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The Pleasures of Spectatorship: Joseph Addison and Public Culture

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## ABSTRACT

### The Pleasures of Spectatorship: Joseph Addison and Public Culture

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This dissertation focuses on the contribution of Joseph Addison and his London newspaper *The Spectator* to the modern “social imaginaries” (Charles Taylor) of public, market and nation. Addison’s championing of perspicacity in prose and detachment in aesthetic judgment created protocols of “stranger sociality” (Michael Warner) that made participation in these social imaginaries possible. Addison is placed in dialogue with such figures in philosophy and rhetoric as Cicero, Ramus, Montaigne, Kant, and Machiavelli. *The Spectator* is the primary text examined, but Addison’s juvenilia and political writing are also cited. The *Spectator*’s reliance on a visual paradigm of communication can be interpreted as establishing modernist dogmas with regard to three functions of rhetoric, production, reception and constitution: 1) the transmission model of communication, 2) the detached, impartial nature of the reflective spectator, and 3) the universal underpinnings of the liberal model of citizenship. These modernist dogmas share a visual organizing metaphor: they presuppose a *transparency* of the communication process in which signification is noise, attachment is bias, and faction is chaos. Addison, it is argued, has a place in the history of rhetoric as an exemplar of a uniquely modern form of eloquence.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1a: *Joseph Addison, Modernity, and the Rise of the Public Sphere*

Public Sphere Theory has, in the last quarter century, established itself as a major research tradition within Communication Studies.<sup>1</sup> A confluence of factors, among them interest generated in the English-speaking academic community by the translation of Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, has led to a veritable explosion of scholarly interest not only in Communication but in the humanities as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Habermas' thesis, in short, is that an entity described by him as "the bourgeois public sphere," where discourse (in the forms of newspapers, journals, and even debates in coffee shops) sought popular assent, created a normative paradigm for the development of Enlightenment values. While Habermas freely acknowledges the "ideological" aspect of the universal values of the Enlightenment, he asserts that its implicit norms transcend its ideological operations. Much of this debate has dealt with attacking or defending this basic position; is the public sphere a vehicle for ideological domination or for public rationality?<sup>3</sup>

This theoretical debate, while essential, can defer a more (for want of a better word) *empirical* approach to the public sphere that actually examines what has been said and done publicly. Regardless of the reasons for the theoretical orientation of much academic writing regarding the public sphere paradigm, scholarship in the history of rhetoric and public address does not operate under these strictures and can fill a lack by attending to the actual works that make up public communication. As David Zarefsky asserts, "what we study when we study

public address is rhetorical practice in all its manifestations.”<sup>4</sup> Critical work in rhetoric and public address has often served to define the complex and contradictory ways in which actually existing publics operate.<sup>5</sup> The following study aims to add to this body of work by focusing on what many would consider some of the founding texts in the history of the bourgeois public sphere, the contributions of Joseph Addison to the pioneering British journal *The Spectator*.<sup>6</sup>

In *The Spectator*, a daily journal read according to its own estimation by close to 100,000 Londoners between 1711 and 1714, Addison, the celebrated British essayist, critic, philosopher and gadfly, created one of the most unforgettable figures in English letters, the “Spectator.” Addison’s Spectator was a silent man who professed to “live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the species.” Addison, through the persona of the Spectator, offered vivid and perspicacious descriptions of London society and lucid explorations of the “new philosophy” epitomized above all by the works of John Locke. Addison’s writing, much like that of his collaborator (and often stylistic and political foil) Richard Steele, was a window through which the public could take in the oft confusing world of London life, a mirror within which they could reflect upon their own roles as rational spectators of that world, and a conceptual space within which they could imagine themselves as participants of the modern social imaginaries of the state, the market and the public sphere itself.

The metaphors of the window, the mirror and of space reference three ways in which Addison’s achievement can be marked, ways which correspond to three acknowledged dimensions of rhetorical practice: the production of texts, the production of judgment, and the production of social reality.<sup>7</sup> These metaphors also highlight how the *Spectator*’s reliance on a visual paradigm of communication can be interpreted as establishing modernist dogmas with

regards to these three dimensions of rhetoric: 1) the transmission model of communication, 2) the detached, impartial nature of the reflective spectator, and 3) the universalist social pretensions underpinning the bourgeois public sphere. These modernist dogmas, which themselves form an essential part of the model of the bourgeois public sphere, share a visual organizing metaphor: they presuppose a *transparency* of the communication process in which signification is noise, attachment is bias, and faction is chaos.

For many rhetoricians, such dogmas epitomize the profoundly antirhetorical temperament of modernism: rhetoric's dark ages.<sup>8</sup> Compared to the more amenable playgrounds of classicism, the Renaissance or postmodernity, the modernism of Addison's time seems at first like hostile territory for the historian of rhetoric. Yet rhetoric is no less important in a putatively antirhetorical age; in fact, one could make the argument that under such conditions rhetoric assumes constitutive importance as the necessary supplement of foundational truth.<sup>9</sup> And lest we protest too much about modernist dogma, we as rhetorical scholars have often been seduced by the dream of transparency more than we care to recognize.<sup>10</sup> By reading Addison rhetorically, we may find a way to come to terms with both the modernity in rhetoric and the rhetoricity in modernity. Consequently, we can come to appreciate some of the essential modernist elements that form the classic model of the public sphere from a rhetorical perspective.

