
JOHNSON SOCIETY OF THE CENTRAL REGION NEWS LETTER
MARCH 2004

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Presidents: Larry Lipking, Helen Thompson, Blakey Vermeule, Northwestern University

Vice Presidents: George Justice, Devoney Looser, Haskell Hinnant, Catherine Parke (some or all of the aforementioned, and perhaps other Johnsonians known to inhabit the area around Columbia, Missouri)

Harmless Drudge: Thomas Kaminski, Loyola University Chicago

Later than Usual, but Worth the Wait!

Your editor has been getting a number of inquiries about our forthcoming meeting. “Why haven’t I got the news letter yet?!” (implicit meaning of the preceding question: “are you lazy or just incompetent?”) “Isn’t the meeting usually in April?” (implicit meaning of the previous question: “Why haven’t I got the news letter yet?”) Well, IF YOU HAD BEEN PAYING ATTENTION (that is, IF YOU HAD READ THE LAST NEWS LETTER WITH CARE), you would know that we are meeting on **MAY 14-15, 2004**, at **Northwestern University**, in Evanston, Illinois. And boy, will you love the program that our troika of Presidents--Larry, Helen, and Blakey--have put together. Bob DeMaria is returning to the JSCR to answer the literary question, “Who asked Johnson to write the *Dictionary*?” (Hey, don’t look at me.) Robert Mayer will talk on “Johnson and Scott on Dryden.” Robert Markley will explain to us “how *Robinson Crusoe* became a novel.” Pat Rogers too is returning (after too many years’ absence) to talk about “The Second Mrs. Wymondesold: the Widow, the Divorcee, Johnson and Reynolds.” (Upon seeing this title, your editor, being a moderately curious sort, opened the index of Boswell’s *Life* to see if the name Wymondesold was to be found there; it was not. He then did a Google search and found (mostly) sites that people use to trace their genealogy. [There was at least one Wymondesold descended from William the Conqueror!] All of this, of course, is to the good: your editor will come in ignorance and depart with knowledge; what can be better than that?) And the rest of the program sounds just as interesting, with papers from Bob Folkenflik, James May, James Noggle, James Tierney, Sean Shesgreen, Benjamin Pauley, and Helen Deutsch. For Friday night entertainment, we are invited to attend a performance of Tony Kushner’s play *A Dybbuk*. Our Saturday session will conclude with Richard Wendorf returning to Northwestern to talk on “Burying Sir Joshua.” And on Saturday evening, Joanna and Larry Lipking have invited us all to their home for a reception. It’s going to be a wonderful weekend, so don’t miss it. (You can find the entire program on pages 3 and 4 below, with the registration form on page 5. And the registration form will also be available from the Society’s website www.jsocr.org. So let’s not hear any excuses, ok?)

More Abstracts from our 2003 meeting

RICHARD NASH, Indiana University: “You shall Ride my Wife’s Pad”: Reading the Breeding of Horses and Empire in Swift, Sterne, and Defoe”

“‘Tis true, Longvil. I am a bold fellow to pretend to it when ‘tis accounted pedantry for a gentleman to spell and where the race of gentlemen is more degenerated than that of horses.”

(Shadwell, *The Virtuoso* I.i. 21-24)

While the Early Modern period offers a wide range of animals for scholars to study, there has been considerable attention directed to the horse, and in this essay I want to add to that developing discourse. I am interested in the ideological force of the metaphor of horse and rider, but I am also interested in another metaphor that this one distracts us from: the allusion to the “degeneration” of the race of horses as representing a parallel degeneration in “the race of gentlemen.” For the story I want to look at today (at least hastily) is the story of the construction of an explicit counter-metaphor: one that will invent an improved race of horse, the thoroughbred, that is perpetually perfecting itself, and is doing so in a way that calls attention to its own metaphoric status as a representative for a particular model of Englishness that simultaneously (and impossibly) defines itself as pure English, upwardly mobile, and exotically primitive. That story is layered like an onion, constituted (among other things) of overlapping concerns of class, Orientalism, political anxiety, regional conflict and commodification. Illustrating, however briefly, how these overlapping concerns engage one another, I will draw from the writings of Swift, Sterne and Defoe.

David Porter, University of Michigan, "A Wanton Chase in a Foreign Place: Hogarth and the Gendering of Exoticism"

The unabashed eroticism that informs Hogarth's aesthetic theory presumes a primarily male gaze, yet Hogarth claims that his *Analysis of Beauty* will appeal to "ladies, as well as gentlemen." Where, then, are Hogarth's female readers meant to turn in their pursuit of aesthetic pleasure? This paper suggests that various aspects of Hogarth's theory—the emphasis on elegance and gentility, his method of visualizing objects as hollow shells, the wanton chase of the eye over intricately patterned surfaces, even the famous serpentine line of beauty itself—bear the stamp of a deep appreciation for Chinese porcelain and the chinoiserie style. The fact that he lashes out against the style in various of his writings (as well as in his visual satires) suggests an attempt to repress the intimations of a genuinely female aesthetic agency with which it is associated. To accommodate the errant wanderings of the wanton female eye would have been to invite a wholesale defection from the Western artistic tradition and from the social and sexual order of which it was a well established part.

