

JOHN MARTYN AND
THE GRUB-STREET JOURNAL,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO HIS
ATTACKS ON RICHARD BENTLEY, RICHARD BRADLEY
AND WILLIAM CHESELDEN

by

RAYMOND WILLIAMSON

ON Thursday, 8 January 1730, the first number of a weekly journal called *The Grub-street Journal* appeared with the avowed purpose of rehabilitating the name of *Grub-street*, which, according to Johnson, was the appellation used for the tribe of mean and needy authors, or literary hacks. It soon became evident to the readers of *The Grub-street Journal* that it was a successor to the *Dunciad* and published with the blessing, if not the direct help, of Alexander Pope. Its field embraced most topics of general interest except politics and it soon became popular because of the vigour with which it pursued the controversies which it raised. Hillhouse, in his book *The Grub-street Journal* says:

Indeed it soon became evident that the *Journal* made exposure of faults, real or supposed, its chief business, and that satire and irony were the breath of life in its nostrils. Controversy became at once its daily food, and hence it got for itself not only many enemies but many readers, for it was sharp, pungent, and clever, and knew no limits in its boldness. The virulent fierceness and personality of some of its quarrels were enough to give it pre-eminence and distinction even in the period of George II. The editors had their own quarrels, which they conducted with great gusto, but their columns were gladly opened to all correspondents, with special encouragement to those who had axes to grind, and whose enemies were willing to fight back.¹

In a journal of this character it was natural for its backers and contributors to preserve an anonymity which those who suffered from its lash endeavoured to unveil. Much about the *Journal's* affairs has always remained obscure, but its editors became known and it is possible to identify the writers of many of the contributions. At its inception there were two editors—John Martyn and Richard Russell. Martyn withdrew from the editorship at the beginning of the second year of the paper's existence but probably continued to contribute from time to time as a correspondent. Russell² was the more important of the two from the point of view of the *Journal*, which he edited for six years. He lived in Westminster and was a graduate of Oxford University who had lost his living because of his non-juring principles. It is, however, with the contributions of John Martyn, who became the second Professor of Botany in the University of Cambridge, that this paper is mainly concerned.

Our knowledge of the respective contributions of these two writers comes from two sources. Martyn's son Thomas in a short biography of his father says:

Mr. Martyn writ the introductory paper under the title of *Bavius*, which was the character he preserved throughout this work, to which the greatest wits of the time did not disdain sometimes to contribute. The best papers were afterwards selected and printed in two volumes twelves, in the year 1737, under the title of—Memoirs of the society of Grub-street. The papers which were writ by Mr. Martyn are distinguished by the signature B. Dr. *Russel* took the title of *Mævius*, and his papers are signed M.³

In the preface to the *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street* which were edited by Russell he says:

From the first appearance of our *Journal*, for about a year and a half, the office of Secretary was executed every week alternately, by two persons, who had agreed to take upon themselves the names of BAVIUS and MAEVIUS, and always to subscribe the former to whatever should be written in the person of the Secretary. When one of these had thought fit to dispose of his interest in the Paper, the chief care of it devolved upon the other; who before had generally appropriated to himself the latter name, but upon this alteration more frequently took the former. These two names, one of which only had been assumed by one of those two persons, and both by the other, gave occasion to the distinguishing of their respective Pieces in this Collection, by a B and an M.⁴

Russell also stated that those few pieces included in the *Memoirs* by Pope and his friends will be distinguished by the letter A.

Thus, in the *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street* which covers the period when Martyn was actively concerned with the *Grub-street Journal*, most of his contributions can be identified, a few articles under other pseudonyms may have been written by him. The initial B for Martyn appears in twenty-five issues, twenty-three in the first volume of the *Memoirs*. A list of his contributions to the *Grub-street Journal* which were reprinted in the *Memoirs* is given as an appendix to this paper. In addition to articles on the policy of the *Journal*, on literary and dramatic criticism, and on current topics which are now only of general interest, there are some which throw light on the history of science at the time he wrote. It is with these only that this account is concerned.

