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# Johnson's Lives of the Poets

A Selection

Edited by **J.P. Hardy**

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## Introduction

Edward Dilly's letter (dated 26 Sept. 1777) to James Boswell gives an account of the London booksellers' initial approach to Johnson following their decision to publish a new edition of the English poets:

The edition of the Poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press; and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to anything that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets, printing by the Martins, at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell, in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small that many persons could not read them; not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our literary property, induced the London booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion, and on consulting together, agreed that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together, and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'The English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author by Dr. Samuel Johnson, and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson to solicit him to undertake the Lives, viz. T. Davies, Strahan and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas; it was immediately agreed to, and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him.

It was on the previous Easter Saturday (29 March) that Johnson had briefly met the booksellers and entered into this contract. When an early advertisement in the *Public Advertiser* prompted Boswell to write and ask about the work, Johnson replied (3 May) that he was 'engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of the English Poets'.<sup>1</sup>

Though the completed work was less extensive in scope than Dilly had indicated, its magnitude and importance far exceeded Johnson's own modest reference to it in this letter. Consisting of fifty-two Lives, his detailed 'Prefaces, Biographical and Critical' to the booksellers' *Works of the English Poets* provides a comprehensive account of English poetry from Cowley and the metaphysical school to Gray

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 108, 110–11, 488–9; *YJ*, i. 264; *Letters*, no. 515.

and his contemporaries. It appeared in two instalments. Twenty-two poets, from Cowley to John Hughes, occupied the first four volumes published in March 1779, and thirty poets, from Addison to Gray, the last six published in May 1781.<sup>1</sup>

On Good Friday of that year Johnson wrote in his diary: 'Some time in March I finished the lives of the Poets, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.' Certainly he seems to have been somewhat slow in starting on the project. Much of 1777 was spent, first in efforts on behalf of the unfortunate clergyman William Dodd, executed for forgery in June, and then on an extended visit to Oxford, Lichfield, and Ashbourne (though during his stay in Oxford Johnson had gleaned some material for his Lives from the Bodleian). It was not until November that he was back in London proposing to begin work in good earnest. By the following Easter, according to his diary entry, he had 'written a little of the lives of the poets'; while a letter dated 27 July to the printer John Nichols gives a detailed picture of what had been completed up to that time:

You have now all Cowley. I have been drawn to a great length, but Cowley or Waller never had any critical examination before. I am very far advanced in Dryden, who will be long too. The next great Life I purpose to be Milton's.

It will be kind if you will gather the Lives of Denham, Butler, and Waller, and bind them in half-binding in a small volume, and let me have it to show my friends.

In October he had (apparently after some delay) returned further proof-sheets to Cadell; and later letters to Nichols include the mention of Richard Duke, George Stepney, John Philips, and Edmund Smith.<sup>2</sup>

It is uncertain just when Johnson began work on the last six volumes. During the remainder of 1779 little would seem to have been done. By the following April, however, he was able to write to Mrs. Thrale: 'I have not quite neglected my Lives. Addison is a long one but it is done. Prior is not short, and that is done too. I am upon Rowe, who cannot fill much paper.' Yet the task seemed to hang heavily on his hands. Within the week he wrote again to her at Bath:

You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say about men of whom I know

<sup>1</sup> Two more London editions were published in Johnson's lifetime: the first in 1781; the second, systematically revised by the author, in 1783.

<sup>2</sup> *YJ*, i. 292, 303-4; *Letters*, nos. 532-3, 581, 584, 597, 603.

nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of them. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end.

