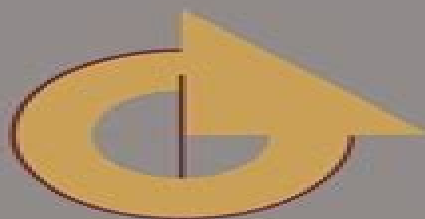


REGULATING CONFUSION

Samuel Johnson and the Crowd



THOMAS REINERT

Regulating Confusion Samuel Johnson Th

Freya Johnston



Regulating Confusion Samuel Johnson Th:

Regulating Confusion Thomas Reinert, 1996-01-17 With the urbanization of eighteenth century English society moral philosophers became preoccupied with the difference between individual and crowd behavior In so doing they set the stage for a form of political thought divorced from traditional moral reflection In Regulating Confusion Thomas Reinert places Samuel Johnson in the context of this development and investigates Johnson's relation to an emerging modernity Ambivalent about the disruption confusion perplexity and boundless variety apparent in the London of his day Johnson was committed to the conventions of moral reflection but also troubled by the pressure to adopt the perspective of the crowd and the language of social theory Regulating Confusion explores the consequences of his ambivalence and his attempt to order the chaos It discusses his critique of moral generalizations concept of moral reflection as a symbolic gesture and account of what happens to the notion of character when individuals having lost the support of moral convention become faces in a crowd Reflecting generally on the relationship between skepticism and political ideology Reinert also discusses Johnson's political skepticism and the forms of speculation and action it authorized Challenging prevalent psychologizing and humanistic interpretations Regulating Confusion leaves behind the re emergent view of Johnson as a reactionary ideologue and presents him in a theoretically sophisticated context It offers his style of skepticism as a model of poise in the face of confusion about the nature of political truth and personal responsibility and demonstrates his value as a resource for students of culture struggling with contemporary debates about the relationship between literature and politics

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contemporary debates about the relationship between literature and politics Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking 1709-1791 Freya Johnston, 2005-02-17 The traditional view of Samuel Johnson as hostile to particulars trifles and aesthetic mediocrity only half explains his authorial character Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking 1709 1791 argues that in a period dominated by social and literary hierarchies Johnson's works reveal a defining interest in little mean or low topics and people Freya Johnston moves away from a critical emphasis on what literature of this period excludes to consider its modes of including recalcitrant material Of necessity finite any piece of writing is informed by the subject matter it omits or to which it indirectly alludes How can we identify the peripheral topics or characters purportedly excluded from a text unless it provides compelling inferences that oblige us to supply the omission In which case something subtler is at work than barefaced proscription Rehearsing the comparative merits of great and little things Johnson and his contemporaries tested the opposing claims of pagan and Christian authority Ancient criticism and its eighteenth century adherents held that each subject required an appropriate style little matters call for the low lofty ones for the high Yet Gospel writers stressed Christ's incarnation as a praiseworthy and imitable descent to the humanly little one that is compatible with the most sublime style Through a series of close readings this book examines how Johnson conceived of his relationships to and with the margins of writing and of society It proposes that his literary and critical practice is neither inclusive nor exclusive in its attitudes towards peripheral things **The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Johnson** Jack Lynch, 2022-08-25 No major author worked in more genres than Samuel Johnson essays poetry fiction criticism biography scholarly editing lexicography translation sermons journalism His works are more extensive than those of any other canonical English writer and no earlier writer's life was documented as thoroughly by contemporaries Because it's so difficult to know him thoroughly people have made do with surrogates and simplifications But Johnson was much more complicated than the popular image of Dr Johnson suggests socially conservative but also one of the most radical abolitionists of his age a firm believer in social hierarchy but an outspoken supporter of women intellectuals an uncompromising Christian moralist but also a penetrating critic of family structures Labels fit him poorly In The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Johnson an international team of thirty six scholars offers the most comprehensive examination ever attempted of one of the most complex figures in English literature The book's first section examines Johnson's life and the texts of his works the second organized by genre explores all his major works and many of his minor ones the third organized by topic covers the subjects that were most important to him as a writer as a thinker and as a moralist *Samuel Johnson in Context* John T. Lynch, 2012 A work of reference on the age of Johnson putting literature in the context of the society that produced it **Making the English Canon** Jonathan Brody Kramnick, 1998 Examines the English canon in the first two thirds of the eighteenth century **Systems Failure** Andrew Franta, 2019-04-16 How eighteenth century writers stretched systems designed to explain social relations to their breaking point showing the flaws in their design The Enlightenment has long been understood and often understood itself as an age of