One is at a loss to know why John Martyn accepted the position of joint editor of the *Grub-street Journal*. At that time he was a young man of thirty-one years of age, apparently comfortably off, whose chief interest had been in botany and natural history. He had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1724 and had given a course of lectures on elementary botany in London in 1726 and the following year repeated it in Cambridge. He was contemplating the study of medicine at Cambridge and in May 1730, a few months after the start of the *Journal*, he entered Emmanuel College, where he kept five terms. Whatever his reasons may have been for becoming joint editor of the *Journal* he approached the job with zest and was soon using it for his own ends.

In 1724 Richard Bradley, F.R.S., who was a well known authority on botany, gardening and husbandry and had made important contributions to these branches of learning, was appointed Professor of Botany at Cambridge University with the hope that he would be able to establish a Botanic Garden in Cambridge. His efforts to bring this about were unsuccessful.

When Bradley was appointed Professor of Botany, John Martyn was twenty-five years of age. His interest in botany had been stimulated by the apothecary

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John Wilmer and he had met William Sherard and other botanists who had encouraged him. He had begun to translate Tournefort's *History of Plants about Paris* and had planned other books, but he had published nothing and was known only as a promising young man. He appears, however, to have thought that he should have been chosen to fill the Chair of Botany at Cambridge instead of Bradley whom he said had obtained the Chair by false pretences. John Martyn made other derogatory statements about Bradley⁵ which have been reiterated and influenced the opinions of subsequent writers on Bradley although these statements have not received independent corroboration.*

When Bradley died Martyn was appointed as his successor, and two years later he ceased to lecture because he said he did not receive sufficient encouragement and laboured under a great disadvantage through want of a Botanic Garden. He resigned at the end of twenty-nine years when he had secured the Chair for his son Thomas, and when he knew a Botanic Garden was about to be established.

Richard Bradley's appointment as Professor of Botany had been largely due to the influence of Richard Bentley, Master of Trinity College. When John Martyn became joint editor of the *Grub-street Journal* he lost no time in attacking Bradley and Bentley against both of whom he held a grudge; against Bradley for occupying the Chair of Botany which he coveted, and against Bentley for his part in Bradley's appointment. The opportunity to attack Bentley came first. The attack was part of the general policy of the *Journal* to attack Pope's enemies, but there can be no doubt that Martyn enjoyed opening the attack for purely personal reasons.

The *Journal's* attack on Bentley was later taken over by Russell and others and continued to the end of its existence.

One of the regular features of the *Journal* was 'News with Remarks'. Items of news were taken from other journals and some caustic or amusing comment added. The following with its comment on Bentley (always referred to as Zoilus by the *Grub-street Journal*) serves as an example.

Number 2.

Saturday, Jan. 10.

Last Monday a woman was found dead in a coach-house, among old lumber, the back side of Church-Lane, St. Gile's. *Applebee's Weekly Journal*.

The learned Dr. ZOILUS thinks, that there is an omission of the copyist in this place; and that we ought to read among OTHER old lumber.⁶

Number 9 of the *Grub-street Journal* contained an article by Martyn written in the form of a letter addressed to Bavius and signed 'Yours affectionately Zoilus'. It is dated Cambridge, 1 March 1730.

* Since writing this article I have found the following statement in *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos*, C. H. Collins Baker and Muriel J. Baker, Oxford, 1949, 125, it is from the Chandos papers now in the Huntington Library, California. '23 August 1717 . . . Richard Bradley, the botanist, was mismanaging the hot-house, the physic garden, and the sums entrusted to him.'

Bradley was employed at Cannons by Brydges who had made his fortune by manipulation of public money when paymaster of the foreign forces.

Zoilus begins his letter with a note of appreciation of the *Grub-street Journal* and then says:

For my own part, my leisure time has been of late chiefly spent in correcting Milton: who has hitherto appeared with as many faults, as any of the ancient poets.⁷

This is followed by a number of suggested emendations and a request that the *Journal* should be sent to him every week; 'for I shall not trouble myself with any other newspapers'.

Bentley at this time was an old man, but still active and engaged in preparing his edition of Milton. Martyn was in touch with a group of Cambridge dons and obtained information about some of Bentley's emendations before his work was published, one of them was included in the mock emendations in the letter referred to above. When Bentley's edition was published a more or less legitimate and detailed attack was made on it and on his method of criticism, albeit in the satirical and burlesque fashion of the *Journal*. By this time Martyn had severed his connexion with the *Journal*.

