the human unceasing current,
And lying there hushed in your arms, as the waves of rapture receded,
And far down the margin of being we heard the low beat of the soul,
I was glad as I thought of those others, the nameless, the many,
Who perhaps thus had lain and loved for an hour on the brink of the world,
Secret and fast in the heart of the whirlwind of travel,
The shaking and shrieking of trains, the night-long shudder of traffic;
Thus, like us they have lain and felt, breast to breast in the dark,
The fiery rain of possession descend on their limbs while outside
The black rain of midnight pelted the roof of the station;
And thus some woman like me waking alone before dawn,
While her lover slept, as I woke and heard the calm stir of your breathing,
Some woman has heard as I heard the farewell shriek of the trains
Crying good-bye to the city and staggering out into darkness,
And shaken at heart has thought: “So must we forth in the darkness,
Sped down the fixed rail of habit by the hand of implacable fate—”
So shall we issue to life, and the rain, and the dull dark dawning;
You to the wide flair of cities, with windy garlands and shouting,
Carrying to populous places the freight of holiday throngs;
I, by waste land and stretches of low-skied marsh,
To a harbourless wind-bitten shore, where a dull town moulders and shrinks,
And its roofs fall in, and the sluggish feet of the hours
Are printed in grass in its streets; and between the featureless houses
Languid the town-folk glide to stare at the entering train,
The train from which no one descends; till one pale evening of winter,
When it halts on the edge of the town, see, the houses have turned into grave-stones,
The streets are the grassy paths between the low roofs of the dead;
And as the train glides in ghosts stand by the doors of the carriages;
And scarcely the difference is felt—yes, such is the life I return to . . . !
Thus may another have thought; thus, as I turned, may have turned
To the sleeping lips at her side, to drink, as I drank there, oblivion.

(1911?)

June 13 1995

Dear Mr. Ruxin,

How good of you to send me your piece about Rolfe Humphries and what a generous letter, a real pleasure. Yes, I wrote Rolfe every week when he was dying, I liked Rolfe. He made a nice poem abt something I said abt the light reflected from the yellow maple leaves on the forest floor. My wife also was a friend of Helen Spencer. That was very nicely done abt Rolfe, especially abt his relations with Pound. He comes out of this episode as the admirable man he was. I am sending this on to Douglas Weber. Why shan’t it be printed in the Amherst magazine? I don’t know what they do about rather longer pieces. My impression is—it is as these go a very good alumni magazine—they use rather short pieces now.

Did I say this was very nicely written with real feeling for the man.

Can I change the subject? I began teaching as an instructor at WRU [Western Reserve University] or Adelbert College, @ $1600 a year. I became acquainted with & saw something of George Rudolph, a very nice man, we played tennis and so on. I have lately wondered abt him, he became a lawyer in one of the large Cleveland firms. Does the name mean anyth to you? He might be, if still alive, in his late 80’s. I am 94. After a year in Cleveland I went on to Union at Schenectady, a dismal city like Youngstown where I more or less grew up. Another Ohio boy.

Many thanks. I am grateful for your sending me this tribute to Rolfe.

Yours
Ted Baird

Ken Bacon reported that Bunting is the Education Czar of NH or is it Vermont It is Vermont I see
June 15, 1995

Dear Mr. Porter,

How fond of you to send me your notice of Raffles Humphries and what a generous letter, a real pleasure. Yes, I wrote Raffles every week when he was dying, liked Raffles. He made a nice poem about someone I sent as the light reflected in the yellow maple leaves on the first floor. My wife also was a friend of Helen Spencer.

That was very kindly done about Raffles, especially about his relation with Pound. He comes out of this episode as the admirable man he was.

...I am sending this on to Douglas Wilson. May he want it depends on the Athenaeum magazine. I don't know what they do about 'shades' lower prices. My impression is - it is as I have got a very few academic journals - they are rather about prices again.

Ralph has very nicely written with real feeling for the man.

Love, 

T. F.
Subject? I began teaching as an instructor at WRU in Alber College, $3,600 a year. I became acquainted with Fred Berner, & George Rudolph, a very nice man, we played bridge with. In absolutely wonderful art class he learned pottery in which he keeps Cleveland from being as mean and mean as it was. He wanted long hair, we had to give it up. He was tall and thin, in his late 80's, died Jan 94. After a year in Cleveland I went to Union as Schenbaly. A desired unit of the German when I moved there. My name is no use. Another Ohio boy.

Many thanks to you,
June 26, 1995

Dear Mr. Ruxin,
What a nice exchange of letters this has been. I am glad to have a word abt George Rudolph. My mind goes back to the past a good deal.

I gave away my Collected Poems of Rolfe Humphries & as always I find I could now use it. A general rule.

Oh yes, an Ohio boy. I was born in Warren in the Packard homestead. An old Western Reserve family, they had made their first automobile in Warren. & then moved to Detroit. I wonder if the Hewlett-Packard is the same family. We moved to Youngstown, which in my memory sure seems a really squalid city. But the steel mills are all gone & I am told the big industry is mowing lawns. John Burt, the retired Bishop of Ohio, came to see me at Reunion. He had had a church there. Class of ’40. A very nice man.