A review of Addison's contribution to modernist rhetoric points not only to Addison's role in establishing these dogmas, but also to how the "return of the repressed" is figured into these selfsame dogmas. First, Addison achieved massive success through the development, promotion and practice of a so-called "Augustan" style of writing that achieved popular accessibility through perspicacity: the ability to suggest, through prose, a visual means of

accessing an absent reality. The visually charged nature of the work is clear from the name Addison gave to the essays he wrote under this persona, they were “speculations” that placed the reader as close as possible to the writer’s own way of seeing, thus creating an effect of writing as a transparent medium. For contemporaries, his stylistic achievement had major effects. Before Addison, only ancient writers were usually considered worthy of imitation. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rhetoric and belles letters movement consistently turned to Addison as an exemplar of proper English style, making him in effect the Demosthenes of the epistemologically minded “new rhetoric.” Among those who recommended Addison for imitation was Hugh Blair:

[In] the highest, most correct, and ornamented degree of the simple manner, Mr. Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language the most perfect example; and therefore, though not without some faults, the safest model for imitation. Perspicacious and pure he is in the highest degree . . . There is not the least Affectation in his manner; we see no marks of labor; nothing forced or constrained; but great elegance joined with great ease and simplicity.

Samuel Johnson:

His prose is the model of the middle stile; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equitable, and always easy, without glowing words and pointed sentences . . . Whoever wishes to attain an English stile, familiar but not coarse, and

elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

And Thomas Wallace:

Should it be doubted, whether the improvement of style which took place in the time of Addison – that variation which substituted uniform and correct neatness in composition, for what was loose, inaccurate and capricious, be justly attributed to him – the doubt will vanish when it is remembered that in no work prior to his time is an equal degree of accuracy and neatness to be found, and even among those periodical papers to which the most eminent of his contemporary writers contributed.

The “improvement in style” that Wallace credited Addison for in the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be contrasted to an earlier style of writing that Addison labeled “Gothic”: florid, obscure, and hostile to popular appeal. Addison restored the standards of accessibility and popular success that had been under suspicion since the Ramist educational reforms of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Yet at the same time, the wide ranging focus of Addison’s writing creates an alternate sense of Addison’s work as not simply a window but a prism, swamping the reader with a kaleidoscopic array of characters, events, themes and genres. There are times when Addison’s typically hypotactic style gives way to a more impressionistic and paratactic way of writing, one that deals in misdirection, irony and parody. Addison as the exemplar of “clarity” is only half the story.

Meanwhile, as a critic and popular philosopher, Addison sought to make the reader into a reflective spectator him or herself (indeed, his focus on the female reader was innovative for its

time) by instructing them in the promotion of “fine taste.” In his role as a moral philosopher, Addison imagined himself a modern Socrates who “brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men . . . out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses.”<sup>11</sup> As A.J. Beljame wrote, “he sought to open Everyman’s eyes to literature; better still, to open his mind, form his judgment, teach him to think and provide him with general ideas on life and art.”<sup>12</sup> Addison so trained his readers in *spectatorship*, the form of judgment identified since Aristotle as dealing solely with cultural and aesthetic response. Yet at the same time, even as the Spectator disavowed the political importance of his writings, Addison the Whig backbencher worked subtly to undermine Tory modes of experience, inviting the reader to render indirect judgment on specific political issues of the day, particularly the birth of the British Empire.

As Addison opened the eyes of his readers to “life and art”, he was doing much more. As Erin Makie writes in her preface to the most recent collection of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, these texts were “historically instrumental in the institution of the bourgeois public sphere . . . *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are not simply commentaries on their culture, but agents in their formation.”<sup>13</sup> As Michael Warner elaborates further, the periodical medium created a sense of “stranger sociality” where one reads a public text mindful of the presence of countless others reading at the same time within an indeterminate yet bounded cultural space.<sup>14</sup> Yet at the same time the *Spectator* references this liberal sense of public as unseen audience, it also references a more republican view of public as appearance, as what this ghostly and unseen reading public is reading is often Addison’s satirical depictions of behavior *in* public. Such vivid characters as Sir Roger Coverley, Andrew Freeport, Will Honeycomb, the Political Upholsterer, the biggest

Newsmonger in England, even the Spectator himself (who despite many critic's assumptions cannot be assumed to be a simple stand-in for Addison himself) not only stand in their physicality in contrast with the ghostliness of a indeterminate reading public, but also by doing so emphasize the role of secular space and time in undermining the permanency of such a public. The public is thus something that is either built or broken by the public action of *individuals* whose own particularity mirrors the greater particularity of the republican public sphere.

Addison provides rhetoricians with an opportunity to reassess the role of these dogmas of transparency, detachment and universality in rhetorical theory. Are they simply markers of an anti-rhetorical spirit? Are they in highly rhetorical achievements in their own right? Studying Addison can help us, if not to endorse, then to appreciate the force of such ideas upon the development of rhetorical production, reception and constitution under modernity.

#### 1b. *Addison's Reception History*

Addison's association with these modernist dogmas of communication may explain his neglect in contemporary rhetorical studies. Outside of rhetoric, Addison is so closely associated with his era that assessments of him vary widely based upon ones assessment of the period with which he is so closely associated. Addison preached the "golden mean" in politics, critical outlook and style, a quality that is found rarely in his commentators over the past three centuries. As Scott Black has argued, Addison's reception shifts wildly between those who see him as a "prophet" or an "ideologue" of modernity. In this shift Addison's influence is reduced in scope from Promethean and colossus-like to symptomatic bubble.