Richard Bradley was made Professor of Botany at Cambridge University in 1724. The following year, in the preface to his *Survey of Ancient Husbandry and Gardening*,⁸ he gave reasons why a Physic Garden was needed in Cambridge, the benefits which would arise from one and his ideas on how one should be planned. He wanted not only a Physic Garden for medicinal plants but a garden in which experiments on horticulture and husbandry would be undertaken. He made a strong appeal for funds requesting:

that those Gentlemen, who are inclin'd to become Founders of it or Contributors to it, would communicate their Intentions to the Reverend Dr. Savage, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.⁹

He hoped that:

the University may expect to have a Garden in some tolerable order by the next Spring, if the Gentlemen, who are inclin'd to contribute towards it, do not delay their benefactions.¹⁰

He said he had already collected a good number of plants and had offers of many more.

The next information about the projected Physic Garden is in Bradley's *Course of Lectures upon the Materia Medica*.¹¹ In the introduction he says:

Gentlemen, I must acquaint you, that I have Directions from several of my friends, who are Persons of Quality, and Honour, to find out a proper Piece of Ground in this University to be purchased for a Physick-Garden, and put in such order as may render it both useful and ornamental; and especially from two or three great men, who give me the strongest Hopes of seeing the Design perfected.

In Obedience to their Directions, I have visited the several Parts in and about the Town of Cambridge, in order to find out a proper Place for a Garden; and have, at length, fix'd upon one, which, if the Gentlemen of the College it belongs to, will consent to part with upon reasonable Terms, will in all Probability be purchased, and secured to the University by Act of Parliament;

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and as soon as that can be done, I can assure you of a good Collection of Plants from my self and some others, who are resolved to set it on Foot, as well as may be, for the Service and Honour of the University. Nor am I without Hopes that a worthy Gentleman of this County will contribute very largely on that Occasion.¹²

When Bradley's lectures were published Martyn lost no time in reviewing them in the ironical and satirical manner which characterized the *Grub-street Journal*. He begins as follows:

To Mr. Bavius, Secretary to the Society of Grub-street

Cambridge, Mar. 15, 1730.

Sir,

It is with the utmost pleasure that we see here a book published at London under the title of *A Course of Lectures upon the Materia Medica, antient and modern, read in the Physick-schools at Cambridge, &c* by R. Bradley, F.R.S. and Professor of Botany in the university of Cambridge. It was particularly obliging in our worthy Professor to print these *Lectures*; seeing not above three or four of our students had the pleasure of hearing them read. As the title-page gave me a great comfort, in informing me that we already had *physic-schools* for the professors to read their private courses of *lectures*: so before I was got through the second page, I was charmed with the full assurance of our soon having a physic-garden; and such an one as will *become the worth and grandeur of this university*. Which will, no doubt, be easily effected, if the money raised on this occasion be intrusted in the hands of our Professor, whose oecconomy is equal to his learning; and whose integrity will be as beneficial to us, as his knowledge. The book now before me gives me a great idea of his genius. For he scorns, like the vulgar writers on the *Materia Medica*, to copy in a servile manner from other authors; but bravely deviating from the beaten road, gives us, almost in every page, something equally new and surprising. I have not yet had the leisure to read the whole through with such attention, as is due to so unparalleled a performance, but in a cursory view only I find so many extraordinary discoveries, that I cannot forbear taking notice to you of them.¹³

This introduction is followed by sarcastic comments on a number of isolated statements. In some of his comments Martyn was right, in others he was wrong. All the points he picks out for criticism are comparatively unimportant. The following are typical examples of his method.

In describing valerian Bradley said:

This Plant we find commonly in the Woods, and on the Sides of wet Banks.¹⁴

Martyn's comment was:

I am glad we shall be better able to find the *Valerian* for the future. We have hitherto found it hardly anywhere about Cambridge but in bushy places, and a dry chalky soil. We shall expect now to find it *commonly in the Woods, and on the sides of wet banks*. That *on the sides of wet banks* I take to be the fittest for physical uses.¹⁵

Valeriana officinalis which Bradley was referring to does grow in swampy places in woods and on most ditch banks. Martyn seems to have confused it with another species of valerian which grows on chalky soil and in chalk pits round Cambridge.

