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# John Wolcot and "The Anecdotic Itch": Peter Pindar, Biography, and Historiography in the 1780s

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4 **John Wolcot and “The Anecdotic Itch”: Peter Pindar, Biography and**

5 **Historiography in the 1780s**

6

7

8 John Wolcot, under his nom de plume of Peter Pindar, was one of the most widely read  
9 poets of the late eighteenth century: his 50 odd poetic satires on divers subjects were one  
10 of the publishing phenomena of the age, with William Wordsworth, who generally  
11 affected a low opinion of Wolcot, forced to consider him as one of the ‘great names’ of  
12 satire.<sup>1</sup> If the scale of his popularity was likely subject to some contemporary hyperbole,  
13 nevertheless Donald Kerr’s analysis of Wolcot’s papers bears out the notion of Peter  
14 Pindar as a highly profitable publishing enterprise in which the book trade had significant  
15 commercial confidence.<sup>2</sup> Despite (or in part because of) this ubiquity, Wolcot has been  
16 neglected by scholarship, written off as a commercially-motivated trimmer devoid of  
17 principle or any commitment to higher ideals; a ‘literary gadfly’, in the words of Jeanne  
18 Griggs, ‘harmless but irritating’ who expended his talent on unworthy matters at a time of  
19 national emergency.<sup>3</sup>

20 Some, particularly more recent, accounts of Wolcot have sought a more  
21 sympathetic or complex response to his satiric method and output.<sup>4</sup> Efforts devoted to the  
22 critical rehabilitation of Wolcot have broadly fallen into two camps. The first, and larger,  
23 effort has looked to ascribe a politically meaningful and radical value to a satiric method  
24 that otherwise seems unduly invested in the treatment of trivial matters in a frivolous

25 fashion. Gary Dyer has interpreted Wolcot's refusal 'to treat satire, in neo-Juvenalian  
26 fashion, as a duty in a time of crisis' not as a moral failing or ducking of the important  
27 issues of the day, but instead as a refusal of the normative and inherited modes of satire  
28 and therefore as an anti-establishment gesture itself.<sup>5</sup> John Barrell has argued that the  
29 tone of good natured ribbing inherent in Wolcot's satire made it more not less subversive,  
30 not least because it allowed Wolcot's views to reach a wide range of audiences, including  
31 ones that were unreceptive to more strident and openly radical messages.<sup>6</sup> There is indeed  
32 evidence that Wolcot cultivated an image of innocuousness. In the ninth *Expostulatory*  
33 *Odes* Peter compares himself unfavourably with Charles Churchill. Churchill is a 'first  
34 rate man of war' compared to Peter's 'small cockboat bobbing at an anchor'; a  
35 'blacksmith's sledge' compared to Peter's 'sugar hammer'. Yet ironic disavowals and  
36 self-deprecation are amongst the more common currencies in which the satirist trades,  
37 and here Wolcot ensures an association with Churchill that might not otherwise have  
38 been apparent since suggesting that they should not be mentioned in the same breath  
39 involves mentioning them in the same breath. The second sort of rehabilitation, best  
40 exemplified by Benjamin Colbert's 'Petrio-Pindarics' and Iain McCalman's overview of  
41 Wolcot, has sought to understand Wolcot's reputation and neglect in terms of the  
42 emerging (self) image of the Romantic canon. Colbert highlights Wolcot's unnerving (for  
43 the established Romantic view of the poet) interest in the demands of commercial print  
44 culture, while McCalman draws attention to Wolcot's liminal (to his disadvantage)  
45 position within the conventional ways in which literary history is periodised.<sup>7</sup> These are  
46 all significant interventions, but overall it remains the case that Wolcot is not as notable a  
47 beneficiary as some of his contemporaries of a wider critical project that has, in the words

48 of Steven E. Jones, worked to ‘decentre Romanticism and reorientate its canonical works  
49 and authors.’<sup>8</sup> In 1999 McCalman’s verdict was that Wolcot ‘remains seriously  
50 underestimated by modern social historians and literary scholars’, and while today one  
51 might not put it in quite such stark terms, nevertheless he remains a neglected figure  
52 relative to his presence in his day.<sup>9</sup>

53         This article takes its cue from these various approaches while also breaking new  
54 ground in the ways Wolcot can be read. Informed by the previously central question of  
55 Wolcot’s politics as determined by the question of whether he is an anti-establishment or  
56 toothless writer, it will consider key Peter Pindar satires of the 1780s in terms of  
57 Wolcot’s interest in the use of anecdote within the writing of history and biography and  
58 his self-conscious interest in the business (figurative but also literal) of writing about  
59 Great Men. Through these interests, I shall argue, Wolcot is engaging in significant  
60 cultural debates about the meaning of greatness and significant achievement in the 1780s.  
61 Appreciating this engagement broadens our sense of the questions it is possible to pose  
62 about Wolcot as a writer beyond those to do with an attitude to ministerial policy during  
63 the Revolutionary period.

64         The essay is in four parts. The first section offers a relatively brief and necessarily  
65 broad outline of the immediate intellectual contexts of anecdote, history, politeness and  
66 commerce that provide the framework for the reading of Wolcot that follows. The aim is  
67 here to demonstrate how these various cultural and intellectual dynamics can be seen in  
68 vital relation to Wolcot’s work. The middle two sections offer reciprocal case studies of  
69 these matters. The first considers two poems in which Peter Pindar addresses the  
70 questions provoked by efforts to memorialise a figure of stature in the literary world in

71 the shape of the recently departed Samuel Johnson: *A Poetical and Congratulatory*  
72 *Epistle to James Boswell, Esq on his Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with the*  
73 *celebrated Dr Johnson* (1786); and *Bozzy and Piozzi, or, The British Biographers, A*  
74 *Town Eclogue* (1786). In these poems we shall see how Johnson can only be understood,  
75 and writing about him can only be guaranteed an audience, by focussing on the lowest-  
76 common-denominator of scurrilous detail and base indignity. This is diagnosed as the  
77 result of mass print culture, an obsession with gossip, and a base philistinism, the last of  
78 which best encapsulated in the figure of King George III himself. If these poems set the  
79 terms of the question or dilemma, my second set of examples offer Peter Pindar's own  
80 solution to the question of mediating figures of eminence in the relationship he constructs  
81 between poet (and satirist) and monarch, in his various poems of 1787 offering advice to  
82 the Poet Laureate Thomas Warton with a particular focus on *Instructions to a Celebrated*  
83 *Laureat; alias The Progress of Curiosity; alias A Birthday Ode; alias Mr Whitbread's*  
84 *Brewhouse*. In this poem the critique of the King offered in the *Celebratory Epistle* is  
85 extended but also inverted as Peter not only warms to his theme of royal imbecility but  
86 suggests, in his reproach to Warton, that this is the only fitting way to write about the  
87 King in a world where the values George represents defy the conventional language and  
88 attributes of greatness. Or to put it another way, in *Bozzy and Piozzi*, the eponymous  
89 biographers are chastised for writing mundane and trivial nonsense; in the *Instructions*  
90 and *Advice*, Warton is chastised for writing anything other than mundane and trivial  
91 nonsense. Separately the two sets of poems identify a mismatch between the subject of  
92 the panegyric (be it Johnson or King George) and the grounds for, and manner of, the  
93 celebration. Collectively they diagnose a wider cultural malaise to do with the meaning

94 and mediation of stature and what might count as significant achievement amongst a  
95 polite and commercial people. The essay will conclude with a final section summarising  
96 these findings and discussing how the issues explored might knit back into the issues  
97 outlined at the start of the introduction to do with Wolcot's place within late eighteenth-  
98 century literary studies.

99

100 **I. "The Anecdotic Itch": History, Commerce, Virtue and the place of**  
101 **Anecdote**

102

103 The use of the anecdotal method within the writing of history and biography in the  
104 eighteenth century has been the subject of significant recent enquiry. Such enquiries have  
105 tended to stress the multiple uses and interpretations available to the eighteenth century,  
106 something that Lionel Grossman, in his comprehensive anatomy of the anecdote and its  
107 various forms, calls, with admirable understatement, 'a complex matter'.<sup>10</sup> Rebecca  
108 Bullard's discussion of secret history narratives (to which the anecdotal method is closely  
109 allied etymologically and practically in the early eighteenth century) is perhaps most  
110 notable for arguing, in the face of previous interpretations, that 'there is no intrinsic  
111 connection between secret history and radical whig politics', but for the purposes of my  
112 engagement with Wolcot, this is less important than her approach to thinking about the  
113 secret – unsanctioned or unofficial – history as a 'rhetorical act of revelation', and a self-  
114 conscious one at that.<sup>11</sup> In what follows we shall see how Bullard's reading of secret  
115 history as a discourse that 'scrutinizes the ethical, epistemic, historiographical and  
116 political implications of its own revelatory gestures' chimes with Peter Pindar's highly

117 self-conscious examination of the most appropriate way of capturing the deeds of great  
118 men and the implications of his chosen approach. In this way his anecdotal approach  
119 offers an unusual but identifiable addition to the discourse of secret history during the  
120 eighteenth century.