And again a few days later he alluded to the colds and persistent cough that were to trouble him during the spring and early summer: 'I thought to have finished Rowe's *Life* today, but I have five or six visitors who hindered me, and I have not been quite well. Next week I hope to dispatch four or five of them.' Small wonder, then, that in reviewing his working-summer in London, he was inclined to be dissatisfied with the amount he had accomplished, and wrote to Boswell in August: 'I have sat at home in Bolt Court all the summer, thinking to write the *Lives*, and a great part of the time only thinking.' But though at the beginning of September he had the longer *Lives* of Swift and Pope still to write, it seems probable that by the time he went to Brighton for a short visit in October, much of the work had already been done.<sup>1</sup>

Inevitably in writing such a work, Johnson obtained and solicited different kinds of assistance from a variety of people. Nichols provided not only numerous books, but many factual details as well.<sup>2</sup> Boswell (and probably Lord Hailes) supplied information about Thomson, who, together with John Pomfret, Sir Richard Blackmore, Thomas Yalden, and Isaac Watts, was included in the edition at Johnson's own suggestion.<sup>3</sup> Details of Watts's life were sought from William Sharp, who had some of the poet's letters in his possession; and to Richard Farmer Johnson wrote first in 1777, and again in 1780, stating on the former occasion that if suitable material were available at Cambridge, he would tell the booksellers to employ someone to transcribe it, or even make the journey to consult it himself.<sup>4</sup> From David Garrick he received Dryden's notes on Rymer, and from Dr. William Vyse, rector of Lambeth, Dryden's letter to his sons in Rome; while from the Sheriff of London he hoped for information concerning Settle's office of 'city poet'.<sup>5</sup> When in his earlier years Johnson had intended to write a *Life* of Dryden, he had sent Samuel Derrick to gather what details he could from the poet's relatives. Indeed, much of Johnson's knowledge, especially of his near-contemporaries, must have come from what he had been told.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, nos. 654, 657-8, 701; *YJ*, i. 301.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, nos. 580.1, 651, 671, 683, 694-6; cf. below, pp. 360, 366.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 63-4, iii. 116-17, 133, 359, iv. 35 n. 3; *Life of Watts*, par. 1; *Letters*, nos. 515, 526.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, nos. 526, 530, 673; *Life*, iii. 126 n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, nos. 578.1 and n., 582 and n.; cf. below, pp. 140-1, *Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill (Oxford, 1905), i. 376 n. 2.

Richard Savage he openly acknowledges as one such source. From Lord Marchmont he was to learn details of Pope; though his most important single source for this Life was undoubtedly the manuscript of Spence's *Anecdotes*, which was lent to him by courtesy of the Duke of Newcastle.<sup>1</sup> Numerous friends, including Joseph Warton, Charles Burney, Mrs. Thrale, and George Steevens, helped him in various other ways as well, though Steevens was the only person thanked by name in Johnson's later Advertisement to the 1783 edition.<sup>2</sup>

Before he returned to London in 1777, Johnson had half-seriously suggested to Mrs. Thrale that she might write some of the Lives for him. Certainly he was disposed to take whatever short-cuts seemed reasonable. He reprinted some of his own earlier work—the *Life of Savage* (1744), *A Dissertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope* (1756), and the account of Collins (1763); and adopted William Oldisworth's memoir of Edmund Smith, and a Life of Young by Herbert Croft of Lincoln's Inn, a friend of the poet's son. He also proposed that the 'historical account' of Lord Lyttelton's life should be the responsibility of the poet's brother Lord Westcote, adding that, to avoid offence, he would confine himself to an examination of the poetry. But Westcote declined his proposal, and within the week Johnson was to write ruefully to Mrs. Thrale: 'I sent to Lord Westcote about his brother's life, but he says he knows not whom to employ, and is sure I shall do him no injury. There is an ingenious scheme to save a day's work or part of a day utterly defeated.'<sup>3</sup>

As a biographer, Johnson made considerable use of printed sources. To Westcote he had replied in the following terms: 'For the life of Lord Lyttelton I shall need no help—it was very public, and I have no need to be minute;' yet he was soon writing to Nichols: 'I expected to have found a Life of Lord Lyttelton prefixed to his Works. Is there not one before the quarto edition? I think there is—if not I am, with respect to him, quite aground.'<sup>4</sup> Johnson's constant debt to such sources can be illustrated by the following paragraph from the Life of Milton, with notes to cite the earliest printed authorities for his statements:

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his personal estate to the Parliament; but when, after the contest was decided, he solicited repayment, he met not only with neglect but 'sharp

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 456, iii. 392, iv. 63, 482–3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 191, iv. 37; *Letters*, nos. 551, 561.1, 652, 668, 672, 689.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, nos. 554, 688, 690.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* nos. 689, 698.

rebuke',<sup>1</sup> and having tired both himself and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless indignation till he showed how able he was to do greater service. He was then made Latin Secretary<sup>2</sup> with £200 a year,<sup>3</sup> and had £1000 for his *Defence of the People*.<sup>4</sup> His widow, who after his death retired to Nantwich in Cheshire, and died about 1729,<sup>5</sup> is said to have reported that he lost £2000 by entrusting it to a scrivener, and that in the general depredation upon the Church he had grasped an estate of about £60 a year belonging to Westminster Abbey, which, like other sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return.<sup>6</sup> Two thousand pounds which he had placed in the Excise Office were also lost.<sup>7</sup> There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants being few were competently supplied. He sold his library before his death,<sup>8</sup> and left his family £1500,<sup>9</sup> on which his widow laid hold and only gave £100 to each of his daughters.<sup>10</sup>

1. *Mr John Milton's Character of the Long Parliament and Assembly of Divines* (1681), *CM*, xviii. 247.
2. Wood, *EL*, pp. 39, 43.
3. Newton, i. *liv*.
4. Toland, *EL*, p. 158.
5. Newton, i. *lvi*. [Cf. below, p. 352.]
6. Birch (1738), i. *lxii*.
7. Wood, *EL*, p. 48.
8. Toland, *ibid.* pp. 192-3.
9. Phillips, *ibid.* p. 78.
10. Birch (1738), i. *lxii*.

Thus the *Lives* are distinguished not so much by original research, as by the skill and relevance with which their author has reworked and compressed available material.

Yet, though Johnson as a biographer drew freely on printed sources, his final portraits are in no sense derivative. Conscious of the shortcomings of Sprat's indiscriminating and partial estimate of Cowley, he sought to give prominence to such details as would clearly highlight the individual character. And his own insights in this respect were often shrewd and penetrating. He had, after all, been a lifelong student of men and manners, and openly acknowledged both his fondness for biography and the moral importance he attached to it.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, however, he may be regarded as taking too much upon himself in interpreting fact, and certain portraits, most notably those of Milton and Gray, are coloured by his rather pessimistic view of human nature and his own forthright personality and opinions.

That we value Johnson's work so highly today is primarily because of the literary criticism it contains. Even where we disagree with particular judgements, its combination of percipience and reasoned argument constantly forces us to justify the grounds for advancing a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rambler* 60; *Idler* 84; *Life*, i. 425, iv. 34, v. 79.



different assessment. The modern critic finds such judgements stimulating. Many others are directly illuminating. The *Lives of the Poets* is also of interest because, in its expected affinities with neo-classical criticism, it tends to present us with a definite perspective or viewpoint on a variety of poetic modes.

One might therefore have assumed (as has usually been claimed)<sup>1</sup> that Johnson was most at home in dealing with those poets who wrote within the Augustan tradition. Certainly the Life of Dryden, which is among his best criticism, is discerning and judicious, recognizing not only Dryden's superiority to his immediate predecessors, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, but also inherent limitations in his overall poetic achievement. The Life of Pope, however, for all its excellence as biography, is arguably less successful as criticism. Though Johnson readily appreciates the metrical skill, sophisticated wit, and imaginative brilliance which set Pope so far above his near-contemporaries, he ultimately fails to grapple with those objections to the poet's genius that were already being advanced.