In referring to mummy Bradley said:

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Mumma, or Mummy, is brought to us from *Egypt*, found there in the Hecatombs.¹⁶

This pleased Martyn who said:

Mummy being found in the *Hecatombs* in *Egypt*, is an information of no great use to us, indeed, as physicians; but it may serve as a specimen of our Professor's learning.¹⁷

Martyn concludes his review of Bradley's book as follows:

These few observations have occurred to me on a very slight survey of these excellent *Lectures*. When I have considered them more carefully, I doubt not but I shall find a great number of discoveries, as extraordinary as they are new. I hope Mr. Professor will be so good as to continue his reading to us; for hitherto *the want of these Lectures publickly has occasioned many to seek them abroad, and fly to foreign universities for that knowledge which we might gain at home*. And I hope this good example will have such an effect, that *every professor in their several branches of physick, will take their proper opportunities of reading to us, and explaining the several parts of their knowledge; that we may not want any thing among us, which is necessary to confirm that character which has always been given to Cambridge and Oxford*. I am

Your very humble servant¹⁸

As Martyn said, Bradley, in his *Lectures on Materia Medica*, did not 'copy in a servile manner from others'. That is where the merit of his lectures lies; though they did little to advance the study of materia medica they formed an interesting introduction to that subject at a time when books on *Materia Medica* were very dry and dreary.

Martyn did not have the satisfaction of a reply from Bradley which he had no doubt hoped to provoke.

Number 18 of the *Grub-street Journal* contains *An Essay towards a New Theory of Physic, in a Discourse read before the Grubean Society by Ephraim Quibus, M.D.* The pseudonym Ephraim Quibus was used by Martyn when writing articles of medical interest. The essay is an amusing, ironical skit making fun of those natural philosophers who had suggested that *animalcules* might cause disease in animals and human beings. In this essay the idea is pushed to its extreme limits. No names are mentioned but since Bradley was one of two contemporary writers who had written on the subject, it is difficult to escape the feeling that although ostensibly attacking what he believed to be a medical fad, some personal animosity was also involved. The very fact that John Martyn thought it worth while to attack this theory suggests that it had found favour in a wider circle than is generally believed. The article, like a number of others in the *Grub-street Journal*, reveals the conservatism, the orthodoxy and even the narrow-mindedness of Martyn.

After referring to the great honour which the *Society* had conferred on him Doctor Quibus says:

I am about to propose a *Theory of Physic*, different from all, which have been already invented: a theory not depending upon precarious reasonings, but supported by a great number of curious and exact observations.

In the first place, I lay down this universal proposition that all diseases whatsoever owe their origin to animalcules. This will seem no very surprising doctrine, to those, who are already

convinced, as indeed most are, that each animated body was once contained in one of those animalcules, which sagacious Lewenhoeck first discovered in the *semen masculinum*. It is certain that not only this, but all the other fluids whatsoever, contain a great variety of animalcules, of different forms, which inhabit each fluid, as their proper element. There are very few, who have not had the pleasure of seeing those in vinegar and pepper water: and those who are sufficiently curious and diligent, may see other minute creatures even in those pure and unmixed fluids.¹⁹

This being so it may be considered that all the fluids secreted by animal bodies normally contain an infinite number of various animalcules and it is easy to understand how various diseases arise. For example, food may be taken into the stomach which upsets or destroys the animalcules living there, and various symptoms are produced according to the resistance set up by the animalcules. If the resulting disorder is slight:

the peccant humour being thrown off, is carried down through the intestines, and so the disorder is ended. On the other side, if the animalcules are not able to sustain the attack, but sink under it; a number of their carcasses, lying dead at once, will cause an uneasy and dangerous putrefaction in the stomach. And if the admitted food be of such a nature as to occasion convulsions in them, this effect must have a secondary one on the stomach; and, causing a tender motion of its fibres, oblige it to throw up and discharge the offending matter, and the animalcules together. Nor will this disorder cease, till its cause be removed: nor will the stomach even then perform its offices justly, till a sufficient supply of new animalcules be generated to restore its natural state.²⁰

He continues in this vein saying it would take up too much time to explain every disease according to his hypothesis so he will be content to refer to a few of his observations:

I have found, in observing human blood on the microscope, that there is one particular animalcule, amongst many others, which is not very much unlike the sea tortoise in shape. This I am persuaded is the general cause of fevers. It is not improbable, that this creature is more prolific in some seasons and constitutions, than in others. When it happens that great numbers of these are generated, the vessels are distended, and the animalcules, pressing each other, cause a greater motion in the blood, and consequently a quicker and stronger contraction of the arteries. The bodies of these creatures being very broad, and their heads small, they frequently attempt to pass through some minute vessels, which cannot admit them; and the continual following, without being able to proceed, a dangerous obstruction is necessarily made, great numbers of the creatures choaked, and the life of the patient in the utmost danger. Now, if by proper medicines we can cause any of the glands lying near these obstructions to dilate so far as to admit a large quantity through them, there is hope that the disease may be removed. If the glands of the skin are thus affected, great shoals of the animalcules are thrown off in a profuse sweat; if those of the intestines, by stool; and if the kidneys, they come away by urine. Give me leave to add, that the sediment of the urine is nothing else but these animalcules dead in great numbers which sink to the bottom of that fluid: as will appear by examining them on a good microscope.²¹

After describing the symptoms produced by another animalcule found in the blood which very much resembles a lobster he concludes:

I could easily account for all the symptoms of every disease, if the time would admit of it, and could show how even our thoughts depend on variously figured animalcules. So that when we speak of maggots in the brain, we use a more literal expression than we generally imagine.

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I shall beg leave to take another opportunity of discoursing before you on the application of this *Theory* to practice; and endeavour to lay down a most certain method of curing all diseases whatsoever, by various treatment of these troublesome inmates.²²

In the same number of the *Journal* as this skit on animalcules, there was a story about a lady who had lost her speech and was directed in a dream to go to the Physic-garden at Chelsea and to eat a certain plant which was revealed to her in the dream. She did so, and 'the use of her tongue was immediately restored'. Martyn adds the comment:

And the learned Mr. *Professor Hecatomb* thought it not improbable, that a plant, which had a power of making a dumb woman speak, might augment that faculty in some others to such a degree, as to become very destructive to the peace of society, and that as much care ought to be taken in destroying this plant, as was formerly applied to the extirpation of wolves.²³

Professor Hecatomb was evidently a name Martyn coined for Bradley after Bradley had used the term 'hecatomb' for 'catacomb' in his book on *Materia Medica*.

The next prod at Bradley in the *Grub-street Journal* was by Russell. It is as follows:

NEWS WITH REMARKS

No. 23. June 11.

Thursday, June 4. Last week Dr. Bradley, professor of Botany in the university of Cambridge, was to view the new pot-house at Black-wall; where he found an extraordinary clay for garden-pots, for the preservation and health of plants; and has settled the several proportions requisite from the smallest herb to the largest orange tree, and bespoke on his own account a large number to be sent to Cambridge. *Daily Post*.

*I hope this learned Professor will proceed to view the rest of the pot-houses, and likewise the glass-houses, which he has not yet viewed: from whence we may justly expect great improvements in pots and bottles; a subject, which if he once take in hand, he will not fail to exhaust.*²⁴

A further reference to Bradley occurs in a postscript to a letter commenting on an emendation in Urry's Chaucer. It is as follows:

P.S. The learned author of the Greenian philosophy has obliged the public with a curious print of Clare-hall, drawn by the hand of Mr. Professor Bradley. There are two things in this picture. Mr. Bradley is created M.D. and the sun is placed in the north.²⁵

Whether Bradley had a medical qualification or not is uncertain, he certainly possessed a good deal of medical knowledge and in foreign biographies he is always referred to as an English physician.

The *Journal's* last comment on Bradley appeared on 9 November 1732, under the heading *Domestic News*.

Wednesday, Nov. 8.

On Sunday night died Mr. Bradley, F.R.S., professor of botany in the university of Cambridge, and author of several ingenious books of husbandry and gardening. D.P. (*Daily Post*)—*The booksellers have lost a good easy pad.*

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Some of Bradley's books on husbandry and gardening had earned such a high reputation and become so popular that pirated editions appeared during his life and several editions were published after his death.