STEVEN SCHERWATZKY, Merrimack College, “Samuel Johnson and the Ethics of Empire”

This essay develops Donald Greene’s suggestion that Samuel Johnson’s writings express an “Augustinian Christianity” by viewing Johnson’s critique of empire alongside that of Augustine in *City of God*. Both Augustine and Johnson argue that classical notions of civic virtue, in their celebration of active engagement in secular affairs as a path to human fulfillment, fall short of the highest ethical standard: to serve the state alone is to worship pride over humility, the temporal over the eternal, and the self over God. The quest for empire reflects a prideful desire for domination and a lust for glory in the earthly city. Despite the differences of time and place that separate them, Augustine and Johnson both view the pursuit of empire as outright theft, and they both prefer small kingdoms to large as more conducive to virtue, peace and stability. In making the case for a shared ethics of empire, the paper suggests not so much an instance of direct influence but rather a striking series of connections that lend credence to Greene’s formulation.

JOHNSON SOCIETY OF THE CENTRAL REGION
May 14 & 15, 2004
Norris University Center, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Friday, May 14, 2004

Louis Room North, Norris University Center

Session I: 12:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Robert DeMaria (Vassar College)

Who Asked Johnson to Write the *Dictionary*?

James May (Penn State DuBois)

Herbert Croft's Revisions to his "Life of Young," 1781-91

Robert Mayer (Oklahoma State University)

History and Authority: Johnson and Scott on Dryden

COFFEE BREAK 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

Louis Room South, Norris University Center

Session II: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Robert Markley (University of Illinois)

How *Robinson Crusoe* Became a Novel: Reading the *Adventures* in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

James Noggle (Wellesley College)

Kings and Ideas: The Politics of Taste in the *Epistle to Burlington*

Pat Rogers (University of South Florida)

The Second Mrs. Wymondesold: The Widow, the Divorcee, Johnson and Reynolds

RECEPTION 5:00 – 6:00 pm,

The Hagstrum Room, University Hall

DINNER 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Louis Room South, Norris University Center

The Dybbuk 7:30 pm

Tony Kushner's adaptation

Ethel M. Barber Theatre, Northwestern University

Saturday, May 15, 2004

Louis Room North, Norris University Center

Session III: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

James Tierney (University of Missouri-St. Louis)
British Periodicals, 1660-1800: A Subject Index
Sean Shesgreen (Northern Illinois University)
In Search of the Marginal and the Outcast:
The "Lower Orders" in the Cries of London and Dublin
Robert Folkenflik (University of California, Irvine)
Global Johnson

COFFEE BREAK 11:00 pm – 11:15 am
Louis Room South, Norris University Center

Session IV: 11:15 am - 12:45 pm

Benjamin Pauley (Oberlin College)
"The lawyer was lost": Johnson's Legal Vocation
Helen Deutsch (University of California, Los Angeles)
"Hodge shall not be shot": Johnson, *Pale Fire*, and the Romance of Authorship

LUNCH 12:45 pm - 1:45 pm
Louis Room South, Norris University Center

Guest Speaker: 1:45 pm - 2:45 pm
Richard Wendorf (The Boston Athenæum)
Burying Sir Joshua

On Saturday evening, all are invited to a reception, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the home of
Joanna and Lawrence Lipking, 425 Hamilton Street, Evanston

*The Johnson Society wishes to thank the English Department, the Northwestern Eighteenth Century
Studies Program, The Judd A. and Marjorie Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern
University for generous financial and logistic support of our conference.*

Hotel information: Our hosts have reserved a block of rooms at the **Homestead Hotel**, 1625 Hinman Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201. **The room rate is \$113.50 per night, including tax.** To reserve a room, please call **847/475-3300**. Reservations must be made by **Friday, April 23**.

Get your Johnsonian News Letter! And help the JSCR as well! New bargain offer!

In our last news letter, your editor mentioned that Bob DeMaria and Peter Kanter had revived the *Johnsonian News Letter*. In an effort to increase their overall subscription base and at the same time provide a real benefit for our Society, Bob and Peter are offering a *special, one-time subscription offer*. For all members of the JSCR (in other words, for anyone who gets this News Letter), if you purchase a subscription to the new *JNL* at the regular price of \$12.00, one half of that amount (\$6.00) will be returned to this Society. So, in effect, you're getting the *JNL* for \$6.00 and contributing the other \$6.00 to your favorite scholarly association. In order to take advantage of this offer, all you have to do is send a check (payable to The Johnsonian News Letter) to **Peter Kanter, The JNL, 6 Prowitt Street, Norwalk, CT 06855**, and *identify yourself as a member of the Johnson Society of the Central Region*. Peter will put you on his subscription list and remit half the proceeds to our Society. **But wait, there's more!** For those who attend the Society's meeting at Northwestern in May, the publishers have agreed to *an even better offer*. If you check the box on the registration form for "subscription to *Johnsonian News Letter*, \$12.00," you will receive a year's subscription to the *JNL*, but THE TOTAL AMOUNT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SOCIETY. That's right--you get the subscription to the *JNL* and the Society gets \$12. How's that for a bargain! So come to the meeting and check the *JNL* box--you get the latest news of what's going on in Johnson circles, and you help fund this Society. That, it seems to me, is hard to beat.

Johnson Society of the Central Region

Thomas Kaminski, Secretary/Treasurer
Department of English
Loyola University
6525 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626

The next meeting of the Johnson Society of the Central Region will take place at the Northwestern University on May 14-15, 2004. Program information and registration materials are included in this News Letter. The program and registration form are also available on the Society's website: **www.jsocr.org**.