As mentioned earlier, Addison's acclaim in the decades after the publication of the *Spectator* caused him to become adopted as a model of stylistic imitation by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Addison is seen nostalgically by the likes of Thackeray and Macauley as a pillar of English literature and taste, while "critics from William Hazlitt early in the century, to W. J. Courthope at the century's end, assume that Addison and Steele are major figures, that their place in the history of English literature is both significant and secure."<sup>15</sup> In 1881, A. J. Beljame associates Addison's name for the first time in connection with a "public" conceived as an entity: a reading public seen as necessary for the rise of writing as a profession. Beljame sees the growth of this literary public as being stifled by dissention. In order "to succeed merely in making himself heard, still more, to succeed in convincing his readers, a man needs gifts of persuasiveness, or tact and impartiality such as are rarely unified in one person . . . every one of these conditions was fulfilled by Addison."<sup>16</sup> He succeeded because, rather than pursuing factions, "he divined there existed, ready and waiting, the makings of another reading public, to whom no one had hitherto given thought . . . ought there not to exist – if it could be discovered – a whole army of intelligent, open-minded readers who might be attracted without too great difficulty? . . . Addison was the first to formulate these questions clearly to himself. He divined the existence of such a public and marched forth to conquer it with clear-cut ideas and a well-defined plan of command."<sup>17</sup> Here we have a pre-Habermasian account of how a public comes into a being through the golden mean of consensus.

Matthew Arnold's account of Addison as "provincial and trite"<sup>18</sup> strikes a different note, and as the 20<sup>th</sup> century begins the need emerges to break from the past that Addison's eminence symbolizes. Barnaby Dobrée writes:

Today we are of two minds about Addison. The phrase of lachrymose adoration typified by Miss Aiken, Macauley and Beljame has passed, and we are in danger of swinging over too much in the direction of deprecation, fanned by a personal dislike of the man, whose general attitude seems to us odious.<sup>19</sup>

From the personalized adoration of Addison in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the personalized dislike of Addison in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Addison is seen as personifying an 18<sup>th</sup> century ethos whose “tone,” in Macauley’s words, “. . . is that of a gentleman, in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.”<sup>20</sup> For C.S. Lewis, the same gentleman is the epitome of “almost everything my own generation ignorantly called Victorian:”

It is all there in the *Spectator* – the vague religious sensibility, the insistence on what came later to be called Good Form, the playful condescension toward women, the untroubled belief in the beneficence of commerce, the comfortable sense of security which, far from excluding, perhaps renders possible the romantic relish for wildness and solitude. If he is not at present the most hated of our writers, it can only be because he is so little read. Everything the moderns detest, all that they call *smugness*, *complacency*, and *bourgeois ideology*, is brought together in his work and given its most perfect expression.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time “moderns” were distancing themselves from Addison’s now musty

image, historians of ideas were, aided by the increasingly felt distance between Addison's time and their own, beginning to see Addison's work as an important landmark in the development of certain conceptual currents: aesthetics, literary criticism, and stylistics. While the technical, academic orientation of such scholarship reduces Addison's scope somewhat, it also ratchets down any personal investment in Addison's virtue. These scholars all find much to celebrate in Addison, but not as a culture hero or villain. Rather, Addison's location at the cusp of the historical shift to the Enlightenment allows them to see the Western conceptual apparatus shift through his work. This is done by abstracting theories from Addison's writings that fit into a grand narrative of the historical movement of ideas.

For Samuel H. Monk, "Addison's papers, though necessarily superficial, are nonetheless of importance by virtue of their being the first effort in the century to build up a real aesthetic."<sup>22</sup> This is a common move among Addison's commentators, asserting Addison's mediocrity as a confirmation of his "representative" identity as a product of his age. Addison, despite his own superficiality, in separating the aesthetic category of "the sublime" from "the beautiful" for the first time, clears the way for the Kantian sublime to overcome the Longinian sense of that term (this despite the fact that Addison was highly influenced by Longinus). Lee Andrew Elioseff seeks the "sources of modern literary criticism" through a study of the cultural conditions that gave rise to Addison's criticism of poetry and drama, avoiding the more socially orientated writings altogether. "The problems raised by many of Addison's essays," Elioseff opines, "are those of a distinctly 'modern' psychological critic whose immediate concern is with the effect of literature upon its audience . . . insofar as this interest remains unsubordinated to the consideration of art as moral discourse, imitation of nature, or formal structure."<sup>23</sup> Elioseff, like

Monk, abstracts out one aspect of Addison's work in order to retroactively insert him into a narrative of the triumphant rise of the modern critical apparatus. Jan Lannerling concerns himself not with Addison's anticipation of later trends but with his modifications of earlier ones with regard to prose style. Lannerling's thesis is that Addison's work represents a shift away from the obscure "baroque" style of early modernity to a more transparent "Augustan" style; this he supports though a statistical analysis of Addison's usage of redundant pleonasms.<sup>24</sup>

The late fifties and sixties brought two major statements upon the far-reaching political, social and cultural impact of the Enlightenment: one positive, one negative. While Jürgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation* depicts the ironic rise of an emancipatory universalism from the "ideological fiction" of the bourgeois public sphere, Michel Foucault, in a series of works starting with *The Birth of the Clinic* and continuing on through *The Order of Things*, *Discipline and Punish*, and other key works, sees the Enlightenment as giving rise to a visually administered regime of surveillance and control.<sup>25</sup> The widely conflicting influence of these differing accounts of the project of modernity upon the reception of Addison's work takes us up to the turn of the century.

While Habermas is not directly cited in Scott A. & Lillian D. Bloom's celebratory *Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal: In the Marketplace, On the Huskings, In the Pulpit*, their examination resonates to a considerable degree with his positive view, lauding Addison's contribution to the civilizing process of "sociability" and lauding him as "a man of integrity who more often than not allows social altruism to supercede self-interest . . . [and] a man of political probity who usually permits liberal idealism to override party demands and the lure of high office."<sup>26</sup> Once again Addison appears a precursor to Kant, only this time in his ethics, not his

aesthetics. In a more direct linkage of Addison with a progressive political legacy, Terry Eagleton's *The Function of Criticism* uses Addison's engagement with the wider world as a model of socially aware criticism. As aware as Habermas of the ideological nature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century's self-understanding, Eagleton similarly points to the imaginary potentials located therein and speaks about a decline from Addison's "cultural criticism" into the over-professionalism that marks 20<sup>th</sup> century "literary" criticism:

The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* are consciously educating a socially heterogeneous public into the universal forms of reason, taste and morality, but their judgments are not to be whimsically authoritarian, the diktats of a technocratic caste. On the contrary, they must be molded and constrained from within the very public consensus they seek to nurture . . .