In No. 41 of the *Grub-street Journal* there is a communication in the form of a letter by Bavius to the *Grub-street Society* in which he says that on the request of a friend he sends

An abstract of an appendix to a System of anatomy, which I doubt not, will merit a place in your Transactions, and entitle the author to a seat in your assembly. It is as follows:

'Mr. Douglas and a surgeon of St. Thomas's hospital, wanting success in cutting for the stone the high way; the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's hospital, who had resolved to do this operation, altered their resolution, and went on in the old way. Notwithstanding this, I resumed the high way; and, cutting nine with success, it came again in vogue, Twice indeed, I cut the peritoneum: but exclusive of these two instances, I lost no more than one in seven; which is more than any one else, that I know of could say. Chap. 1.

I couch'd a young gentleman, who had no remembrance of ever having seen. When he first saw, he thought all objects whatever touch'd his eye: he knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another: he wonder'd that a large face could be expressed in a little picture, and what he saw, he thought extremely large. Chap. 2.

I took 33 stones from W. Hassenden, in the 68th year of his age: he is now living at Gravesend. P. 253.—

I took a stone 10 inches round, weighing 11 ounces, from J. Miles, who is now living at Reading. P. 254.—

I invented an operation, in case of a total closure, or extreme contraction of the pupil. The manner of doing it is thus: A small knife or needle, edged on one side, is thrust through the tunica sclerotic, and then forwards through the iris, the edge being turned to the iris; in drawing it out a slit is cut. P. 255'

This, gentlemen, excepting the pictures of 34 stones, 3 eyes and a knife, is the sum and substance of the sixpenny piece above mentioned.

It is true, it is little more than a bill of cures perform'd; and therefore, ought, after the example of Dr. Anodyne, to have been given gratis; but as one of the articles has already been printed in the *Philosophical Transactions* and my friend is a man of figure, many may be desirous of seeing it, who cannot go to the price of it. . . . By your indulgence, he may become more fam'd for the operations he has invented: and, tho' he may not have made them intelligible to his countrymen, by the account he has given of the manner of doing them; yet they may know whither to repair on occasion, with assurance that he knows how to do them.²⁶

When this memorial had been read to the Society, Dr. Quibus, among other remarks, said:

that he hoped the Society would for the future take cognizance of such physicians and surgeons, as published quack-advertisements of their cures, either in books or public News-papers; and give them a public rebuke; unless they could prove, that neither their *hands*, nor their *medicines* could say anything in their favour; which he took to be very far from the case of the gentleman hinted at in this *Memorial*.²⁷

The gentleman hinted at was William Cheselden who had published separately the appendix to the fourth edition of his *Anatomy of the Human Body*²⁸ for the use of those who had the previous editions. It contained a short historical account of cutting for the stone and the various operations which had been employed, the reasons why he had tried the high operation and why he had abandoned it, and how he developed his own technique of the lateral operation which he briefly described.

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A fuller description of his technique was published in 1731 by his friend James Douglas, who had frequently watched him operate. An estimate of Cheselden's work as a lithotomist has recently been given by Sir Zachary Cope in his life of William Cheselden. Cheselden operated with great speed, frequently extracting the stone in less than a minute. Of his results, which were presented in later editions of his *Anatomy*, Cope says:

These results, obtained in days before antiseptics were available on patients who were not anaesthetized, must be accounted remarkable.²⁹

Cheselden's detailed description of the sensations following the return of sight to the youth who had been blind since birth and whose sight he restored by removing congenital cataracts, and of which Martyn was scornful, is the first scientific attempt to elucidate a problem on which there had been much speculation by philosophers. It is such a remarkable and interesting physiological and psychological study that Cope reprints it in full in his book.

As for the operation for making an artificial pupil which Martyn includes in his abstract of Cheselden's paper, this

... was severely criticized by Benedict Duddell in a monograph which he published in 1733. Nevertheless he gave Cheselden credit for being public-spirited rather than selfish, as may be judged by the following passage:

'Some treatises are wrote for the public good, and others for private interest. I don't believe the latter is the gentleman's view neither do I intend to attack him as I wou'd those who seem to write on such a motion.'³⁰

In his book on *Anatomy* Cheselden mentioned several instances, in which during dissections he had noted, perforation of the ear drum where there had been no history of deafness, further, he says:

I have seen a man smoak a whole pipe of tobacco out through his ears, which must go from the mouth, through the Eustachian tube, and through the Tympanum, yet this man heard perfectly well. These cases occasioned me to break the Tympanum in both ears of a dog and it did not destroy his hearing, but for sometime he received strong sounds with great horror.³¹

When Cheselden was appointed physician to Queen Caroline, who was rather deaf, he wished to find some remedy for her deafness and suggested that he might be allowed to remove the ear drum of a criminal who would be pardoned for submitting to the operation. He thought it possible that perforation or removal of the drum might improve defective hearing in a similar way to which couching for cataract improves the sight.