Since Johnson considered Cowley's his best Life,<sup>2</sup> one is naturally prompted to ask how successful is his criticism of other than Augustan poetic modes. In general it must be said that, however lively his critical intelligence, many of his remarks stemmed from neo-classical assumptions about language and poetic form. He condemned most of Gray's poetry—the *Elegy* excepted—for a use of words that seemed to him artificial, affected, and potentially a threat to the stability of the English language. He further held that metaphysical wit in avowedly elegiac poetry was such as to declare the professed emotion counterfeit—a neo-classical criterion of 'sincerity' also largely responsible for his howler in dismissing *Lycidas*. In *Comus* he argued a clash of form and content, describing it as 'a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid and tediously instructive'. Yet he was generally a critic who, to adapt his own phrase, knew, but was above the rules.<sup>3</sup> He responded to most forms of poetic originality, and praised not only *The Rape of the Lock*, but achievements as diverse as the intellectual vigour of the metaphysicals, and the quality of perception reflected in Thomson's *Seasons*.

Even where Johnson most obviously employs the analytic method of the neo-classical period, as in discussing *Paradise Lost* under the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. George Watson, *The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism* (1964), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Diary & Letters of Madam D'Arblay (1778-1840)*, ed. Austin Dobson (1904-5), i. 183-4.

conventional headings of fable, characters, sentiments, and diction, he makes us feel the force of his own individual response. What finally differentiates his criticism of Milton's epic from Addison's is the conflict it sets up within his own breast. Though imaginatively committed for moral and religious reasons to the excellence of its grand design, another side of his nature is compelled to acknowledge the poem's 'want of human interest'. And this is but the central paradox in an argument fraught with fascinating contradictions. It has been suggested that in this instance Johnson's critical method resembles that of a 'moderator considering both sides of the argument' in order to reach a judgement;<sup>1</sup> but such a description, though it underlines the attempt at objectivity, only denatures the quality and immediacy of his complex and divided response to the work.

The present selection contains the *Lives* of seven of the best known poets represented in Johnson's 'Prefaces': Cowley, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Collins, and Gray. (The *Life* of Cowley has been included not only because Johnson himself thought it his best, but because it contains remarks obviously addressed to the work of Donne, the most important poet of the metaphysical school.) Such a principle of selection has meant that other notable *Lives*—like that of Swift, and the earlier, incomparable *Life* of Savage—have had to be omitted; but within the space available, the *Lives* reproduced here do, I believe, give the clearest impression of Johnson's range and achievement as a critic of English poetry.

The previous Oxford text of the *Lives* was that prepared by George Birkbeck Hill, who produced in 1905 what has since remained the standard edition, and to whose informative (though often prolix) annotation every future editor must be indebted. Certainly my own debt to Hill is great. In some places, however, his text is faulty, and it has therefore been necessary to produce a fresh one for this edition. Johnson's first edition (1779–81) has been taken as the copy-text, and all relevant substantive changes introduced from the London editions of 1781 and 1783. Use has also been made of extant proof-sheets bearing the author's manuscript corrections. These authorize, for example, the reading '... the pains and the pleasures of other minds' (p. 12), even though all other printed editions read 'pleasure' for 'pleasures'.

In accordance with the editorial policy of this series, Johnson's text has been modernized (except that the original division into sentences and paragraphs has been retained); and notes have been

<sup>1</sup> D. M. Hill, 'Johnson as Moderator', *NQ*, cci (1956), 522.

placed at both the foot of the page and the end of the book. Misprints in the text have been silently corrected, but Johnson's misquotations have been reprinted. Examples of misquoted titles are *Virgin Martyr* for *Royal Martyr* (p. 130), and *Albion and Albania* for *Albion and Albanus* (p. 131). Misquotations in passages of both prose and verse are frequent, and some of these are interesting—especially Johnson's 'fecundine' for 'secondine' in Cowley's ode 'The Muse' (p. 34).<sup>1</sup> Proper names are given their accepted modern form; and, wherever necessary, words have been converted to numerals (e.g. '1,750 copies' for 'seventeen hundred and fifty copies', 'Charles I' for 'Charles the first') and vice versa (e.g. 'forty-ninth year' for '49th year').