If, like the silent Mr. Spectator, the critic stands a little apart from the bustle of the metropolis, this is no mark of alienation: it is only so as the more keenly to observe, and so the more efficiently to report what he learns of that world to its more preoccupied participants, Valid critical judgment is the fruit not of spiritual dissociation but of an energetic collusion with everyday life. It is in intimate empirical engagement with the social text of early bourgeois England that modern criticism first makes its appearance.<sup>27</sup>

Despite Eagleton's view that Addison works were not "whimsically authoritarian, the diktats of a technocratic caste," this seems precisely to be the view of those who read Addison along Foucaultian lines. "Mr. Spectator," writes Scott Paul Gordon, "seems to anticipate

precisely the “Eye of Power,” the voyeuristic gaze which disciplines subjects by observing them . . . [the figure] pursues his ‘Work of Reformation’ not, as one might think from the critical traditions surrounding the “gentle” Spectator, through politics and debate in an inclusive public sphere, but rather through the threat of public exposure . . . the new orthodoxy of aggressive spectators and passive spectacles can easily accommodate Mr. Spectator as a “father” of surveillance technology.”<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, for Erin Mackie, Addison’s writings on taste, particularly on fashion, are

. . . characteristic of the large historical shift from absolutist to hegemonic modes of sociopolitical control. Hegemonic power governs through the individual internalization of normative standards which are increasingly embodied not so much in formal legislation but in modes of style, taste, manners, sentiments, and affectations – those “protocols of style and decorum” . . .

Most important, these modes and attitudes are instituted not through coercion but through persuasion; they are understood to be freely adopted or declined by each individual. People revise their behavior and lifestyles not under the duress of sumptuary laws or formal edict – religious or secular – but propelled by desires felt as individual and personal, truly one’s own. Such wants and satisfactions go far to constitute the deepest sense of self. Successful incorporation into the bourgeois social order involves not a person’s subjugations of his own will to that of the “law” but the absence of any distance between that will and the “law.”<sup>29</sup>

Gordon and Mackie both seek resistance to Mr. Spectator's hegemonic panopticism not in broad-based emancipatory politics but through performative revolt. Gordon speaks of the Spectator's need to hide himself from the 'aggressive spectacle', the deliberately self-fashioned character who repels the Spectator's depth hermeneutics of suspicion, whose "innocent appearance, designed to prevent skeptical investigation, is tailored to predict and use the desires of potential victims" such as the Spectator.<sup>30</sup> By manipulating the social text in such a way that resists the Spectator's interpretive abilities, one can lay a trap. As resistance to the *Spectator's* disciplining of fashion discourse, Mackie endorses Michael Warner's characterization of consumption as a "'counterutopia' that exists in a kind of complementary relationship with the public sphere, offering an arena for the representation of just those particularities and differences jettisoned by the bourgeois public sphere's ideology of the subject."<sup>31</sup>

The most recent Addisonian literature from the new century seems to signal a desire to move away from the high-spirited, free-flung polemics of recent debates. Scott Black complains that the shift in viewing Addison from "prophet" to "ideologue" of the bourgeoisie simply represents a reversal of earlier critical narratives, and additionally that critics who make points by uncovering hidden ideology "believe their critical assumptions by suggesting a pathos of discovery that could only mean something if there was a discourse somehow not "ideological."<sup>32</sup> William Walker argues that the simple equation of Addison's work with "bourgeois ideology" is untenable. Walker suggests a more modest ideological characterization of Addison's work as "Whig" instead of bourgeois. For his part, Black makes welcome forays into an investigation of the relationship between "social" and "literary form," although his work is mainly content to assert a sympathetic isomorphism between the two, rather than to investigate of how the two

might interact in a more concrete and/or contradictory manner. It is this stage of the critical debate, then, that the current work takes things up.

### 1c. *Plan of the Work*

Addison's writing stands astride the rather large shifts in rhetorical culture that occurred in the early modern era. In order to fully appreciate Addison's importance, it will be necessary to place his work in a dialogue with those who came before and after him. In Chapter Two, I will investigate how Addison became the exemplar of an "Augustan Style" that came to replace the baroque "Senecan amble" of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and would inspire the "New Rhetoric" of the Scottish Enlightenment. Addison, in opposing the "Gothic" style of his day, championed the perspicacious style of Golden Age Latinity in the hope of promoting the social cohesion that he and others saw in Rome under Octavian. Chapter Three examines Addison's place at the beginning of the Enlightenment discourse on aesthetic judgment, one that would be given its fullest expression in Kant's third *Critique*. Addison's identification of the realm of the imagination as a "habitat" for spectatorial disinterest will be put into a constructive dialogue with contemporary debates in rhetorical theory about the public utility of the epideictic genre. Finally, in Chapter Four, we will examine how Addisonian allegory promoted the emergence of what Charles Taylor has identified as the "modern social imaginaries" of market, public and state. Addison's work is seen as promoting the forms of "stranger sociality" that Michael Warner sees as essential to modern forms of publicness. Chapter Five will conclude by considering what perspectives on the public sphere we have gained from the renewed consideration of modernist

rhetoric that this work proposes, and will tackle the question of how we should evaluate Addison's contributions to the rhetorical tradition.