A criminal condemned to be hanged was in fact reprieved to undergo the operation but it was never performed. The reason why is given by Cheselden in later editions of his *Anatomy*. He says:

Some years since a malefactor was pardoned on condition that he suffered this experiment, but he falling ill of a fever the operation was deferred, during which time there was so great a public clamor raised against it that it was afterwards thought fit to be forbid.³²

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Martyn, under the pseudonym Ephraim Quibus, M.D., wrote on the ethics of performing operations on criminals in No. 53 of the *Journal*. The following extracts illustrate the manner in which he treated the subject. He soon descended to personalities and tried to laugh the problem out of court rather than discuss it seriously. After saying that he considers Mr. Cheselden to be serious in his desire to operate on the ear drum of a criminal he says:

I have been informed, that he tried the very same experiment some time ago on the ears of a dog: but alas! we have quite lost the benefit of the experiment; the incurious son of a bitch took the advantage of a back door being open, and ran quite away. I hope the door will be secured when the experiment is tried on Mr. Rey: for should he have as unphilosophical a mind as the dog; and should his heels be as slippery as his finger; he may serve us the very same trick and leave us as much in the dark, as we were before. Some are of opinion, that this same drum is not to be seen in a living man; so that, when the operation is said to have been performed, we may remain in some doubt, whether it has been performed or not. But this is a trifling objection; for tho' another person may not be able to see it, yet a curious operator may: as I well remember, when I pursued my studies at Leyden, the perspicacious Mr. Lewenhoeck could see things very clearly by means of his glasses, of which I, with all the eyes I had, and even assisted with the best of that gentleman's glasses, could not get so much as a glimpse.³³

He goes on to list other operations which might be performed upon malefactors of which the following is another example of his method of criticism:

Another experiment, which I would recommend to be tried, is the tying up of one of the testicles, to see whether by that means the sex of a child begotten at such a time may be determined. . . . I apprehend very little difficulty in trying the experiment. A jury of widows might be impannelled on such an occasion: and, I doubt not, but in this curious and inquisitive age, many virtuous ladies might be found who would gladly make the experiment, out of a pure spirit of philosophy. But if there were any difficulty in this, there could be non in obtaining such women as should lie likewise under sentence of condemnation; who commonly take care to put themselves in a condition of obtaining a reprieve, without any good end answered to the publick.³⁴ etc.

A fortnight after Martyn's attack on Cheselden had appeared the following notice was published in the *Grub-street Journal*:

*As Mr. Cheselden's intended operation in taking out the drum of the ear has been ridiculed by Dr. Quibus in our 53rd Journal, we think ourselves obliged in justice to insert the following account.*³⁵

This was followed by a description of the organ of hearing and Cheselden's reasons for hoping that useful information could be gained by performing the operation which had been published in the *Daily Courant* of 19 January.

This may have been an instance of the *Grub-street Journal* demonstrating its fairmindedness by publishing both sides of a controversy, on the other hand, Martyn may have overstepped the mark by attacking Pope's medical advisor and friend. Pope considered Cheselden the 'most deserving man in the whole profession of chirurgery'³⁶ and coupled his name with Mead's in the well known quatrain:

Raymond Williamson

Weak though I am of limb and short of sight
Far from a lynx and not a giant quite
I'll do what Mead and Cheselden advise
To keep these limbs and to preserve these eyes.

Apart from contributions to 'News with Remarks' the remaining articles which can be attributed to Martyn were, four on matters concerning the *Journal's* policy, an essay on Miltonic verse, an attack on medical writing, a satire on the jury system, a review attacking Ralph's 'Fashionable Lady', proposals for erecting a College for the habitation of Grub-street authors, a discourse concerning almanacks, an essay on the primitive poets and an account of some obscene Hottentot ceremonials.