121         As Grossman notes, the connection between anecdote and the revelatory secret  
122 history loosened through the eighteenth-century (without, as we shall see, entirely losing  
123 touch with it). The term lost its specific sense of embarrassing revelation about the  
124 powers-that-be and gained a wider currency as part of a historiographical method  
125 evolving in response to the priorities of a polite and commercial age. As the political and  
126 social priorities of civic humanism gave way to those of commercial humanism notions  
127 of moral and political virtue underwent a profound shift. To cite one just one famous  
128 example, this is Samuel Johnson on the ‘projectors’:

129         I cannot conceived why he that has burnt cities, and wasted nations, and filled the  
130 world with horror and desolation should be more kindly regarded by mankind  
131 than he that died in the rudiments of wickedness; why he that accomplished  
132 mischief should be glorious, and he that only endeavoured it should be criminal.<sup>12</sup>

133 By ‘huddl[ing] together in obscurity and detestation’ both those conventionally  
134 considered the heroes of history and those failed criminals – both the Caesars and the  
135 Catilines, as he puts it – Johnson is revaluing the meaning of virtue for an age repelled by  
136 the warrior ethics of the past. This suspicion about the public actions of those that had  
137 previously been considered the heroes of history is also accompanied by a  
138 reconsideration of the proper materials of history. As history came to be understood not  
139 as the civic activity of the autonomous citizen but as the result of a complex series of

140 inter-relations, so understandings of the drivers of history and the ways in which history  
141 should be articulated changed. This, in the words of Mark Salber Phillips, led to an  
142 ‘enlargement of the boundaries of the historical’ in order to take account for all those  
143 things excluded from classical history but which commercial eighteenth-century Britain,  
144 extrapolating from its own experience, saw as vital to the understanding of the past,  
145 included ‘the history of literature, of the arts and sciences, of manners and customs, even  
146 of opinion and sentiment’.<sup>13</sup> For Phillips, one symptom of this is the growth in  
147 importance of the sentimental biography as one of the constituent genres of history in the  
148 late eighteenth century, private histories containing anecdotal scenes of everyday life and  
149 of the domestic sphere not, as at the start of the century, as a way of revealing the sordid  
150 motivations and immoral priorities behind the pieties of official public history, but out of  
151 a growing sense that manners maketh the man. At such a cultural moment, anecdote can  
152 serve as a way of recovering what Helen Deutsch has termed ‘a lost embodied “real”, an  
153 undoing of larger, public historical narratives in order [...] to bring the dead, particularly  
154 the illustrious scholarly dead, back to life.’<sup>14</sup>

155         Johnson had made this point forcefully three years early than his comments in *The*  
156 *Adventurer* in *The Rambler* 60. There he argues against the limiting perspectives of  
157 public history and its ‘false measures of excellence and dignity’ (some of which he would  
158 consider criminal in the later article) in favour of ‘domestic privacies, and [...] the minute  
159 details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other  
160 only by prudence and virtue.’<sup>15</sup> Yet Johnson recognises the challenges of such a history.  
161 Challenges to do with the selection of material, since not everything that can be known is  
162 worth knowing; and the challenges of perspective that comes from a position intimate

163 enough to its subject to be aware of those private habits worth knowing but able to retain  
164 an independent and larger perspective, one that avoids seeing it ‘an act of piety to hide  
165 the faults and failings of their friends’. The answer, according to Johnson, remains firmly  
166 rooted in the classical notion of history as exemplar, or, as he puts it with a Horation  
167 rather than Plutarchean turn, to provide ‘instruction or delight.’ However, while Johnson  
168 rests on this Horation editorial principle, Isaac Disraeli, in the most famous account of the  
169 anecdote in England in the eighteenth century, goes one stage further in examining the  
170 potential crisis of editorial judgement and priority within the anecdotal valuing of the  
171 small details of life, a crisis summarised by Helen Deutsch as, ‘if details like these are  
172 important enough to record, then nothing is sacred, on the one hand, and nothing is  
173 meaningless, on the other.’<sup>16</sup>

174 Disraeli is as clear as Johnson had been that if the proper study of history is the  
175 human mind, then ‘human nature, like a vast machine, is not to be understood by looking  
176 at its superficialities, but by dwelling on its minute springs and wheels.’<sup>17</sup> Disraeli maintains  
177 that anecdote represents the essential means by which one understands the genius of men  
178 and times and he therefore denies (in a way that Johnson perhaps would have done) that  
179 there can ever be too many anecdotes collected and presented. Nevertheless he is clear  
180 that it is the presentation of anecdote, its interpretation and the larger truths to which it is  
181 taken to attest, that really matters. ‘To collect anecdote is the humble labour of industry’  
182 he suggests, the challenge if ‘to present them with reflection, with acumen, and with  
183 taste.’<sup>18</sup> In Disraeli’s ideal anecdotal memoir, the memoirist collects exemplary episodes  
184 and stories and presents them in such a way as to render himself invisible. The aim is to  
185 set narrative and interpretation and anecdote off to such effect as to give the reader the

186 illusion of discovering the company of the great man for themselves rather than to insist  
 187 upon the activities of the memoirist. In this way the anecdotal is central to what David  
 188 Simpson calls a ‘culture of subjectification’ and the emergence of ‘middle class ideology’  
 189 during the period, not only because of the emphasis on the familiar and everyday closes  
 190 the gap between the traditionally elite and a middle class audience but also because of the  
 191 interpretative reading such an approach encourages: ‘to make significant meaning out of  
 192 fragments or anecdotes is to make a self for ourselves in the very act of so making.’<sup>19</sup>

193         Johnson and Disraeli both demonstrate a confidence and anxiety about the role of  
 194 what had hitherto been secret history to provide an account of men and times more  
 195 aligned with the values of their times. Indeed those values themselves were a matter of  
 196 contest. As J.G.A. Pocock reminds us (and as Phillips’s book amongst others charts)  
 197 ‘there is no greater and no commoner mistake in the history of social thought than to  
 198 suppose that the tension [between commercial and civic virtue] ever disappeared’.<sup>20</sup> The  
 199 superiority ascribed to polite and commercial society was tempered by a nostalgia – and  
 200 more in some quarters – for virtues it was easier to disavow than necessarily do without.  
 201 Reconciling sensibility and power was a key preoccupation of the middle decades of the  
 202 century across various fields and numerous texts can be read in this light: the moral and  
 203 political philosophy of Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson; the novels of Samuel  
 204 Richardson; the *Poems of Ossian*, which celebrate the impossible deeds of an impossible  
 205 hero who, in the words of Walter Scott, combined ‘the strength and bravery of Achilles,  
 206 with the courtesy, sentiment and high-breeding of Sir Charles Grandison’.<sup>21</sup> The 1780s in  
 207 particular saw increased anxieties, in the wake of the loss of the American colonies and  
 208 renewed threats to British interests in India that the fruits of a commercial empire would

209 be moral corruption and inexorable decline. For example, Robert W Jones has  
210 demonstrated the various ways in which the literature and politics of Opposition sought a  
211 range of masculine identities and rhetorical forms that met the challenges of commerce  
212 and politeness during a disastrous war.<sup>22</sup> In this context the anecdotal is both an emblem  
213 of the more expansive world of commerce and trade, of a complex, rich and sophisticated  
214 society needing to be understood in terms of the ‘secret springs’ that motivate the actions  
215 of complex modern individuals whose best and worst features were to be understood  
216 within the everyday and domestic, and also a symptom, in Grossman’s words, of ‘the  
217 decadence of taste and the intrusion of the commercial spirit into literature’, the  
218 overvaluing of a cult of the individual and their mannerisms at the expense of the  
219 significant messages of history.<sup>23</sup> This cult of the individual helped created a celebrity  
220 culture built out of ‘an extensive, industrialised, and intertextual mode of gossip’ in  
221 which the details of lives stand for substantive achievement.<sup>24</sup> Depending on your point  
222 of view the anecdotal is a solution to the opportunities and challenges of a new order, or  
223 the symptom of the inherent corruption of that order, or both.

224         This then provides the context for Wolcot’s exploration of the problems of finding  
225 an appropriate discourse of memorialisation in an age whose values are increasingly  
226 divorced from the traditional modes of valorisation and in which those responsible for  
227 that memorialisation are making a living out of their work. As such, Wolcot’s satire  
228 engages in this important eighteenth-century debate about the means of reconciling  
229 heroism and sensibility, the private and the public, the place of celebrity, and the most  
230 appropriate way of establishing, what Jones terms ‘a discursive mode capable of ensuring  
231 the legibility of character’ in an age of politeness and commerce.<sup>25</sup> It is now appropriate

232 to turn to some examples of the way in which Wolcot's interest in the nature of biography  
 233 and the business of its literary representation is aligned with key eighteenth-century  
 234 historiographical discourses and debates about the meaning and representation of the  
 235 great figures of history.

236

237 **II. "The Charming Haberdasher of Small Wares": James Boswell and the**  
 238 **Anecdotal Method**

239 The *Epistle to Boswell* and *Bozzy and Piozzi* were both exceptionally popular, the latter  
 240 going through ten editions in two years. They also had considerable longevity, appearing  
 241 alongside *The Lousiad*, as representative of Wolcot's work in Richard Griffin's *The*  
 242 *British Satirist, Comprising the Best Satires of the most Celebrated Poets from Pope to*  
 243 *Byron* (1826). They date from an important point in Wolcot's career. In 1782 he had  
 244 announced Peter Pindar's existence with his *Lyrical Odes to the Royal Academicians* and  
 245 in 1785 produced the first canto of the *Lousiad*, another four cantos of which would  
 246 appear over the next ten years. *The Lyrical Odes* (and its sequels) offer a demolition of  
 247 the pretensions of the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in which all but Sir Joshua  
 248 Reynolds come in for blunt abuse. The *Lousiad* is a broad attack on George III as an  
 249 oafish fool and domestic tyrant. The Boswell satires mark a turn towards a more specific  
 250 analysis of the relationship between poetry and power, and the poetic representation of  
 251 men of stature. They represent a satiric attack on the absurdity of biographies of Johnson  
 252 that focussed on the anecdotal and quotidian, and they seek to connect this to a broader  
 253 cultural interest in the inane and trivial most obviously articulated in the figure of George  
 254 III himself. Thus they inaugurate one of Peter's favourite topics in king-baiting –

255 George's childish love of obscure or worthless detail – and one of his favourite ways of  
 256 exploring it, the consideration of the proper object of poetry.