## CHAPTER TWO: ADDISON AND AUGUSTAN STYLE

### *2a: Addison Between the “Immutable” and the “Occasional”*

There is a well-known anecdote about Addison that pictures him reading a copy of Montaigne's *Essays* with much irritation and fidgeting. Finally he throws the book aside.

"Well," asks a companion, "what think you of the famous French author?"

"That a pair of manacles or a stone doublet would probably have been of some service to the author's infirmity."

"How, sir! What, imprison a man for a singularity in writing?"

"Why, let me tell you sir, if he were a horse he would have been pounded for straying; and why he should be any more favored because he's a man, I cannot understand."<sup>33</sup>

In this anecdote, we see the Joseph Addison who devoted his critical powers to fighting obscure prose and who was celebrated throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century for the perspicacity and "techniques of clarity" exhibited in his writings.<sup>34</sup> Yet in *Spectator* no. 476, he acknowledges Montaigne as a primary influence, along with Seneca, at least in those sorts of writings that he calls "essays":

Among my Daily-Papers, which I bestow upon the Publick, there are some which are written with Regularity and Method, and others that run out into the Wildness of those Compositions, which go by the Name of *Essays*. As for the first, I have the whole Scheme of the Discourse in my Mind, before I set Pen to Paper. In the other kind of

Writing, it is sufficient that I have several Thoughts on a Subject, without troubling myself to range them in such order, that they may seem to grow out of one another, and be disposed under their proper Heads. *Seneca* and *Montaigne* are Patterns for Writing in this last Kind, as *Tully* and *Aristotle* excel in the other.<sup>35</sup>

Addison devises an elegant metaphor to illustrate the difference between these two modes of writing:

When I read an Author of Genius, who writes without Method, I fancy myself in a Wood that abounds with a great many noble Objects, rising among one another in the greatest Confusion and Disorder. When I read a Methodical Discourse, I am in a regular Plantation, and can place myself in its several Centers, so as to take a view of all Lines and Walks that are struck from them.<sup>36</sup>

Addison's main intent in No. 476 is to extol method at the expense of genius. "I, who hear a Thousand Coffee-House Debates every Day, am very sensible of this want of Method . . . The Man who does not know how to methodize his Thoughts has . . . a barren *Superfluity of Words*. The Fruit is lost amongst the Exuberance of Leaves."<sup>37</sup> He creates a figure, Tom Puzzle, free-thinker, radical, atheist, and "one of the most Eminent Immethodical Disputants" to represent "those Schools of Politicks" whose "Disputants put me in mind of the Skuttle Fish, that when he is unable to extricate himself, blackens all the Water about him, till he becomes invisible."<sup>38</sup> Tom "has got about half a Dozen common-place Topicks into which he never fails

to turn the Conversation” although he seems particularly to harp on “the Unreasonableness of Bigottry and Priestcraft.” Puzzle’s nemesis, Will Dry, manages to constantly derail this modern sophist by nothing more than “desiring him to tell the Company, what it was that he endeavored to prove. In short, *Dry* is a Man of a clear methodical Head, but few Words, and gains the same Advantages over *Puzzle*, that a small Body of regular Troops would gain over a numberless undisciplined Militia.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite this *Gorgias* in miniature, the fact remains that Addison admits that he writes essays, that he on occasion is like the “Men of great Learning or Genius, who are often too full to be exact, and therefore chuse to throw down their Pearls in Heaps before the Reader, rather than be at the Pains of stringing them.” Clarification of this apparent discrepancy can be found earlier, in No. 435, when he makes a similar distinction:

Most of the Papers I give the Publick are written on Subjects that never vary, but are for ever fixt and immutable. Of this kind are all my more Serious Essays and Discourses; but there is another sort of Speculations, which I consider as Occasional Papers, that take their Rise from the Folly, Extravagance, and Caprice of the present Age. For I look upon my self as one set to watch the Manners and Behavior of my Counterpartmen and Contemporaries, and to mark down every absurd Fashion, ridiculous Custom, or affected Form of Speech that makes its Appearance in the World, during the course of these my Speculations.<sup>40</sup>

Here, to add somewhat to the confusion, Addison defines “Serious Essays and

Discourses” as those written on “Subjects . . . for ever fixt and immutable.” These match up clearly with the “Regularity and Method” and the writings influenced by Cicero and Aristotle. The “Occasional Papers that take their Rise from the Folly, Extravagance and Caprice of the present Age” would seem to justify Addison’s later admission of writing “essays” in the style of Seneca and Montaigne. They are meant, as if by homeopathic intent, to model the ephemerality of their subjects. “By this Means I have so effectively quashed those Irregularities which gave Occasion to ‘em, that I am afraid Posterity . . . will be apt to think that the Fashions and Customs I attacked, were some Fantastick Conceits of my own.”<sup>41</sup>

In here making a distinction between the “immutable” and the “occasional”, and in later making a distinction between “method” and “genius,” Addison contrasts two strategies of essay writing, the didactic yet popular “Serious Essays” through which he aspired to “have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses”<sup>42</sup>, and the Senecan and Montaignian *essai* or “trial,” a textual rambling in a dark wood of ‘noble’ objects with the possibility to “every moment discover something or other that is new to you.”<sup>43</sup> While each strategy produces quite different effects, they share one important thing in common; they are understood not as elements of style, but as pretextual elements of thought’s encounter with an external world.

As the contents of mind can only be communicated to other minds through language, the traces of mind are to be found in style, but the purpose of style itself is to exhibit the products of mind so they can be experienced as clearly as possible. In his evocation of “Method,” Addison adopts the Ramist strategy of carefully using of metaphor to communicate logical principles.