Rolfe Humphries once asked me why he found it so hard to see Frost. I cdn’t tell him what was obvious, that Frost never forgot an injury or in this case a hostile review. So I made an evasive answer. This was in Rolfe’s political days, when I think it was Mountain Interval came out. Rolfe panned it.

Calvin Plimpton stopped in recently. He looks better than he has done in some time. I don’t know what he does—but I never understood him, tho we were friends going back to his freshman year.

Yours etc.
Theodore Baird

Oct 9 1995

Dear Paul,
I am sending you a copy of a book by our friend Bill Pritchard. I hope you will find time to read it. The account of his literary education may not seem so far away from your own, for the law is not so remote from literature. This is a record of how all that made Amh Col a remarkable College—in my opinion—simply disintegrated. My contribution in the past—as I claim—was to encourage teachers to talk to each other—an educational idea at the time. Bill’s narrative will show what has happened—with the encouragement of the presidents & the trustees helpless and yet appointing the presidents. We are told there never were such wonderful students yet when a very clever man invents a department with jurisprudence in its title and offers a course called MURDER, 300 students file in, the largest course in our history.
(As if Macbeth is abt murder). & like the Trial of the Century. Have I express this fairly? Students were urged to condense in writing papers, thus reducing the reading for someone. And no one notices. But Bill's account tells how it happened. I dare say Amh is like every other college but for a time it wasn't. But you will make your own interpretation. Anyway however you read it you will be interested.

Yours etc
Ted B.

October 23 1995

Dear Paul,
Kenneth Bacon when I reported I had heard from you told me you were interested in the Rowfant Club. My brother, then in the bond dept of the old Union Trust, had a customer, a retired wholesale druggist, who asked me to lunch at the Club, then at his house on the West Side spent the afternoon showing me his treasures. All I remember now is a pencil made by Thoreau.

We had such a nice exchange of letters I thought you would be a good reader of our friend's book on teaching at Amh. I don't know that this was his intention but for me, an old man, it was the record of the disintegration of what made Amh a rather special place, to me, a scandalous course of events, and no one seems to have noticed what has happened—The trustees, nearly all MBA's & their presidents, respond to all the popular trends, new departments, and agree only on the need for more money. Of course, you are right, it is still possible to get a good education here despite all the pretenses of being the best etc. Pritchard is the only person in a dept of 14 who teaches just literature. Think of it. The college becomes a social instrument—it always was in some degree—and the professors evangelists, as in the old days.

I started to reread Boswell the other night & have reached his company of London. A lovely book. I came on a phrase from S. J. “the idleness of suspense.” I thought how much of my life has been so spent, waiting for something to happen.

Yours etc
Ted B
February 10 1996

Dear Paul,

Your very kind note much appreciated. I should never be anything but grateful for the years we had together.

Yours
Ted B.

February 26 1996

Dear Paul,

Don't you think that we cd adopt first names? You were good to send me yr piece abt A. Powell & I read it with pt and pr. Alas, I am not an admirer of this writer but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy him. This has been a long difference I have felt for Bill P's enthusiasms and his admiration for this writer has always seemed to me a puzzle. I can see how the difference of this social world is a kind of extravagance for you. I am trying to be understanding & I know it rather creaks. I find this world tiresome, these dreadful Brits, their awful caste system. I say nothing abt Powell's flat language tho Bill calls it witty. You'll just have to bear with me. But I can see how nicely you spoke of him.

But what a set.

Do not let this disturb our friendship. And what good friends I have made with former students. I just heard on the steam radio that the tether broke unaccountably, the satellite broke away. This was the 5th and last flight, I suppose, of Jeff Hoffman '66, who had been in my freshman class, who took Sh, tho a physics major & who became a friend & comes down to tell me abt the joys of weightlessness. A Scarsdale boy! Whose ambition as a kid was to be what he became. He worked on the Hubbell telescope you may remember. A fine man. He appeals to my imagination, more than even a soldier—or sailor—wd do. Only about 200 have been in space of all the millions etc. A self-conscious articulate man, not the test pilot sort. I speak as if I understood these differences.

There was a review in the TLS of the new edition of Gibbon, priced abt $150. I have given away 2 Gibbons & have read him how many times, an hour in the evening, that sort of reading. I can't recite in him except for a few passages. I love the tone, the irony, the eloquence, the form of the sentences, the attitude toward life. I saw an advertisement for something called The Reader's Subscription offering this 3 vol work for 9.95 & I cdn't resist that. Now I have to buy 3 books in the next...
two years. (And I belong to something, too.) I have read the learned intro and have begun reading. The curious thing is there is absolutely no mention of Bury’s edition or of Bury’s footnotes. (Done in the 1890’s) So what, I ask again, what is the shelf-life of a scholar’s work. How long does a legal thinker live in anyone’s mind? Will Posner, say, soon be forgotten? Does “thought” advance in a straight line or in jerks, every one freshly created as if no one had ever thought before? Does the life-span of a thinker grow shorter now there is so much going on, so much “communication?” This new editor has made a new text, with variant readings. But Bury’s notes were helpful, often critical of Gib, setting him right.