257         As is well known, Johnson's death in December 1784 inaugurated a frenzy of  
 258 speculation, planning and competition over the question of a biography of the great man.  
 259 In the event Boswell was first out of the blocks with his *Journal of a Tour to the*  
 260 *Hebrides* in September 1785, a revised edition of which appeared before the year was  
 261 out. Hester Piozzi's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson LL.D.* was published in March  
 262 1786. Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D* would appear in March 1787  
 263 though he, as Johnson's official biographer, was known to be working on it well in  
 264 advance (as Peter's satires demonstrate).<sup>26</sup> Peter's *Congratulatory Epistle* appeared in  
 265 February 1786, in response to the revisions to the second edition of Boswell's *Journal*,  
 266 and *Bozzy and Piozzi* the following month in immediate response to the first edition of  
 267 Piozzi's *Anecdotes*. As Helen Deutsch's praise for Wolcot as 'perhaps the most brilliant  
 268 of the many contemporary critics of Boswell's penchant for anecdotes' reveals, these two  
 269 poems were not unique in addressing the vogue for unflatteringly anecdotal accounts of  
 270 Johnson.<sup>27</sup> Indeed Robert Vales records four other occasions upon which Wolcot himself  
 271 makes reference to Boswell's addiction to anecdote, including one in his notorious "Ode  
 272 to Lord Lonsdale" of 1792.<sup>28</sup> The *Congratulatory Epistle* and *Bozzy and Piozzi* are  
 273 however Peter's most sustained meditations on the subject.

274         *Bozzy and Piozzi* imagines the would-be memoirists Boswell and Piozzi locked in  
 275 competition over the right to publish the first biography of Johnson. This takes the form  
 276 of a debate over the relative merits of their previously published *Journal* and *Anecdotes*  
 277 adjudicated by Johnson's friend and executor, the magistrate Sir John Hawkins. The

278 poem opens with the consternation felt at the news of the death of Johnson amongst the  
 279 Olympians:

280       Minerva sighing for her fav'rite son,  
 281       Pronounc'd, with lengthen'd face the world undone:  
 282       Her owl too, hooted in so loud a style,  
 283       That people might have heard the bird, a mile:  
 284       Jove wip'd his eyes so red, and told his wife  
 285       He ne'er made Johnson's equal, in his life;  
 286       And that 'twould be a long time first, if ever,  
 287       His art could form a fellow half so clever.<sup>29</sup>

288 In the midst of what Peter terms the 'Johnso-mania', Boswell and Piozzi emerge as chief  
 289 amongst the 'pigmy planets' who 'catch their little lustre from the sun' of Johnson's life  
 290 and opinions. Vying for what Peter calls 'the palm of anecdote' they come before

291 Hawkins:

292       [...] for vict'ry, both as keen,  
 293       As for a tott'ring bishoprick, a Dean,  
 294       Or patriot Burke, for giving glorious bastings  
 295       To that intolerable fellow Hastings. (p.9)

296 This introduction is characteristic of Peter's style with its debunking informality and a  
 297 general facetiousness deployed in an indiscriminate manner. So Edmund Burke's  
 298 agitations against Warren Hastings over his conduct of the Maratha War that had begun  
 299 early that year (and would of course culminate two years later with his four-day long  
 300 opening speech at Hastings' impeachment) are reduced to the stuff of schoolboy banter or

301 common room snobbery ('glorious bastings', 'intolerable fellow'). Beyond that, the  
302 mock-heroic representation of 'Johnso-mania' implicates Peter as part of a cultural  
303 discourse that is unable to observe notions of literary decorum and congruity. Peter's  
304 voice is comically bathetic as he pursues his satiric target, but the cost of this method is  
305 the undercutting of the sense of grandeur of its subject matter in just the ways that it will  
306 accuse Boswell and Piozzi in due course. In other words, we assume that it matters  
307 whether or not Hastings's actions threatened British interests and influence in India and  
308 that, to the anti-ministerial Wolcot, Burke represents a force for good in bringing  
309 malpractice to light. In which case Hastings is more than merely 'intolerable' and the  
310 facetiousness implied in 'glorious bastings' misplaced. Peter's desire to be funny at all  
311 costs compromises his ability to offer a voice of Juvenalian righteous indignation.

312         Hawkins instructs Boswell and Piozzi to trade stories about Johnson from their  
313 *Journal* and *Anecdotes* respectively so as to determine who should earn the right to a full  
314 biography. This functions as a convenient trigger, yet the reader is given no justification  
315 for this method of arbitration and no sense of the basis upon which Hawkins will form an  
316 opinion about Boswell and Piozzi's relative merits via the anecdotes they relate (what, in  
317 this context, does good look like?). The formlessness of the event is reinforced by the fact  
318 that Boswell and Piozzi do not engage in debate, rebut or reinforce, rather they talk past  
319 each other, refuse to acknowledge the other's presence and instead bombard Hawkins  
320 (and the reader) with unconnected anecdotes. One effect of this lack of discursive or  
321 argumentative structure – which is the anecdotal method in its purest form of course – is  
322 that the reader is encouraged to seek other patterns and make other senses. That being so,  
323 what emerges, in a vestigial echo of the previously dominant notion of the anecdote as

324 complicit in the revealing of the secret (or unofficial or private) histories that offer  
 325 unflattering insights into the human frailties elided by more anodyne and public accounts,  
 326 is the impression that all the stories told show Johnson up in a bad light: his irascibility,  
 327 his gluttony, his desire to be funny or clever or have the last word. Each individual  
 328 anecdote is footnoted with a page reference within the *Journal* or *Anecdotes* at which the  
 329 original can be found. This cod-apparatus gives the debate the impression of rigour, and  
 330 anchors the dispute in reality by reassuring the (perhaps presumed to be incredulous)  
 331 reader that these are authentically from the texts in question. In fact this editorial joke  
 332 cuts two ways. On the one hand, the reader who goes back to the source texts to look up  
 333 these passages can join in the fun at Boswell and Piozzi's expense, satirically rereading  
 334 the passage in the light of what they know Peter has made of it, reading through Peter's  
 335 eyes as it were. On the other, there is a suspicious of a further neo-Scriblerian joke at the  
 336 expense of Peter himself and his overly serious-minded assumption that readers are going  
 337 to be interested (or be taking matters seriously enough) to go to the trouble of looking up  
 338 references.

339         The poem is punctuated with an interlude during which Hawkins takes a nap. In  
 340 fine epic style the ghost of 'the surly RAMBLER', appears to him in a dream, implores  
 341 him to stop Boswell and Piozzi writing their biographies ('nor crucify, through  
 342 biography, a friend' as Johnson puts it), and leaves after delivering a short speech on the  
 343 subject of none other than Peter Pindar:

344             Tell PETER PINDAR, should you chance to meet him,  
 345             I like his GENIUS---should be glad to greet him ---  
 346             Yet let him know, CROWN'D HEADS are sacred things,

347           And bid him rev'rence more, the BEST OF KINGS; (p.27)

348   This comically double-edged meta-textual moment (being told by a visitor from the  
 349   beyond that he is looking forward to meeting you is not comforting), is made more  
 350   farcical by a footnote in which Peter expresses puzzlement with this last couplet, given  
 351   what Peter understands Johnson's view to have been of a '*certain GREAT*  
 352   PERSONAGE'. The levels of recursive, mediated representation at this moment are  
 353   playful in the extreme, an example of what Kyle Grimes means when he characterises  
 354   Romantic parodic satire as 'a dialogising counter-movement to the implicit truth-claims  
 355   of all monological discourses.'<sup>30</sup> In this instance Wolcot has his imaginary author (Peter)  
 356   evoke via a highly self-conscious epic trope a literary representation of a real but dead  
 357   person (Johnson), and then has that imaginary author argue with what a figment of his  
 358   own imaginary imagination has to say. As with most meta-textual jokes it is less amusing  
 359   spelt out than experienced, but the larger point about the inherent fallacy of biographical  
 360   attempts to establish a single version of the messy complexity that goes to make up the  
 361   lives and opinions of their subjects is well taken.