Footnotes are confined to the glossing of words and allusions which are not included in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, or of which the particular sense may not be obvious to a modern reader; short biographical notes; the identification of most quotations and works mentioned in the text; brief literary references; and bibliographical or other material wherever this can be appropriately added to an existing note.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise this material, together with all longer notes, and information of a general or explanatory kind, is relegated to the end-notes, the occurrence of such a note being indicated in the text by a supralinear 'n'. The first end-note to every Life lists the main MS. or printed sources used by Johnson in writing it. All biographical references to Virgil can be found in the *Life* attributed to Donatus. References to Shakespeare's plays are as given in *The London Shakespeare*, ed. John Munro (1958), in 6 vols. In bibliographical references the place of publication, unless specified, is London. Cross-references are not usually given within a single Life.

I wish gratefully to acknowledge the award of a grant from the Myer Foundation Fund of the Australian Humanities Research Council which enabled me to spend two months in Oxford working on this edition, and the kind hospitality of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College during my stay among them. From the staff of the Bodleian Library, the Australian National Library, and the Library of the University of New England, I have received every assistance. Mrs. Karen Jennings, my research assistant, has been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. D. Fleeman, 'Some Proofs of Johnson's *Prefaces to the Poets*', *The Library*, xvii (1962), 216 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Historical or mythological figures as well known as Alexander, Dante, or Venus, are not glossed, and no notes have been given to English kings and princes. Nor has any attempt been made to annotate words or allusions explained in the standard modern editions of the authors from whom Johnson quotes.

conscientious in following up references, as has my secretary Miss Margaret Murray in typing the manuscript. Friends have always been most willing to help. In particular I should like to thank Mr. G. G. Barber, Mr. J. C. Eade, Professor Cecil Grayson, Dr. Mary Hyde, Mr. Emrys Jones, Mr. K. H. P. Lee, Dr. Roger Lonsdale, Professor R. D. Milns, Dr. L. F. Powell (who supervised my first work on Johnson), Dr. Robert Shackleton, and Mr. J. S. G. Simmons. To Miss Mary Lascelles, who has been characteristically generous of her time and knowledge at all stages of the work, and to Mr. John Buxton, who has proved most helpful as the general editor of this series, I owe a special debt of gratitude. My very great thanks are also due to Dr. J. D. Fleeman who, with his wife Isabel, made me so welcome during my stay in Oxford, and has, more recently, willingly supplied many references, and advised me on numerous problems.

# Abbreviations

<i>CM</i>	<i>The Columbia Edition of the Works of John Milton</i> , gen. ed. F. A. Patterson (New York, 1931–40), 20 vols.
<i>Cowley: Essays</i>	<i>Abraham Cowley: Essays, Plays, and Sundry Verses</i> , ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1906).
<i>Cowley: Poems</i>	<i>Abraham Cowley: Poems</i> , ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1905).
<i>Dennis</i>	<i>The Critical Works of John Dennis</i> , ed. E. N. Hooker (Baltimore, Maryland, 1939–43), 2 vols.
<i>Derrick</i>	<i>The Miscellaneous Works of John Dryden</i> , ed. Samuel Derrick (London, 1760), 4 vols.
<i>Dict.</i>	Samuel Johnson, <i>A Dictionary of the English Language</i> (London, 1755), 2 vols.
<i>Dryden: DW</i>	<i>Dryden: The Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Montague Summers (London, 1931–2), 6 vols.
<i>Dryden: Essays</i>	<i>John Dryden: Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays</i> , ed. George Watson (London, 1962), 2 vols.
<i>Dryden: Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of John Dryden</i> , ed. C. E. Ward (Durham, N. C., 1942; repr. New York, 1965).
<i>Dryden: Poems</i>	<i>The Poems of John Dryden</i> , ed. James Kinsley (Oxford, 1958), 4 vols.
<i>EL</i>	<i>The Early Lives of Milton</i> , ed. Helen Darbishire (London, 1932).
<i>Essay on Pope</i>	Joseph Warton, <i>An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope</i> (London, 1762, 2nd rev. ed.).
<i>GM</i>	<i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i> .
<i>Grant</i>	Douglas Grant, <i>James Thomson, Poet of the Seasons</i> (London, 1951).
<i>Gray: Corr.</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Thomas Gray</i> , ed. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley (Oxford, 1935), 3 vols.
<i>Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of Samuel Johnson</i> , ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1952), 3 vols.
<i>Life</i>	<i>Boswell's Life of Johnson (Together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales)</i> , ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934–50), 6 vols.
<i>LR</i>	<i>The Life Records of John Milton</i> , ed. J. Milton French (New Brunswick, N.J., 1949–58), 5 vols.
<i>Mason</i>	William Mason, <i>Poems of Mr. Gray: to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings</i> (London, 1775, 2nd rev. ed.).
<i>Murdoch</i>	<i>The Works of James Thomson</i> , ed. Patrick Murdoch (London, 1762, 4 <sup>o</sup> ), 2 vols.
<i>Newton</i>	<i>Paradise Lost . . . A New Edition</i> , ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1749), 2 vols.
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> .
<i>Oeuvres</i>	<i>Les Oeuvres de M. Boileau Despréaux, Nouvelle édition</i> (Paris, 1747), 5 vols.