Addison's explication of "method" via the image of the plantation is in a sense meta-communicative, for it uses a pleasantly apt, clear image to describe a mental process that can be described most accurately through the evocation of pleasantly apt and clearly illustrative images. Such images have the advantage of being as "fixt and immutable" as the precise products of Method that inspire them, and many of Addison's most famous works utilize exactly such precise, elaborate images that lack more heterogeneous and mundane observational detail. Yet often in Addison's work he is compelled to leave the contemplative plantation of method to return to the woods of disorder, confusion and fashion, and the result is "a destabilizing resemblance between the object of criticism - the vain, illusive fetishes of fashion and commodity - and the very forms this criticism takes."<sup>44</sup> By the very loving detail with which he describes these ephemera, Addison in his Montaignian mode embodies an essential aesthetic principle of modernity, the taking of pleasure in the uncommon or novel.<sup>45</sup>

Addison's images of the garden and the forest illustrate a central tenet of modernist rhetoric; the assumption of the ideal *transparency* of rhetorical texts, an assumption of which has remained a problematic in recent methodological debates within rhetorical studies. Addison's writings entice the rhetorical critic to make such an assumption because they suggest an instance "in which the object of interpretation loses all of its recalcitrance and becomes transparent. Such is the dream of interpretation, and we have been seduced by that dream."<sup>46</sup> The clarity of Addison's style is such that we imagine we are seeing Addison's creativity, the response of the reader, or early British culture as the case may be, in a perfectly unmediated manner. At the same time, Addison's critical work enjoins us to reject textual elements that distract us from the representational character of his writing. Anything in writing that counts as ornamentation

(Addison's *bete noire* in this regard is the acrostic form in poetry) is to be rejected as opposed to good, common sense, the common sense that is prior to textualization and must be transmitted by text in an undistorted fashion.

*2b. The rhetorical tradition in conflict: centrifugal and centripetal rhetoric*

To understand what Addison was reacting against as he came to epitomize these stylistic standards, it is necessary to throw oneself into the dark woods of early modern rhetorical history, into the thorny development of what Morris W. Croll has labeled the early modern "baroque style."<sup>47</sup> Its history, like the style itself, "abounds with a great many noble Objects, rising among one another in the greatest Confusion and Disorder." We find our first marker of such a confusion when Addison aligns himself with Cicero, Aristotle and "method" in *Spectator* no. 476, as there is hidden in this apparently banal statement complex shifts in the way the West has come to conceptualize textual production. The paring of Aristotle and Cicero on the side of method is the most curious detail, for this ignores a conceptual struggle in early modern rhetoric that can be summed up loosely as the rise of an Aristotelian account of rhetoric at the expense of a Ciceronian one, a process effected by and large under the banner of "method." Cicero's unusual status here as a writer of "method" does not so much signify ignorance on Addison's part of this history as much as it does the marginalization of Cicero as a rhetorical thinker in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Let us consider Addison's description of "method," which focuses on arranging thoughts according to a scheme that is firstly separate from the actual act of expression, and secondly conceived as a visual process:

For the first [i.e. Method], I have the whole Scheme of the Discourse in my Mind, before I set Pen to Paper . . . [this] is of Advantage to a Work, both in respect to the Writer and the Reader. In regards to the first, it is a great help to his Invention. When a Man has plann'd his Discourse, he finds a great many Thoughts rising out of every Head, that do not offer themselves upon the general Survey of a Subject. His Thoughts are at the same time more intelligible, and better discover their Drift and Meaning, when they are placed in their proper Lights, and follow one another in a regular Series, then when they are thrown together without Order and Connexion. There is always an Obscurity in Confusion, and the same Sentence that wou'd have enlightened the Reader in one Part of the Discourse, perplexes him in another. For the same Reason likewise every Thought in a Methodical Discourse shews itself in its greatest Beauty, as the several Figures in a piece of Painting receive new Grace from their Disposition in the picture. The Advantages of a Reader from a Methodical Discourse, are correspondent with those of the Writer. He comprehends every thing easily, takes it in with Pleasure, and retains it long.<sup>48</sup>

Invention and Disposition are the first two canons in the complete and holistic traditional conception of rhetorical production that is given perhaps its most skillful presentation in Cicero's *De Inventione*.<sup>49</sup> That process proceeds from these first two canons through the way stations of Style, Memory, and finally to Action. But these other three canons are nowhere to be found in this issue, and nowhere is Cicero cited in connection with the terminology. The only extensive

treatment of Cicero as a rhetorician in the *Spectator* comes in no. 541, in an essay written not by Addison but by John Hughes in the character of “the Templar,” a humorously antiquarian member of the *Spectator*’s club introduced in *Spectator* #2 (“*Aristotle* and *Longinus* are much better understood by him then [contemporary jurists] *Littleton* and *Cooke*. . . . He knows the Argument of each of the Orations of *Demosthenes* and *Tully*, but not one Case in the Reports of our own Courts”).<sup>50</sup> The discussion of Cicero by Hughes focuses entirely on “Pronunciation and Action,” completely isolating the physical and performative aspects of the art as separable from the art of invention or arrangement.<sup>51</sup>

What these two Ciceros, Addison’s Cicero of “Method” and John Hughes’ Cicero of “Pronunciation,” clearly reflect is the impact of Peter Ramus’s Solomonic division of the five traditional canons of rhetoric between dialectic and rhetoric in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a division whose influence upon English rhetoric during the 17<sup>th</sup> century has been exhaustively documented.<sup>52</sup> Ramism was a revolutionary doctrine, but it can also be understood as perhaps the most austere expression of one half of a theoretical divide Thomas Conley identifies in *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* running through the rhetorical tradition like red and blue thread; the divide between what he terms “centrifugal” and “centripetal” conceptions of the process of argument formation:

The centripetal concept emphasizes the kernel unit that is explicated by the *argumentatio* and the validity of the argument . . . for Aristotle, the “argument” of a speech is its underlying enthymeme, “a sort of syllogism.” Cicero’s emphasis . . . is on eloquence, “wisdom speaking copiously” – hence the centrifugal quality of Ciceronian

argumentation. The “argument” of a speech is to be found not in any underlying scheme but precisely in the development of *loci*, their amplification, and the graceful connections made in it among the particulars of the case.<sup>53</sup>

This distinction between inventional processes turns largely on the status of thought; either thought is one part of a continuum of textualization, or thought is a “mirror of nature”, a literally *reflective* conception of thought as spectatorship that subsequently sets the adventure of communication in motion in hope of sharing this reflection with others in as pristine a form as possible. In the centrifugal conception, conversely, the distinction between private thought and public expression is one of degree, not kind. Rather than the translation of private reflection (“thought”) into a communicative form (“text”), a simple distinction is made between speaking to oneself and speaking to others.

Isocrates, in what may be considered a programmatic statement for the centrifugal conception of rhetoric, states that “the same arguments we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts.”<sup>54</sup> Rather than conceiving of the rhetor as a private reflector who crafts a message designed to publicly represent subjective thought, the rhetor is conceived as a participator in discourse who chooses to allow a wider public to listen in to one’s thoughts. Aristotle takes the opposite position; it is the reformulation of thought in the form of the enthymeme that marks the translation of dialectic into rhetoric. This in turn suggests differing approaches to understanding the rhetorical process, either as primarily an *epistemological* one (Aristotle: how successfully is the content of reflection encoded in the popular message?) or as an *ethical* one (Cicero/Isocrates: when and under what

circumstances should language become public?). For centripetal rhetoric the question of representation predominates; for centrifugal rhetoric, the questions of *kairos*, decorum, and civic action take the lead.

The outward movement of the centrifugal conception, exemplified by Isocrates, Cicero and thier followers in the Italian Renaissance, sees rhetorical invention as a public action that is actualized through the completion of the act of expression. Cicero's orations carry the listener along on a journey where the copious use of figuration and the vehemence of the performative style are as much the point as the basic premise (e.g. "Cataline must be stopped"). Such an approach is epitomized in the complete doctrine of the five canons of rhetoric: invention, disposition, style, memory and delivery take the orator through the entire sequence of message conception, development and delivery. Although invention is given the honor of being the first in the sequence, the process amplifies the original "kernel" of argument in an outward direction to arrive at the ultimate point of delivery, particularly *public* delivery to a wide audience through the medium of sound; hence, centrifugal rhetoric is a force which spirals out from a center and into the public realm.

This centrifugal process of Ciceronian rhetoric, if left uncompleted, is barren from a *civic* standpoint.<sup>55</sup> This is not to deny that some thoughts are not meant to be shared, or that the sharing of "philosophical" thoughts is often beside the point. There is a clear difference between the language of Cicero's orations, Cicero's philosophical texts, and Cicero's letters, but they can all be understood as legitimate manifestations of Cicero's republican style, manifestations that happen to address themselves to popular, technical, and intimate audiences.<sup>56</sup> The gap between thought and expression in the centrifugal conception of rhetoric is therefore not a foundational

*aporia* but an ethical imperative, one arising when circumstances force one to mediate prudentially between the private rewards of contemplation and the civic necessity of sharing ones' insights with the multitude. Cicero's introduction to *De Oratore* can be seen as a meditation on the *situational* differences between philosophy and rhetoric, the *substantive* differences between them being denied later in the dialogue itself. In the introduction to Book I, Cicero speaks of his dashed expectations for a contemplative life:

I used to imagine that I too should become entitled . . . to some opportunity of leisure and of again directing my mind to the sublime pursuits beloved of us both, when once, the career of office complete and life too taking a turn towards its close, the endless toil of public speaking and the business of canvassing should have come to a standstill. The hopes so born of my thoughts and plans have been cheated, alike by the disastrous times of public peril and by my manifold personal misfortunes.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that rhetoric, by placing thought into public circulation, involves risk is elaborated further by contrasting acting and oratory. An actor portraying poor judgment is celebrated for his fine portrayal of folly, "but if a defect is observed in an orator, it is immediately imputed to dullness."<sup>58</sup> Rhetoric offers to ability to create change on a massive scale, but this can also boomerang on the reputation of the rhetor with a harsh echo; hence the ethical dilemma of entering into the public arena, the great rewards and pitfalls of letting the multitude eavesdrop on ones' thoughts. This situational distinction based upon the question of specialized vs. popular audiences reflects the iconic commonplace, known since Zeno, of the

closed fist of dialectic vs. the open hand of rhetoric. Such a distinction between closed and open hands can be easily converted to an analogy of closed and open systems: dialectic is a closed system that operates based upon internal principles, while rhetorical invention, in necessarily responding to other rhetorical performances, is not a simple movement from invention to performance but is rather a feedback loop. Rhetoricians have the burden, in other words, in responding to whatever sound or unsound arguments have entered public knowledge (including those that say what Cicero fears, that the orator is an idiot), while dialecticians can simply ignore claims that do not meet their internal criteria.