362           Hawkins awakes and the action resumes, but with some differences. By now,  
 363   Boswell's stories have become entirely self-reflexive, and finally the protagonists round  
 364   on each other, each attacking the other's desire to scratch what Boswell terms the  
 365   'anecdotic itch'. They criticise each other's respective anecdotes for their triviality, their  
 366   inaccuracy, the fact that they are unflattering to Johnson; and they are finally reduced to  
 367   abusing the size and quality of each other's readerships. At this point Hawkins calls a halt  
 368   and a plague on both their houses:

369           For shame! For shame! For heaven's sake pray be quiet ---

370 Not Billingsgate exhibits such a riot.  
 371 Behold for scandal, you have made a feast,  
 372 And turn your idol, Johnson to a beast:  
 373 'Tis plain the tales of ghosts are arrant lies,  
 374 Or instantaneously, would Johnson's rise:  
 375 Make you both eat your paragraphs so evil ---  
 376 And for your treatment of him, play the devil. (pp.50-51)

377 Hawkins goes on in similar style, though his defence of Johnson is significantly undercut  
 378 when at the end of the poem he departs to write his own anecdotal biography. Hawkins'  
 379 biographical ambitions were of course known about even if the content of his offering  
 380 was as yet unrevealed. Peter suggests that this episode will have inspired Hawkins 'on  
 381 anecdote to cram' in order to 'vomit first, a life of surly Sam'. The disease of the British  
 382 biographers is apparently contagious and a symptom of a society that would appear to  
 383 have lost a vocabulary of the glorious, a way of articulating the profound and timeless.  
 384 We see explicitly the extent of Hawkins' infection, while in more subtle ways Peter  
 385 himself runs the risk of being accused of the elevation of the trivial and pettifogging  
 386 through his memorialisation of it in mock-classical style, complete with footnotes.

387 The *Epistle* of a month earlier addressed to Boswell alone has a more  
 388 straightforward rhetorical thrust: the ironic praise of Boswell and an encouragement to  
 389 him both to hold his nerve in the face of the criticism provoked by his *Journal* (and  
 390 revisions to the second edition suggested some such loss of nerve), and to beat Hawkins  
 391 and Piozzi to producing a full biography of Johnson. Yet whereas *Bozzy and Piozzi*  
 392 would only hint at the broader issues of literary taste at stake when abusing each other's

393 readerships, the *Epistle* engages in an explicit critique of the cultural malaise whereby the  
 394 great and the good are trivialised within a popular culture hungry for trivia and anecdote.  
 395 In doing so he also makes explicit links between the questions of the lowest-common-  
 396 denominator priorities of cheap print, the celebrity culture it embraces, the recalibration  
 397 of what counts as history this might involve, and between all this and the figure of  
 398 George III.

399 Peter widens and deepens his attack on contemporary print culture and its  
 400 commercial imperatives in the terms of his encouragement to Boswell to keep the faith in  
 401 the face of the outcry provoked by the first edition of the *Journal*:

402        Though Wilkes abuse thy brain, that airy mill,  
 403        And swear poor Johnson murder'd by thy quill;  
 404        What's that to thee? Why let the victim bleed ---  
 405        Thy end is answer'd, if the Nation read. (p.16)

406 Peter's mock-messianic invocation of the full biography had already forced home the  
 407 point that satisfying the public appetite for scurrilous gossip is the best way of achieving  
 408 longevity for a biography:

409        O Bozzy, still, thy tell-tale plan pursue:  
 410        The world is wond'rous fond of something new;  
 411        And, let but Scandal's breath embalm the page,  
 412        It lives a welcome guest from age to age. (p.14)

413 This is the most striking example of what Deutsch notes as Peter's habit of 'continually  
 414 evok[ing] [the] past as future spectacle', and as Peter elaborates on that 'something new',  
 415 he makes clear that it is not the stuff of conventional history:

416 Find when he eat and drank, and cough'd, and sneez'd –

417 Let all his motions in thy book be squeez'd:

418 On tales however strange, impose thy claw;

419 Yes, let thy amber lick up e'vry straw:

420 Sam's nods, and winks, and laughs, will form a treat;

421 For all that breathes of Johnson must be great! (p.19)<sup>31</sup>

422 Johnson is a victim several times over here of the creation of what, following Richard  
 423 Schickel, is today understood as 'the illusion of intimacy' at the heart of celebrity.<sup>32</sup> The  
 424 details of his personal life, his tics and habits, are paraded for the edification of the  
 425 reading masses and the profit and fame of the biographer. At the same time it is hard for  
 426 the reader not to feel some resentment towards Johnson himself as the minutiae of his life  
 427 are assumed to be of interest and imposed upon the reader.

428 The upshot of the successful pursuit of 'something new' is, says Peter, nothing  
 429 less than the recalibration of the pantheon of great historians, as he explicitly links the  
 430 question of anecdotal biography to writing of other sorts of history writing, and indeed  
 431 other forms of story-telling:

432 Stewart and Robertson, from thee, shall learn,

433 The simple charms of Hist'ry to discern:

434 To thee, fair Hist'ry's palm, shall Livy yield,

435 And Tacitus, to Bozzy, leave the field!

436 Joe Miller's self, whose page such fun, provokes,

437 Shall quit his shroud, to grin at Bozzy's jokes!

438 How are we all with rapture touch'd, to see

439           Where, when, and at what hour, you swallow'd tea!

440           How, once, to grace this Asiatic treat,

441           Came haddocks, which the Rambler could not eat.<sup>33</sup>

442 Boswell's achievements and methods overshadow the classical historiography of Livy  
 443 and Tacitus and the Scottish Enlightenment historiographical and sociological thinking of  
 444 William Robertson and Dugald Stewart, not to mention the achievements of Joseph  
 445 Miller (1684-1738), the comedy actor immortalised by John Mottley in his joke book *Joe*  
 446 *Miller's Jests, or the Wit's Vade-Mecum* of 1739. On one level this is facetious  
 447 hyperbole and an example of ambitiously extended zeugma as Bozzy's performance  
 448 simultaneously overtops that of Livy, Tacitus and the most famous joke-teller of the age.  
 449 But on another it is worrying at a problem within eighteenth-century historiography  
 450 discussed in section one, namely that a view of history as the representation of active  
 451 political virtue is being overtaken by a sociable, sentimental ideology whose implications  
 452 for the writing of history had yet to unfold but whose potentially levelling implications  
 453 were clear. As Phillips puts it, if it was 'increasingly hard to think of history as  
 454 exclusively concerned with the narrative of political action' then the editorial task of the  
 455 historian was suddenly increased beyond measure.<sup>34</sup> The same cultural moment has been  
 456 observed in the narrowing of the distance between biography and history to the point  
 457 where in the words of Grossman, 'history itself came to resemble a kind of national  
 458 biography.'<sup>35</sup> At the same time, according to Peter here with his references to Livy and  
 459 Miller, History has become a joke, or at least indistinguishable from it.

460           It is notable that all these comments throw an emphasis upon Boswell's profile as  
 461 an author, rather than on the subject his efforts should illuminate. In *Bozzi and Piozzi*

462 Boswell is variously described as a ‘mighty shark for anecdote and fame’; a ‘charming  
 463 haberdasher of small ware’; an assiduous labourer ‘amid the anecdotic mine’; a ‘lively,  
 464 bouncing cracker’ at the tail of Johnson’s comet; and ‘a very Laz’rus at the rich man’s  
 465 table’. Peter even describes Boswell as a ‘watchful cat’ who for 20 years ‘did’st mousing  
 466 sit before Sam’s mouth so wide, | To catch as many scraps as [he] was able’. In the  
 467 *Epistle*, the emphasis on acquisition, on the gathering of scraps, hunting and mining,  
 468 places the memoirist front and centre, his activity distracting attention from the supposed  
 469 subject of the work. This is not the kind of memoir Disraeli would have in mind a few  
 470 years later, with its emphasis not on the collection of anecdote but upon their disposal  
 471 into a form that allowed the allusion that the reader was creating the narrative. Small  
 472 wonder perhaps then that at the end of his *Dissertation* he would expressed a desire for a  
 473 native anecdotalist to rival the French masters of the mode, one who combines the  
 474 ‘learning’ of Joseph Warton, the ‘taste’ of Horace Walpole and the ‘faithfulness’ of  
 475 Boswell, where faithfulness might mean both loyalty to subject and to the task of  
 476 revealing all.

477           Wolcot may be responding satirically to pressures and movements within  
 478 historiographical writing that were felt by contemporaries to do with the editorial shaping  
 479 and selection of a richer history of people, characters and the times, but he also has a  
 480 particular figurehead for this cultural obsession with the trivial in the *Epistle*. Peter’s  
 481 claim that ‘pleas’d, on thy book thy sovereign’s eye-balls roll, | Who loves a gossip’s  
 482 story from his soul’ introduces a lengthy (over thirty line) account of the ‘one huge  
 483 cyclopedia of wit’ that makes up the King’s brain. In what would become the familiar  
 484 shape of his satires on George III, Peter emphasises the utmost triviality or mundane

485 practicality of almost everything the King knows, generating his comic charge from the  
 486 discrepancy between the power of majesty and ludicrous banality or penny-pinching  
 487 economy of most of the things he concerns himself with:

488       Which gard'ner hath most cabbages and peas,

489       And which old woman hath most hives of bees;

490       Which farmer boasts the most prolific sows,

491       Cocks, hens, geese, turkies, goats, sheep, bulls, and cows; (pp.10-11)

492 In later satires on George's husbandry (notably *The Royal Tour; or Weymouth*  
 493 *Amusements*), these preoccupations are integral to Peter's attack on the King's ill-placed  
 494 parsimoniousness; ill-placed, according to Peter, because the King's much trumpeted  
 495 frugality is often sharp-practice at the expense of the livelihoods of his own subjects. In  
 496 the *Epistle* they work to link Boswell's idea of a biography of a great man, and his sense  
 497 of the reading public's appetite for the inane or grubby details of such biographies, with  
 498 what passes for intellectual prowess with the sovereign. Both suggest a culture drowning  
 499 in a sea of inconsequential nonsense, of triviality and distasteful gossip.