systems In 1759 Jean Le Rond d'Alembert one of the architects of the Encyclopédie claimed that the true system of the world has been recognized developed and perfected In *Systems Failure* Andrew Franta challenges this view by exploring the fascination with failure and obsession with unpredictable social forces in a range of English authors from Samuel Johnson to Jane Austen Franta argues that attempts to extend the Enlightenment's systematic spirit to the social world prompted many prominent authors to reject the idea that knowledge is synonymous with system In readings of texts ranging from novels by Sterne Smollett Godwin and Austen to Johnson's literary biographies and De Quincey's periodical essays Franta shows how writers repeatedly take up civil and cultural institutions designed to rationalize society only to reveal the weaknesses that inevitably undermine their organizational and explanatory power Diverging from influential accounts of the rise of the novel *Systems Failure* audaciously reveals that in addition to representing individual experience and social reality the novel was also a vehicle for thinking about how the social world resists attempts to explain or comprehend it Franta contends that to appreciate the power of systems in the literature of the long eighteenth century we must pay attention to how often they fail and how many of them are created for the express purpose of failing In this unraveling literature arrives at its most penetrating insights about the structure of social life

Samuel Johnson Lawrence Lipking, 2009-07-01 He was a servant to the public a writer for hire He was a hero an author adding to the glory of his nation But can a writer be both hack and hero The career of Samuel Johnson recounted here by Lawrence Lipking proves that the two can be one And it further proves in its enduring interest for readers that academic fashions today may be a bit hasty in pronouncing the death of the author A book about the life of an author about how an author is made not born Lipking's *Samuel Johnson* is the story of the man as he lived and lives in his work Tracing Johnson's rocky climb from anonymity to fame in the course of which he came to stand for both the greatness of English literature and the good sense of the common reader the book shows how this life transformed the very nature of authorship Beginning with the defiant letter to Chesterfield that made Johnson a celebrity Samuel Johnson offers fresh readings of all the writer's major works viewed through the lens of two ongoing preoccupations the urge to do great deeds and the sense that bold expectations are doomed to disappointment Johnson steers between the twin perils of ambition and despondency Mounting a challenge to the emerging industry that glorified and capitalized on Shakespeare he stresses instead the playwright's power to cure the illusions of everyday life All Johnson's works reveal his extraordinary sympathy with ordinary people In his groundbreaking *Dictionary* in his poems and essays and in *The Lives of the English Poets* we see Johnson becoming the key figure in the culture of literacy that reaches from his day to our own

Episodic Poetics Matthew Garrett, 2014-03-18 The early United States was a culture of the episode In *Episodic Poetics* Matthew Garrett merges narrative theory with social and political history to explain the early American fascination with the episodic piecemeal plot Since Aristotle's *Poetics* the episode has been a vexed category of literary analysis troubling any easy view of the subsumption of unwieldy narrative parts into well plotted wholes Garrett puts forward a new dialectical theory of

episodic form to recast this peculiar object of literary history looking to the episode as a narrative unit smaller than the genre in order to give an account of all the period's major prose genres Garrett shows how in ways both magisterial and mundane episodic forms gave variegated shape to the social political and economic conflicts that defined the moment of national formation *Episodic Poetics* proposes a new method of reading and a new way of conceiving of literary history The book asks how we might understand the cultural role of the episode as a literary micro unit one that forces us to read individual narratives in terms of an always partial and fraught development toward plot *Episodic Poetics* combines theoretical reflection and historical rigor with careful readings of texts from the early American canon such as *The Federalist* Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and the novels of Charles Brockden Brown along with hitherto understudied texts and ephemera such as Washington Irving's *Salmagundi* Susanna Rowson's *Trials of the Human Heart* and the memoirs of the metalworker and failed entrepreneur John Fitch Garrett recounts literary history not as the easy victory of grand nationalist ambitions but rather as a series of social struggles expressed through writers recurring engagement with incompletely integrated forms

British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce A. Neill, 2002-05-10 *British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce* examines how between 1680 and 1800 British maritime travellers became both friends and foes of the commercial state These nomadic characters report on remote parts of the globe in the twin contexts of an increasingly powerful imperial state and an emerging world economy Examining voyage narratives by William Dampier Daniel Defoe Jonathan Swift Tobias Smollett Samuel Johnson James Cook and William Bligh Neill demonstrates how the transformation of travellers from nomadic outlaws into civil subjects and vice versa takes place against the political economic backdrop of commercial expansion

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