

Indeed, we shall be considering ourselves as well.

We shall then preserve, for everyone, the highest qualities of social existence, at a time when we sometimes appear to be crushed beneath the weight of the so-called "advances" which our brains have helped us to design.

Though inevitably we face what Don Francisco has described as "dying in life", the neurologist might humbly add a fourth sentence to his three:

And what you call dying is finally dying,  
And what you call birth is beginning to die,  
And what you call living is dying in life,  
And what you call death is a lasting memorial.

#### Fanny Burney on Samuel Johnson's tics and mannerisms

The following are some further contemporaneous observations of the tics, mannerisms, postures, and verbal repetitions displayed by Samuel Johnson which support the notion<sup>1-3</sup> that he was a victim of Gilles de la Tourette syndrome (see *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 56:1311).

Fanny (Frances) Burney (1752–1840) was daughter of the musicologist Charles Burney. She enjoyed a considerable reputation as a novelist and diarist, and as portrayer of the domestic scene she was the forerunner of Jane Austen. She became second keeper of the robes to Queen Charlotte in 1786 and married the French émigré, General d'Arblay. She was a favoured friend in Johnson's household.

Fanny Burney (Mme D'Arblay)<sup>4</sup>:

He is, indeed, very ill-favoured! Yet he has naturally a noble figure; tall, stout, grand and authoritative: but he stoops horribly; his back is quite round: his mouth is continually opening and shutting, as if he were chewing something; he has a singular method of twirling his fingers, and twisting his hands: his vast body is in constant agitation, see-sawing backwards and forwards: his feet never a moment quiet;

and his whole great person looked often as if it were going to roll itself, quite voluntarily, from his chair to the floor.

And in her *Early diaries*<sup>5</sup>: "The careless old ejaculations have, in almost every case been modified or effaced in the manuscripts of the diaries. . . . These almost unmeaning expletives seem to have passed unrebuked by Dr Johnson."

His repetitive utterances were often of a religious nature (frequent recitations of the Lord's Prayer) but coprolalia and scatological comments are very probable, although doubtless the loyalties and social niceties of his friends inhibited their histories.

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- 1 McHenry L. Samuel Johnson's tics and gesticulations. *J Hist Med* 1967;22:152–68.
- 2 Murray TJ. Dr Samuel Johnson's movement disorder. *BMJ* 1979;1:1610–4.
- 3 Pearce JMS. Doctor Samuel Johnson: "the Great Convulsionary" a victim of Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome. *J R Soc Med* 1994 (in press).
- 4 Burney F. *Letters and diaries*. London: G Bell. 1846.
- 5 Burney F. Early diary of F Burney. 1846;2:234. Cited by George Birkbeck Hill. In: *Johnsonian Miscellanies II* London: Constable and Co. 1897, reprinted 1966: 274–5.