500       The references to George III are then the most significant of several moves that  
 501 allow the *Epistle* to build from an attack on the impertinence of one man seeking to hitch  
 502 his star to the fame of a literary great to the identification of a more widespread cultural  
 503 malaise. One of the ironies of this is that Peter's argument is fundamentally anecdotal,  
 504 relying on taking the singular (Boswell's biographical activities) as representative of the  
 505 whole (a cultural taste for gossip). This shadows the larger question these two poems  
 506 repeatedly raise about the place of Peter himself within this critique, since the sheer  
 507 pyrotechnical brilliance and fascinated exuberance of his depiction of the 'charming

508 haberdasher of small wares' threatens to collapse the distinction between Peter and the  
 509 world he describes. If Boswell's celebrity relies on Johnson, then Peter's relies on  
 510 Boswell relying on Johnson. It is a deeply compromised position. More generally, the  
 511 culture of cheap print, the same culture that would soon be able to facilitate the  
 512 production of forty two and a half thousand copies of Peter's own works (though Peter's  
 513 print did not in fact come cheap), encourages the peddling of this mind numbing trivia.<sup>36</sup>  
 514 The cult of celebrity and personality, the same cult of celebrity and personality that has  
 515 people rush to enjoy the picaresque literary adventures and opinions of Peter in print,  
 516 fosters, according to Peter, an attitude in which admiration for greatness can only be  
 517 expressed perversely via an obsession with the intimate details of everyday habits. In this  
 518 way Peter is a part of the malady he diagnoses, creating and satisfying the appetite his  
 519 poems otherwise condemn. He is in these poems an example of the dynamic whereby  
 520 'even writers who lamented the degradation of literature and thought themselves as rising  
 521 above it, often became embroiled, willingly or unwillingly, in the culture of  
 522 commercialised celebrity.'<sup>37</sup> In the next section I want to turn to some of Wolcot's further  
 523 examinations of the relationship between writer and subject, and the problems of being a  
 524 public writer in a period where virtue has been replaced by celebrity and where it feels  
 525 like there is no longer a relevant public language of praise.

526

527 **II. "Tribute All Sincere": Brother Peter, Brother Tom, and the Poetic Discourse of**  
 528 **Majesty.**

529 The Boswell poems outline a problem caused by a mismatch between a figure of great  
 530 stature in the world of letters – Johnson – and the ways in which popular culture would

531 seem to seek to memorialise figures of stature via the anecdotal and the ‘tell all’ memoir.  
 532 It is as if the discourse of memorialisation has come adrift from the characteristics,  
 533 actions and behaviours traditionally considered worth memorialising. The Warton poems  
 534 suggest a similar but opposite mismatch, this time between a traditional discourse of  
 535 royal eulogy and a royal figure whose behaviours and values are more in tune with the  
 536 cultural values so lamented in the Boswell poems.

537         Thomas Warton was appointed Poet Laureate in 1785, and his output in this office  
 538 was subject to immediate and widespread derision in, for example, a collection of  
 539 *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship* of the same year.<sup>38</sup> Peter weighed in on three  
 540 occasions in 1787 (*Ode Upon Ode; Instructions to a Celebrated Laureat [...] alias Mr*  
 541 *Whitbread’s Brewhouse; Apologetic Postscript to Ode Upon Ode*) and again in 1788 with  
 542 *Brother Peter to Brother Tom*. The inconvenience of Warton’s death in 1790 did not  
 543 curtail Peter’s interest in the subject: his *Advice to the Future Laureat: An Ode* (1790)  
 544 laid out the poetic qualifications for filling the recently vacated post, while the subtitle to  
 545 one of his most famous poems, *The Royal Tour and Weymouth Amusements: A Solemn*  
 546 *and Reprimanding Epistle to the Laureat* (1795) makes clear that it is occasioned by  
 547 Peter’s disapproval of the then incumbent Henry James Pye. In the meantime Peter also  
 548 offered various other animadversions on his relationship with the King and, by extension,  
 549 the relationship between poets and majesty.

550         The ‘advice to the poet’ ploy serves of course as a useful disclaimer that allows  
 551 Wolcot to claim that Peter is not attacking the King, but rather those who write about  
 552 him. Nevertheless it provides other satiric opportunities. In the case of the Warton poems  
 553 the examination of the relationship between the poet (and the notion of poetic merit) and

554 the subject matter at hand is a means of satirising the whole business of state-sponsored  
555 verse and through this the person of the King. It also provides an opportunity to explore,  
556 through the fictional poet Peter, the question of what kind of poet can be envisaged as  
557 flourishing in this culture, and beyond that it was an established method through which  
558 writers signalled a self-conscious interest in the writing of history. As Noelle Gallagher  
559 has most recently demonstrated, satirists from the Restoration onwards used the Advice  
560 to the Artist genre to ‘situate their works within an English historiographical tradition’  
561 and make ‘historical representation itself a central issue in the portrayal of past persons  
562 and events’ in such a way as to suggest, in a position becoming familiar in this article,  
563 that ‘history might be less comprehensible from a lofty vista than from beneath the  
564 narrowing lens of a microscope’.<sup>39</sup> Wolcot’s own position is of course tending in the  
565 other direction in terms of its conclusions, focussing on the potentially negative  
566 consequences of the ‘narrowing lens.’ Yet it is important to be alert to the fact that he is  
567 working within a recognised tradition, albeit coming to a different conclusion than many  
568 that had come before, since it is another example of a way in which Wolcot’s  
569 preoccupations can be seen within the context of a larger historiographical and  
570 intellectual framework.

571         Given Wolcot’s interest in the ways in which Johnson might be memorialised for  
572 the 1780s, it is hardly surprising that he had Peter engage in conversation with Warton,  
573 since Warton in effect raises the same question when he favourably compares George,  
574 and the sorts of poems it is fitting to write about him, with poems written in praise of  
575 great men from the past. In effect Warton calls attention to the tensions discussed in  
576 section one of this article; what Adam Potkay has termed ‘a cultural seam between two

577 ethical domains' represented by the 'sublime eloquence and political community' of  
 578 antique civic virtue and that of the 'subdued manners in private life' seen on as  
 579 essentially modern and polite.<sup>40</sup> In his *Ode on His Majesty's Birth-day, June 4 1787*  
 580 Warton considers the royal myth-making of Chaucer, Spenser and Dryden on behalf of  
 581 previous monarchs, before concluding:

582       Had these blest Bards been call'd, to pay  
 583       The vows of this auspicious day,  
 584       Each had confess'd a fairer throne,  
 585       A mightier sovereign than his own!  
 586       Chaucer had bade his hero-monarch yield  
 587       The martial fame of Cressy's well-fought field  
 588       To peaceful prowess, and the conquests calm,  
 589       That braid the sceptre with the patriot's palm:  
 590       His chaplets of fantastic bloom,  
 591       His colourings, warm from Fiction's loom,  
 592       Spenser had cast in scorn away,  
 593       And deck'd with truth alone the lay;  
 594       All real here, the bard had seen  
 595       The glories of his pictur'd Queen!  
 596       The tuneful Dryden had not flatter'd here,  
 597       His lyre had blameless been, his tribute all sincere!<sup>41</sup>

598 In Warton's eyes valuing George III above Edward III involves valuing a different set of  
 599 arts and practices, a set more suitable for the modern, polished world. It is a distinction

600 lost on Peter, whose response in the *Instructions* to the ‘laurell’d ODE-MAN’ is blunt  
 601 (‘smoking’ in this context has the – already - archaic meaning of ‘ridicule’ or ‘make fun  
 602 of’):

603 But, Thomas Warton, without joking,  
 604 *Art* thou, or art thou *not*, thy Sov’ reign smoking?

605  
 606 How can’st thou seriously declare  
 607 That George the Third  
 608 With Cressy’s Edward can compare,  
 609 Or Harry?----‘tis too bad, upon my word.<sup>42</sup>

610  
 611 In his early *Ode for the New Year, 1787* Warton had in similar vein compared the ‘rough  
 612 magnificence’ and military adventuring of the Crusades with the ‘worthier triumphs’ of  
 613 Georgian England and its commitment to the values of ‘commerce, peace and art’. The  
 614 opening section of Peter’s *Ode upon Ode* paraphrases this position in a way that  
 615 highlights the difficulty of the poet whose frame of reference is caught between a world  
 616 of ancient eloquence and modern commercial politeness:

617 Great (says the Laureat) were the Poet’s puffings,  
 618 On idle daring red-cross ragamuffins,  
 619 Who, for their childishness, deserved the birch:  
 620 Quoth Tom, a worthier subject now, thank God!  
 621 Inspires the lofty Dealer in the Ode,  
 622 Than blockheads battling for old Mother-Church.

623

624 Times (quoth our courtly bard) are alter'd quite;

625 The poet scorns what charm'd of yore the fight;

626       Goths, vandals, castles, horses, mares:

627 The polish'd poet of the present day

628 Doth in his tasty shop display,

629       Ah! vastly prettier-colour'd wares.<sup>43</sup>

630

631 Peter's characterisation of crusaders as 'red-cross ragamuffins' is a *reductio ad absurdum*  
632 of Warton's position. It highlights the contradiction between Warton's platitudinous way  
633 of writing about the past and the attitude he displays towards it when he dismisses it as  
634 anachronistic. In effect Peter takes Warton at his word and in doing so shows Warton as  
635 caught in a rhetorical trap of his own devising. Similarly, Peter's stanzas are animated by  
636 a tension between two different rhetorical registers: on the one hand 'courtly bard' and  
637 'polish'd poet' and on the other the notion of the poet as a shopkeeper displaying his  
638 goods. This tension between the commercial and the civic is best encapsulated in the  
639 phrase 'lofty Dealer in the Ode'. Peter's critique of Warton thus aims to demonstrate the  
640 mis-match between the business of poetry and royalty, or at least its current embodiment.  
641 Here and elsewhere Peter sees Warton's mistake in part as one of misunderstanding the  
642 kind of poetry fit for the court of George III. If the values of the Georgian world are  
643 different from those of his warrior-prince forebears, then there needs to be a different sort  
644 of poetry and language, one that seems beyond Warton's grasp or imagining.