- Osborn James M. Osborn, *John Dryden: Some Biographical Facts and Problems* (Gainesville, Fla., 1965, 2nd rev. ed.).
- Parker W. R. Parker, *Milton: A Biography* (Oxford, 1968), 2 vols.
- PL *Paradise Lost*.
- Pope: Corr. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford, 1956), 5 vols.
- Pope: Poems *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, gen. ed. John Butt (London, 1939-67), 10 vols.
- Rehearsal George Villiers, *The Rehearsal*, ed. Montague Summers (London, 1914).
- Ruffhead Owen Ruffhead, *The Life of Alexander Pope . . . with a Critical Essay on his Writings and Genius* (London, 1769).
- Rymer *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer*, ed. C. A. Zimansky (New Haven, Conn., 1956).
- Sherburn George Sherburn, *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* (Oxford, 1934; repr. 1968).
- Spence Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. J. M. Osborn (Oxford, 1966), 2 vols.
- Spingarn *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford, 1908-9; repr. 1957), 3 vols.
- Swift: Corr. *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford, 1963-5), 5 vols.
- Thomson: Letters James Thomson (1700-1748): *Letters and Documents*, ed. A. D. McKillop (Lawrence, Mass., 1958).
- Walpole: Corr. *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, gen. ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven, Conn., 1937- ).
- Warburton *The Works of Alexander Pope . . . with his last Corrections, Additions, and Improvements*, ed. William Warburton (London, 1751, 2nd ed.), 9 vols.
- Ward Charles E. Ward, *The Life of John Dryden* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1961).
- YJ *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, gen. eds. A. T. Hazen and J. H. Middendorf (New Haven, Conn., 1958- ).

The standard abbreviations have been used for the titles of modern literary periodicals.

# Reading List

## I Lives of the Poets

### Editions

*Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* (1779–81), 10 vols.

*The Lives of the most eminent English Poets* (London, 1781), 4 vols.

*The Lives of the most eminent English Poets* (London, 1783), 4 vols.

*Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill (Oxford, 1905; repr. New York, 1967), 3 vols.

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### Articles

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Boyce, Benjamin. 'Samuel Johnson's Criticism of Pope in the *Life of Pope*', *RES*, n.s. v (1954), 37–46.

Fleischauer, Warren. 'Johnson, *Lycidas*, and the Norms of Criticism', *Johnsonian Studies*, ed. Magdi Wahba (Cairo, 1962), pp. 235–56.

Hilles, F. W. 'The Making of *The Life of Pope*', in *New Light on Dr. Johnson*, pp. 257–84.

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Keast, W. R. 'Johnson's Criticism of the Metaphysical Poets', *ELH*, xvii (1950), 59–70.

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## II Other Books on Johnson

- Bronson, B. H. *Johnson Agonistes and Other Essays* (Cambridge, 1946), esp. pp. 1-52.
- Clifford, J. L. *Young Sam Johnson* (New York, 1955).
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