You are good to remember my present situation after 67 years of companionship. It will take time to adjust, if that’s the word.

So don’t be discouraged with me. I value our correspondence.

Yours etc
Ted

August 7 1996

Dear Paul,
The enclosed may amuse you, Bill P’s tribute to this old man [Anthony Powell]; like everything Bill writes nicely done. I had to tell him I do not feel the rich humor in the chamber pot scene, where it is carried like the sacrament in a religious procession. This seems to me—like much of Powell’s writing—very or completely English, not an American cause for laughter. There cd be a Ph.D. thesis The chamber pot in English Lit., with examples that I think of often in Smollett & of course Sh. I see from my etymological dictionary that the word Jordan is now derived from the river.

Best wishes always
Ted B

NOTES

1. Correspondence with Paul Ruxin in Theodore and Frances Titchener Baird Papers [Box 10, Folder 7], Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.
Theodore Baird (1901–1996) was born in Warren, Ohio, and attended Hobart College (B.A. 1921) and Harvard University (M.A. 1922; Ph.D. 1929). He served as a member of the Amherst College English faculty from 1927–1969. Besides teaching Shakespeare, Baird developed the highly-regarded English 1-2 composition course for freshmen, which included innovative teaching techniques including a new set of assignments each year and in which a whole semester’s focus would be on a question such as, “Where are you?” “What is a game?” and “What or who is your true self?” In English 1, Theodore Baird would enter class through a window and ask whether the window shouldn’t therefore be called a door. If you’ve ever spent time in a college dormitory, you know how the door-window question might catch fire there. A book about the course, Fencing with Words: A history of writing instruction at Amherst College during the era of Theodore Baird, 1938–1966, written by Robin Varnum, was published in 1996 (NCTE).

Baird was also a prolific diary and letter writer. Baird and his wife Frances commissioned a house from Frank Lloyd Wright, which was built in 1940 on Shays Street in Amherst and is the only house Wright built in Massachusetts. The house was built in Wright’s “Usonian” style, and included furniture that Wright custom-designed for the space. [An edited version of the bio available online at http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma1013_bioghist.html Downloaded 12 January 2017.]


Rolfe Humphries ’15 (1894–1969) was a poet, translator, and Classics Professor at Amherst College from 1957 to 1965.

Calvin H. Plimpton M.D. ’39 (1918–2007) was the 13th president of Amherst College from 1960 to 1971.


“At Amherst College this spring semester, a new course, ‘Murder,’ has become the most popular in the school’s history, with more than 300 students enrolled, a fifth of the 1,570 student body. That breaks the record, held by ‘Human Sexuality,’ which was offered in the 1970’s.

“The turnout for ‘Murder’ surprised even the professor, Austin Sarat, the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Science. Amherst, a small, prestigious liberal arts college of red brick buildings in western Massachusetts, prides itself on its tiny class size and individual instruction by
senior faculty members. The median class size is 15 students.

“A wiry, energetic man with steel gray hair, Professor Sarat attributes the large enrollment in his class to America’s fascination with murder.” (New York Times, March 19, 1995) [http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/19/us/a-course-called-murder-and-it-s-tough-too.html (Downloaded 12 January 2017)]

The phrase appears in Samuel Johnson Rambler 60, Saturday, 13 October 1750—contained in Boswell’s “Introduction” to his The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. “There are many invisible circumstances which, whether we read as enquirers after natural or moral knowledge, whether we intend to enlarge our science, or increase our virtue, are more important than publick occurrences. Thus Salust, the great master of nature, has not forgot, in his account of Catiline, to remark that his walk was now quick, and again slow, as an indication of a mind revolving something with violent commotion. Thus the story of Melancthon affords a striking lecture on the value of time, by informing us, that when he made an appointment, he expected not only the hour, but the minute to be fixed, that the day might not run out in the idleness of suspense; and all the plans and enter-prizes of De Wit are now of less importance to the world, than that part of his personal character which represents him as careful of his health, and negligent of his life.”


As Pritchard notes in an email to the editors (10 January 2017), he had sent Baird “a piece on Anthony Powell’s MUSIC OF TIME. In the first volume, A QUESTION OF UPBRINGING, there’s a funny scene in which a prank played on a character (substituting chamber pot for hat) goes slightly askew.”

In Tobias Smollett’s novel The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle appears a passage containing “chamber-pot” and one of its synonyms a “Jordan”: “Alarmed and terrified at this sudden appointment, he flew to the other end of the room, and, snatching up an earthen chamber-pot, which was the only offensive weapon in the place, put himself in a posture of defence, and with many oaths threatened to try the temper of the barber’s skull, if he should presume to set his nose within the apartment. . . . never doubted that his friend’s suspicion was just, but, shaking his Jordan at the imaginary guard, swore he would sooner die than part with his precious ware.”
This book was designed by Ron Gordon and Aaron Tilford of the Oliphant Press, New York.
The typeface is Adobe Caslon.