645           This dilemma about the appropriate memorialisation of the particular interests and  
646 achievements of George III is the context for the substantial matter of *Instructions to a*  
647 *Celebrated Laureate*. It is an extended anecdote about the royal birthday treat of 1787, a  
648 visit to Whitbread's Brewery aimed at satisfying royal curiosity as to the art of brewing.  
649 Such sustained anecdotes would come to serve Peter well in his satires of George and,  
650 according to John Barrell, were 'by 1795 much more corrosive of the King's majesty  
651 than [...] Gillray's caricature'.<sup>44</sup> Peter presents this mock-epic account of the visit to  
652 Warton as a model for the appropriate expression of the qualities of the King in verse.  
653 Furthermore Peter offers himself as the poet best placed to match form and theme,  
654 language and subject. That said, and from the very start of the poem when Peter ascribes  
655 its epigraph '*sic transit gloria mundi*' to 'old sun dials' rather than any more elevated  
656 source, the reader is clear that this is a distinctly double-edged compliment. More sharply  
657 than in the Boswell poems, Wolcot has Peter act both as indicter and indictment of the  
658 discourse of triviality he attacks. In the former, Boswell and Piozzi are 'pigmy planets'  
659 who 'catch their little lustre from the sun' of Johnson. In the latter, there is no such  
660 incongruity between George and Peter because Peter's poetry of the inconsequential  
661 matches the character, actions and nature of the King and times. Whereas Boswell and  
662 Piozzi had presumed on the reputation of the great Johnson with their mundane tittle-  
663 tattle, Peter's jokey, colloquial informality, his fundamentally bathetic turn, resonates  
664 absolutely with the 'microscopic genius' of George in a way that the solemn platitudes of  
665 Warton had not.

666           The King's qualities can be summarised as stupidity, rudeness and selfishness.  
667 His stupidity comes in the apparently indiscriminate inanity of his interest in brewing:

668           And now his curious Majesty did stoop  
 669           To count the nails on ev'ry hoop:  
 670           And lo! no single thing came in his way  
 671           That full of deep research, he did not say  
 672           “What’s this? hae, hae? what’s that? what’s this? what’s that?” (p.15)  
 673   George’s enquiries into ‘the world of small’ are inexhaustible. His numb-skull curiosity  
 674   on every matter must be satisfied however reductive and missing of the overall point. It  
 675   culminates in a moment that combines closely-observed social comedy and broad farce,  
 676   when Whitbread tells the royal party that if he laid all his barrels side by side in a row  
 677   they would reach Kew. George’s response to this commonplace way of indicating the  
 678   large number of barrels Whitbread has in his possession demonstrates a literal minded  
 679   curiosity devoid of any effort to really engage with what he is being told:  
 680           “What? If they reach to Kew then, side by side,  
 681           What would they do plac’d end to end?”  
 682           To whom, with knitted calculating brow,  
 683           The Man of Beer most solemnly did vow,  
 684           Almost to Windsor that they would extend;  
 685           On which the King, with *wond’ring* mien,  
 686           Repeated it unto the *wond’ring* Queen:  
 687  
 688           On which, quick turning round his halter’d head;  
 689           The brewer’s horse with face astonish’d neigh’d:  
 690           The brewer’s dog too pour’d a note of thunder,

691           Rattled his chain, and wagg'd his tail for wonder. (p.16)

692   This emphasis on child-like literal-mindedness, while not supportive of George's dignity

693   has nevertheless been interpreted by Vincent Carretta as part of Wolcot's 'laughing

694   treatment of the King' – whom he finds 'embarrassing' rather than anything stronger –

695   within an overall 'rhetoric of disappointment, not disobedience' that stretches as far back

696   as Andrew Marvell.<sup>45</sup> The 'Peter Pindarian tone', according to Carretta, 'reveals no

697   serious discontent with the rule of George III' and indeed renders George harmless and

698   protects him from more searching political critique.<sup>46</sup> A similar point has been made by

699   Carol Percy in her consideration of the ways in which George's supposedly idiosyncratic

700   form of speech was rendered. It may have opened George up to a degree of ridicule, but

701   more profoundly it 'helped to craft his more public image as an ordinary man, able to

702   bridge the social gulfs mapped by linguistic difference.'<sup>47</sup> By contrast however, John

703   Barrell has reinvested the satires of the 1790s (poems such as *A Royal Tour*) with a more

704   pointed political meaning by interpreting them as an attack on George III's particular

705   brand of royal ideology of ordinariness and 'the irreconcilable desires of the King and

706   crowd alike for a monarch both majestic and familiar.'<sup>48</sup> Barrell does this by way of a

707   comparison with what he sees as less purposeful efforts in the 1780s. However, it is

708   possible to see the latent (and not so latent) viciousness of the later portraits of the King

709   in these earlier efforts, and a similar focus on the image of ordinariness as an image, and

710   a hypocritical one at that. This is apparent in what Peter depicts as George's habit of

711   asking multiple, indiscriminate questions:

712           Now Whitbread inward said, "May I be curst

713           If I know what to answer first".

714           Then search'd his brains with ruminating eye ---  
 715           But ere the Man of Malt an answer found,  
 716           Quick on his heel, lo, MAJESTY turn'd round,  
 717           Skipp'd off, and baulk'd the pleasure of reply. (pp.20-21)

718   This would not matter so much had Peter not previously been at such pains to emphasise  
 719   Whitbread's nervousness at the Royal visit and the 'Whitbread-rout of preparation' in  
 720   advance of the King's arrival. Whitbread's response to the arrival of the Royal party is  
 721   described in terms whose comic incongruousness derives from their colloquial matter-of-  
 722   factness:

723           Arriv'd, the King broad grinn'd and gave a nod  
 724           To Mr. Whitbread, who had GOD  
 725           Come with his angels to behold his beer;  
 726           With more respect he never could have met----  
 727           Indeed the man was in a sweat,  
 728           So much the BREWER did the KING revere. (p.14)

729   That we know such things makes the discomfort George causes Whitbread evidence of  
 730   not merely gracelessness but cruelty. He is too rude to wait for answers to his own  
 731   questions and tactlessly asks whether Whitbread's beer is as good as that of rival brewers  
 732   (a question that 'grat[es] like arsenic on his host's digestion'). As such the poem  
 733   anatomises that most subtle form of bullying, the hypocritical abuse of power in which  
 734   authority presumes familiarity while not submitting itself to the rules that govern  
 735   interactions between the genuinely equal. Carretta suggests that the 'domestication of the  
 736   regal image brought the viewer up to the King's level as much as it brought the king

737 down to his subjects', but the most significant point within these interactions is the  
 738 double-standard and hypocrisy that sits at the heart of this supposed ordinariness and  
 739 apparent parity.

740 George's questions appear trivial and random, but an interest in penny-pinching  
 741 runs through them. This is most marked when the King 'noteth notable things':

742 *Mem.*--- 'Tis hops that give a bitterness to beer ---  
 743 Hops grow in Kent, says Whitbread, and elsewhere.

744  
 745 *Quaere.*---Is there no cheaper stuff? Where doth it dwell----  
 746 Would not horse aloes bitter it as well?

747  
 748 *Mem.*---To try it soon on our small beer-----  
 749 'Twill save us sev'ral pounds a year.

750  
 751 *Mem.* ---To remember to forget to ask  
 752 Old Whitbread to my house one day ----

753  
 754 *Mem.*----*Not to forget* to take of beer the cask  
 755 The brewer offer'd me, away. (p.17)

756 The King makes his notes in 'a very pretty memorandum book,| With gilded leaves of  
 757 asses skin so white', reinforcing the hypocrisy of the penny-pinching. Equally the  
 758 laughter generated by the last quatrain, with its opposing impulses (though congruent  
 759 sentiments) united through rhyme scheme, feels more hollow later in the poem when the

760 royal family greedily tuck into the lunch offered by the Whitbreads, a mock-epic  
 761 decimation ‘Of flesh, and fish, and fowl of ev’ry nation.’

762           At the end of the anecdote Warton reproaches Peter with the question “[i]s this an  
 763 action, *Peter?* this a deed | To raise a *Monarch* to the sky?”. In effect Warton voices  
 764 Peter’s own critique of Boswell and Piozzi’s memorialisation of Johnson via unflattering  
 765 anecdote in the earlier poems. However Peter is unrepentant, refusing to concede that  
 766 this is an unacceptable way of celebrating George’s unique talents:

767           But this I tell thee, Thomas, for a fact,

768           Thy Caesar never did an act

769           More wise, more glorious, in his life.

770           Now GOD preserve all wonder-hunting KINGS,

771           Whether at Windsor, Buckingham, or Kew house,

772           And may they never do more foolish things

773           Than visiting SAM WHITBREAD and his brewhouse. (p.27)

774 The activation of the more conventional rhetoric of royal paean– the honorific Caesar, the  
 775 references to wisdom and glory – reminds the reader again of the questions of political  
 776 virtue and the representations of political virtue raised by Warton and applied literally for  
 777 satiric effect by Peter. Equally it shows Peter to be no nostalgic apologist for a previous  
 778 model of political virtue, for all that his satire attacks the modern notions of manners and  
 779 social virtue that have evacuated grandeur and meaning from high office. George is  
 780 recuperated by Peter giving thanks for a King about whom this is the worst that can be  
 781 said, an observation that perforce brings to mind all the much more unpleasant things

782 monarchs are capable of doing. It may be an act of royal recuperation, but it is one that  
 783 comes with the strength of a threat.