They are amusing and entertaining and in keeping with the *Journal's* policy 'to restrain the enormities of our worse brethren, proceeding from their want of integrity and knowledge'.³⁷

There was justification for some of the articles, for example, those on medical writing and on almanacks, but interest in most of them depended on attacks on persons and a coarseness of language which reached its peak in the account of Hottentot ceremonials which it was suggested might be applied to the Dunces and other Grub-street writers. The peroration serves as an example of the whole:

I well remember that about twenty years ago a certain reverend divine was in such esteem that not only fans and other implements of the fair sex, but even vulgar utensils, nay *chamber-pots*, were adorned with his picture. This surely would never have been done, if it had not been looked on as a token of respect to *piss upon him*. And those ingenious astronomers, Messieurs Whiston and Ditton, had an ode composed to their honour, the burden of which was,

Let Whiston and Ditton
Be p——st on, and sh——t on.³⁸

This article, according to the *Memoirs of Grub-street* was 'so well relished by the town, as to occasion the printing of an additional number of the *Journal*, in which it appeared'.

In the statements made in the *Journal* on its policy and in the Preface to the *Memoirs of Grub-street* much emphasis is placed on the integrity of the editors. They protest too much. The first sentence of the Preface to the *Memoirs* (written by Russell) says:

As the only rational end of all reading is information, the two essential qualifications necessary to every writer are knowledge and integrity.³⁹

Later on he says:

As we never published anything properly calumnious, or which we knew to be false; so we took all unimaginable care not to publish anything slanderous, or which, having all the appearance of truth at first, might afterwards prove to be groundless imputation.⁴⁰

He goes on to say that they suppressed 'aspersions of private pique and malice' and that the policy of the *Journal* 'did not proceed from envy, malice, or ill nature: so these bad qualities have had no influence in the conduct of it'.⁴¹

John Martyn and the Grub-street Journal

APPENDIX

List of John Martyn's contributions to the *Grub-street Journal* which were reprinted in Vol. 1 of the *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street*.

Number	Page	
1	1-4	Introductory article on the general policy of the <i>Journal</i> . On the arrangement of news in the <i>Journal</i> by Geoffrey Quidunc.
2	10	News with remarks. 3 items, the second being a dig at Bentley.
3	11-12	On the decision of the <i>Journal</i> to avoid politics.
4	18-19	News with remarks. 2 items.
5	19-24	An essay on Miltonic verse.
7	34	News with remarks. 2 items.
8	35-40	An attack on medical writing by Ephraim Quibus, M.D.
9	42-5	An attack on the critical emendations of Milton by Zilus.
11	52-6	An ironical review of Bradley's <i>Materia Medica</i> .
14	61-3	A satire on the jury system, occasioned by the Abergavenny scandal. News with remarks. 2 items.
15	70-1	News with remarks. 3 items.
16	72-6	An attack on Ralph's <i>Fashionable Lady</i> .
17	85	News with remarks. 2 items.
18	86-9	A satirical essay on a new theory of physic by Ephraim Quibus, M.D.
	89-90	Comment on a story of a plant which made a dumb woman speak, with a dig at Bradley.
21	102	A notice of policy in dealing with contributions.
26	138-9	A comment on an emendation in Urry's <i>Chaucer</i> , with a P.S. ridiculing Bradley.
33	163-5	Proposals for erecting a College for the habitation of Grub-street authors, by Giles Blunderbus, Esq., Historiographer to the Grubean Society.
41	200-2	An attack on a surgeon cutting for the stone and couching for cataract.
46	229	An epigram on Walpole. (This did not appear in the <i>Journal</i> .)
51	246-50	A discourse concerning Almanacks for the year 1731, by William Bickerstaff, Esq.
53	254-7	A discourse on empirical experiments on criminals by Ephraim Quibus, M.D.
55	268-71	On primitive poets, duck, etc.
59	292-7	An account on some obscene Hottentot ceremonials, with the implication that they might be applied to the Dunces.

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15. *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street*, 53.
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17. *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street*, 53.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 55–6.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–7.
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33. *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street*, 254–5.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
36. In a letter from Pope to Swift, 25 March 1736.
37. *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street*, preface, ix.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
39. *Ibid.*, preface, i.
40. *Ibid.*, preface, xxiv.
41. *Ibid.*, preface, xxvi.