784           In all this Peter is of course assuming a position from which he can judge George.  
 785 Wolcot raises the stakes of this insight still further by exploiting the licence of this  
 786 fundamentally levelling perspective to conceive of the relationship between poet and king  
 787 in a radically different way. As Peter puts it in *Brother Peter to Brother Tom*:

788           The world may call me liar, but sincerely  
 789           I love him ----for a partner, love him dearly:  
 790           Whilst his great name is on the ferme, I'm sure  
 791           My credit with the Public is secure.

792

793           Yes, beef shall grace my spit, and ale shall flow,  
 794           As long as it continues George and Co.;

795                       That is to say, in plainer metre,

796                               George and Peter.<sup>49</sup>

797 Indeed, Peter can even posit a version of this partnership whereby he is the senior partner.  
 798 He concludes to dedication to Pye in the *Royal Tour* by taking matters one step further  
 799 when he says that he no more hates kings and queens than the hunter hates the wild boar:

800           May KINGS *exist*---and TRIFLE pig with Kings!  
 801           The MUSE desireth not more precious things----  
 802           Such sweet *mock-grandeur!*—so *sublimely garish!*  
 803           Let's have no WASHINGTONS: did *such* appear,  
 804           The MUSE and I had ev'ry thing to fear ----

805           Soon forc'd to ask a pittance of the parish.

806

807           *Such* want not praise---in native virtue strong:

808           Tis *folly, folly, feeds* the POET'S song.<sup>50</sup>

809   In another context the final line could be a Juvenalian rallying cry to the righteous  
810   standard of satire. But Wolcot has too close an eye on the literal reality behind the dead  
811   metaphor, and the immediately previous reference to Poor Relief makes the notion of  
812   feeding the poet's song entirely inseparable from the imperative of feeding the poet.

813           In laying bare the profit motive in his satire Peter reveals that his commitment to  
814   the radical cause to be one of financial expediency rather than principled opposition. Yet  
815   to say that Peter portrays the relationship between poet and monarch to be one in which  
816   the latter provides opportunities to the commercial advantage of the former is also to say  
817   something rather far reaching about Wolcot's disrespect for the monarchy. He has Peter  
818   reconfigure kings and queens as, at best, partners in the poet's business, and, at worst, a  
819   commodity upon which the professional writer can trade. This might not be a particularly  
820   idealistic or appealing way of understanding equality of station, but its grubby logic is all  
821   the more deliberately undermining of royal authority for that.

822

### 823   **III. Conclusion**

824   The poems discussed here explore the literary representation and mediation of  
825   'greatness', and suggest its deterioration from the noble Lives model of the ancients to  
826   the triviality of celebrity culture either as a response to the demands of a crass  
827   commercialism or as a result of the inherent inanity of its modern subject. Yet they also

828 reveal a fraught and contradictory position for the writer. On the one hand Wolcot  
829 laments and satirises the absence of a recognised or applicable rhetoric of greatness: there  
830 is no way of doing justice to Johnson, and no way but Peter's of doing justice to George.  
831 Yet on the other hand he lambasts the hypocritical high-handedness of the representatives  
832 of the political order who would be the beneficiaries of that rhetoric of greatness and who  
833 Wolcot might otherwise be thought of as defending though this attack on the trivial  
834 levelling of modern culture. Wolcot's ultimate attitude towards Warton is one of pity for  
835 being lumbered with George III as a figure around which to attempt to create a model of  
836 discourse of royal virtue for the modern world that dispenses with the ludicrous  
837 anachronisms of previous royal paean. Peter Pindar is then a way of wrestling with the  
838 paradoxes of an age suspicious of, or anxious about, the relevance of traditional ways of  
839 mediating greatness yet unable to formulate a coherent or appealing alternative way of  
840 articulating a more relevant set of values. Peter on Boswell on Johnson, and Peter on  
841 Warton and Peter on George III represent Wolcot's satiric investigation of nature of  
842 modern biography as surely as Disraeli on Anecdote offers a discursive one.

843 Peter Pindar emerges as both tenor and vehicle in this process, calling attention to  
844 the pitfalls of the age in significant part by embodying them. Any effort to separate John  
845 Wolcot and Peter Pindar completely would not only be naïve but fruitless. When, in the  
846 first canto of the *Lousiad* (1785), Peter announces his switch to royal satire with the claim  
847 that he 'LOVE and the SONS OF CANVAS quit[s] for Kings' he is collapsing the  
848 distinction between the *Persian Love Elegies* that had appeared in 1773 under Wolcot's  
849 name and Peter's own debut attacking the painters of the Royal Academy, the *Lyric Odes*  
850 *to the Academicians* (1782). But regardless of such elisions, it is crucial to understand

851 Peter Pindar as other than Wolcot, an unreliable commentator who is as often as not the  
852 butt of Wolcot's satire, calling out what Wolcot identifies as the idiocies of his age by as  
853 often as not exemplifying them. Distinguishing Peter from John allows for an  
854 understanding of Peter as a poetic creation, a character in Wolcot's imaginative world,  
855 and the acknowledgement that he is as open to interrogation and indeed satiric  
856 representation as any of the figures he is himself satirising.<sup>51</sup>

857           Understanding Wolcot and his creation Peter in such terms not only deepens our  
858 sense of Wolcot's sophistication as a poet and satirist but also provides a richer context  
859 for understanding the later Wolcot within of the range and subtlety of political responses  
860 to the French Revolution in Britain. The last twenty years have seen significant insights  
861 into the contexts and complexities, the debates and differentiations in what had  
862 previously been interpreted as a neat dichotomy of radical/reactionary.<sup>52</sup> Of particular  
863 importance has been the reconfiguring of the notion of political loyalism (especially in  
864 historical studies) not only as a something with many hues but as 'an empowering  
865 movement that gave its followers a public presence and political voice with which to  
866 criticise the polity they sought to defend.'<sup>53</sup> Yet with a few exceptions the debate about  
867 Wolcot has not moved beyond questions of apostasy and double-dealing. Or again, the  
868 emphasis on competition between radical and loyalist writers over terms and ideas – what  
869 Mori terms 'sites of contest and inspiration' – should open the door on contextualising  
870 the practices of Wolcot discussed above in terms of others within the period. For  
871 example, the work discussed in this article resembles what Kyle Grimes has termed  
872 Romantic 'hacker satire', characterised as 'parasitic, derivative, opportunistic or  
873 parodic'.<sup>54</sup> Grimes' account of William Hone's satiric voice as a 'parodic seizing of

874 cultural authority' that is 'definable by the role it plays in very immediate and historically  
875 specific discursive power struggles' offers a compelling way of revaluating Peter's interest  
876 in the local and, in the long view of history, trivial regardless of any judgement about the  
877 extent to which they shared a political position across generations.<sup>55</sup> It also articulates the  
878 opportunistic way in which Peter is both a mouthpiece for and a target of Wolcot's  
879 various satiric agenda, including the self-conscious and explicit consideration of the  
880 complicity between satirist and object of satire. The reader is invited to laugh at Peter  
881 almost as often as with him, and sometimes both with and at him at the same time.

882 Equally, to read Wolcot working in this way in the mid-1780s is to offer a  
883 contribution to the appreciation of what still seems like a lost decade in eighteenth-  
884 century poetry. Even sympathetic readings of Wolcot tend to focus on his output post-  
885 1789, and it is notable that many of the ideas and concepts deployed in this essay have  
886 had their most thorough and significant articulation in relation to periods either side of  
887 the work they are being asked to do here. It is <sup>56</sup>notable then to see how Wolcot's poetry  
888 from the 1780s combines themes and preoccupations more usually understood in terms of  
889 earlier or later periods, but which he demonstrates exist in vital relation through his work.  
890 As such the insights generated are important not just for understanding the significance of  
891 Wolcot's work during this time, but for arguing for the importance of a decade itself  
892 frequently only understood in unflattering comparison with the one that followed.  
893 Through Peter Pindar, Wolcot diagnoses and critiques a crisis of cultural authority in his  
894 age, creating a spokesman for that crisis who anatomises, exemplifies and glories in its  
895 absurdities. Acknowledging this recognition is a further step towards the rehabilitation of

896 not only one of the most prolific poetic voices of the age, but one of unacknowledged  
 897 sophistication and importance.

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<sup>1</sup> As cited in Benjamin Colbert, “Petrio-Pindarics: John Wolcot and the Romantics”. *European Romantic Review*, 16.3 (2005): 311-328. DOI: 10.1080/10509580500211343, p.312.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Kerr, “‘Satire is Bad Trade’: Dr John Wolcot and his Publishers and Printers in Eighteenth-Century England.” Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text, 12. Online: Internet (28/09/2010): [http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc12\\_n02.html](http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc12_n02.html). For example 42,500 copies of his 1794 collection *Pindariana* were printed.

<sup>3</sup> Jeanne Griggs, “Self-Praise and the Ironic Personal Panegyric of Peter Pindar”, *The Age of Johnson* 8 (1997): 223-254, (p.254). See Tom Girtin’s *Doctor with Two Aunts: A Biography of Peter Pindar* (London, 1959) for a sympathetic and now rather venerable, but still the most detailed and serviceable, account of Wolcot’s career, life and the growth of these perceptions; and also Robert L Vales, *Peter Pindar (John Wolcot)* (New York, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> The hitherto most significant reassessments of Wolcot’s achievements can be found in Grzegorz Sinko, *John Wolcot and his School: A Chapter from the History of English Satire* (Warsaw, 1962); Iain McCalman, “John Wolcot” in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1770-1803*. gen. ed. Iain McCalman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.765-66; Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.31-7; Colbert, “Petrio-Pindarics”; John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.118-144; Noah Herringman, ‘“Manlius to Peter Pindar”: Satire, Politics and Masculinity in the 1790s’, *Romanticism and Patriotism: Nation, Empire, Bodies, Rhetoric*, A Romantic Circles Praxis volume, ed. Orrin N.C.Wang (2006) [8 June 2014].

<sup>5</sup> Dyer, *British Satire*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Barrell *Spirit of Despotism*, 138. Other dimensions to Barrell’s recuperation of Peter will be discussed below.

<sup>7</sup> See also the works of textual scholarship on Wolcot. There is an edition of *Bozzy and Piozzi* in John Strachan and Graeme Stone’s *Parodies of the Romantic Age* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) and of *The Lousiad* in volume 3 of Strachan’s *British Satire 1785-1840* (2003)

<sup>8</sup> Steven E Jones, ‘Introduction’ to *The Satiric Eye: Forms of Satire in the Romantic Period*, ed Steven E Jones, (New York: Palgrave, 2003), p.1. See also his earlier *Satire and Romanticism* (London, 2000) and Colbert’s ‘Popular Romanticism: Publishing, Readership and the Making of Literary History’ in *Authorship, Commerce and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750-1850*, ed E.J. Clery, Caroline Franklin and Peter Garside, (London: Palgrave, 2002), pp.153-68.

<sup>9</sup> McCalman, “John Wolcot”, p.765

<sup>10</sup> Lionel Grossman, ‘Anecdote and History’, *History and Theory* 42.2 (May, 2003), 143-168 (p.154).

<sup>11</sup> Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), p. 37, p.11. Her argument that secret history is opposed to arbitrary and absolute government regardless of its political stripe differs from the Whig reading offered for example by Annabel Patterson in *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.183-5.

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, *The Adventurer* 99 (16 October 1753) in *Samuel Johnson*, ed Donald Greene, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.273-77 (p.276)

<sup>13</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000), p.17.

<sup>14</sup> Helen Deutsch, *Loving Dr Johnson* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), pp.178-9

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* 60 (13-10-1750), in Greene (ed), pp.204-207 (p.205)

- <sup>16</sup> Deutsch, *Loving Dr Johnson*, 9.
- <sup>17</sup> A *Dissertation on Anecdotes*, in *Literary Miscellanies, a New Edition, Enhanced* (London: John Murray, 1801) p.27. The first edition appeared in 1793.
- <sup>18</sup> Disraeli, *Dissertation on Anecdotes*, p.64.
- <sup>19</sup> David Simpson, *The Academic Postmodern and the Rule of Literature: A Report on Half Knowledge* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1995), p.56
- <sup>20</sup> J.G.A.Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.122.
- <sup>21</sup> Scott, *The Edinburgh Review* 6 (July, 1805), p.446. See Iain MacDaniel, *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Roman Past and Europe's Future* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2013); John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Dafydd Moore, *Enlightenment and Romance in the Poems of Ossian* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp.87-112.
- <sup>22</sup> Robert W. Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics in Britain during the War for America 1770-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- <sup>23</sup> Grossman, "Anecdote and History", p.154.
- <sup>24</sup> Jason Goldsmith, 'Celebrity and the Spectacle of Nation' in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*, ed Tom Mole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 21-40, p.22.
- <sup>25</sup> Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, p.31.
- <sup>26</sup> See Sir John Hawkins *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed O.M.Brack Jnr (Athens, GA, 2009)
- <sup>27</sup> Deutsch, *Loving Dr Johnson*, p.8. For analysis of some of the more eye-watering examples of these see also pp.140-47.
- <sup>28</sup> Vales, *John Wolcot*, pp.42-3. The "Ode to Lonsdale" was an ironic retraction of the previous year's "Commiserating Epistle to James Lowther, Lord Lonsdale" (in response to which Lonsdale had threatened legal action). Unfortunately for Wolcot, it was taken seriously as an act of craven backsliding, most notably by James Gilray in "SATAN in all his Glory" (1792), and became one of the central planks of the charge against Wolcot that he was lacking conviction and moral fibre.
- <sup>29</sup> *Bozzy and Piozzi, Or, The British Biographers, A Town Ecologue*, by Peter Pindar Esq (London: G. Kearsley & W. Foster, 1786), p.4.
- <sup>30</sup> Kyle Grimes, "Verbal Jujitsu: William Hone and the Tactics of Satirical Conflict" in Jones (ed), *The Satiric Eye*, 173-84, p.181. The phrase 'crown'd heads' is a direct reference, given its subject matter, to *The Lousiad*, making that another metatextual joke.
- <sup>31</sup> Deutsch, *Loving Dr Johnson*, 9.
- <sup>32</sup> See Schickel's seminal *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity in America* (1985/2001). Closer to home, see Cheryl Wanko, "Celebrity Studies in the Long Eighteenth Century: An Interdisciplinary Overview", *Literature Compass* 8/6 (2011): 351-362. Doi 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2011.00806.x. See also Claire Brock, *The Feminisation of Fame, 1750-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); Mole (ed) *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*; Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996).
- <sup>33</sup> *A Poetical and Congratulatory Epistle to James Boswell, Esq. on his Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with the celebrated Dr Johnson*, By Peter Pindar Esq (London: G. Kearsley, 1786), pp.9-10.
- <sup>34</sup> Phillips, *Society and Sentiment*, p.17.
- <sup>35</sup> Grossman, 'Anecdote and History', p.157.
- <sup>36</sup> See Dyer, *British Satire*, 32. As he points out though, Peter's 'colloquial, semi-doggerel style, connect[s] him to more popular traditions' in a way that aligns his work with populist cheap-print forms.
- <sup>37</sup> David Higgins, 'Celebrity, Politics and the Rhetoric of Genius' in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. Tom Mole, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 41-59 (p.43).
- <sup>38</sup> Robert Burns also used the occasion of ridiculing Warton's poems to George III for making political points. See Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Oxford, 2010), p.141.
- <sup>39</sup> Gallagher, "'Partial to Some One Side': The Advice-to-Painter Poem as Historical Writing", *ELH* 78.1 (Spring, 2011), 79-101 (p.80, p.98). See also her full length study *Historical Literatures: Historical Literatures: Writing About the Past in England, 1660-1740* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2012).
- <sup>40</sup> Adam Potkay, *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.8
- <sup>41</sup> Thomas Warton, *Poems on Various Subjects* (London: G & J. Robinson, 1791), p.244

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- <sup>42</sup> *Instructions to a Celebrated Laureat; Alias the Progress of Curiosity; Alias A Birth-Day Ode; Alias Mr Whitebread's Brewhouse, by Peter Pindar Esq*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, (London: J & A M'Lean, 1788) p.8
- <sup>43</sup> *Ode Upon Ode; Or, A Peep at St James's; Or, New Year's Day; Or What you Will in The Works of Peter Pindar Esq* 3 volumes, (London: J. Walker, 1797), vol.1, p.383-4.
- <sup>44</sup> Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 121.
- <sup>45</sup> Vincent Carretta, *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), p.269, p.5.
- <sup>46</sup> Carretta, *George III and the Satirists*, p.280.
- <sup>47</sup> Carol Percy, 'The King's Speech: Metalanguage of Nation, Man and Class in Anecdotes about George III', *English Language and Linguistics* 16.2 July 2012, 281-299 (p.296). doi: 10.1017/S1360674312000068.
- <sup>48</sup> Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 123-4.
- <sup>49</sup> *Brother Peter to Brother Tom. An Expostulatory Epistle By Peter Pindar Esq*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (London: G. Kearsley, 1788), p.13.
- <sup>50</sup> *The Royal Tour; Or, Weymouth Amusements; A Solemn and Reprimanding Epistle to the Laureat by Peter Pindar Esq*. (Dublin: W Porter, 1796), p.iii
- <sup>51</sup> Dyer notes that 'no poet's practice conveys more than Wolcot's how radically pseudonymity can differ from anonymity' (*British Satire*, 37).
- <sup>52</sup> For a survey of key scholarship, see Emma Vincent Macleod, 'British Attitudes to the French Revolution', *The Historical Journal* 50.3 (Sept., 2007), 689-709. DOI: 10.1017/S0018246X07006310.
- <sup>53</sup> Jennifer Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism: Patriotism, Nationhood and the State in the 1790s', *English Historical Review* 118.475 (Feb. 2003), 33-58 (p.33). See also Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- <sup>54</sup> Grimes, "Verbal Ju-Jitsu", 174.
- <sup>55</sup> Grimes, "Verbal Ju-Jitsu", 182.
- <sup>56</sup>