The centrifugal conception of rhetoric receives perhaps its highest appreciation in the early Italian Renaissance. Petrarch, writing in the mid-14th century, and Stephano Guazzo, writing late in the 16th, mark the rough edges of a period in early modernism that saw thought and speech as a continuum, and saw the relation between a philosophy that circulated thought in limited, contemplative circles and an eloquence that circulated thought in public and civic circles as prudential, not foundational; humanists like Leonardo Bruni, Coluccio Salutati and Petrarch himself moved easily between one role and another depending upon circumstance.<sup>59</sup> Petrarch, who was essential in making the Ciceronian model a central component of Italian Humanism, underlined the reciprocity between thought and speech. "Each depends upon the other, but while one remains in one's breast, the other emerges out into the open." The openness of speech, the public sharing of thought, is thus mandated by the principle of "charity toward our fellow man."<sup>60</sup> Stephano Guazzo, writing in 1574, elaborates the point that "nature herself has given man the power of speech. But certainly not in order that he converse with himself . . . rather as a means of communication with others . . . a means by which men can come together and love

each other."<sup>61</sup>

The story of the holistic, centrifugal, Ciceronian/Isocratean conception of rhetoric is the heroic picture of rhetoric that has continued to embolden its champions to the present day. This is rhetoric as it was and as it should be, and it continues to be the assumed model of those who recommend a healthy rhetorical culture as the cure to society's ills. But if we accept the splendor of this model of rhetoric, we must also accept the misery that comes with it, for this dream of rhetoric is constantly under attack, on the run, driven underground. The further back one reaches to find the golden age of a complete and uncompromised rhetoric, the further it appears to recede.

If we consider the splendor of an uncompromised rhetoric such as the one we have just sketched out, one that sees content and style as way stations on a seamless course of message production, the sight of rhetorical misery must be located in the gap between content and style, between *res* and *verba*. In the centrifugal conception of rhetoric the fact that thought and expression are different would not be considered to be of much consequence. The suspicion of betrayal of *res* by *verba* marks the presence of the centripetal. Like many before, Tzvetan Todorov has laid much of the blame for this split on the Second Sophistic, for its legacy both in theory (Quintillian) and in practice (Tacitus). But the "first great crisis of rhetoric" that Todorov recounts can be placed really anywhere that rhetoric as a definable discipline is located. Once rhetoric as an activity can be isolated, it is always possible to marginalize it conceptually by conceiving of something that is stronger. With Plato and Aristotle, we can find two figures at the beginning of Western thought who conceive of rhetoric as the servant of a foundational truth, as a necessary yet mischievous and inconstant *verba* meant to serve a non-verbal *res*.<sup>62</sup>

To the extent that the enveloping inclusiveness of centrifugal rhetoric suggests the faculty of hearing, then centripetal rhetoric suggests the need for shared vision, of placing the audience in a position where it can view the truth beheld by the mind's eye of the rhetor in as clear a form as possible. Rather than a sonic rippling effect outward that booms and bends even as it becomes more and more impressive, we might consider instead the image of starlight moving through a vacuum. For Plato, the exemplary centripetal theorist, rhetoric (if it is an art at all) is the art of creating images that can vividly represent that which cannot be represented: the realm of pure ideas. The images of the white and black winged horses, of the soul as a sieve, of the human race living in a cave mesmerized by shadowy illusions, are as elegant and symmetrical as the eidetic concepts they illustrate. The images properly reflect these concepts, and not the debased world of human perception that they strive to replace.

Aristotle's own relationship with style is much more complex, and the bicameral nature of the *Rhetoric*, with the discussion of style neatly cordoned off in Book Three, suggests that for him the apprehension of the rhetorical situation and its textualization are distinct processes. To the extent that he does deal with style, especially in those areas of the text where he confronts Isocrates as the supreme stylist of his day, Aristotle denounces language usage that calls attention to itself, usage that strictly violates what Aristotle defines as "the *arête* of prose style and civic oratory . . . clarity."<sup>63</sup> Permissible elements of style include the uses of amplification, metaphor, the bringing before the eyes of action (*enargeia*), and what Kennedy translates as "urbanities" and Dufour and Wartelle as *bons mots*: *asteia* and *eudokimounta*. For Aristotle these techniques are strategies for expressing emotion or keeping the attention of the audience, their primary function being to "create quick learning in the our minds."<sup>64</sup> In other words, style must

serve the enthymeme, the non linguistic element that Aristotle claims as his primary contribution to rhetoric.<sup>65</sup>

For Aristotle, it is this sensual realm of common "appearances" that must be worked through in performing the rhetorical task of adjusting ideational content to popular audiences. Therefore, when appealing to popular audiences Aristotle's solution (not only in his *Rhetoric* but also in his other works) is to recommend an appeal to the contingencies of sense perception that popular audiences share.<sup>66</sup> Aristotle's concept of style strives to hide its artistry by valuing clarity, brevity, and appropriateness above rhythm, cadence and form.<sup>67</sup> The aim is to deal with "the appearances" in as transparent a way as possible in order to create a shared sense of vision where the perceptions of the auditors can approximate those of the rhetor, ideally in a way that transcends the momentary imposition of the need for expression at all. This desire to evoke a visualization of mental content without loss of sharpness and density (as one might digitally say, with no drop in pixel count) can be considered the essential aim of a centripetal conception of rhetoric.

With Plato and Aristotle, we see two primary examples of a centripetal rhetoric whose eloquence is visual, not aural as in the Ciceronian model. Despite the critical comments of both thinkers with regard to rhetoric, both Plato and Aristotle accept the necessity of using arts of expression to distribute content to mass audiences, provided that the distributive process is as transparent as possible; this transparency is secured by adherence to a visual eloquence, to the ability to subsume a multitude of perspectives within a higher specular order, decisively through the rhetorical strategy of perspicacity. But one cannot overlook the fact that, despite their eventual interest in the need to disseminate content to a wide audience, the process of

communication is for both Plato and Aristotle necessarily separate from thought itself.

Todorov, again, locates the ultimate institutionalization of this split in the Second Sophistic, a moment of significant temporal importance both in terms of politics and literature.<sup>68</sup> Politically, the Second Sophistic coincides with a shift away from the ideal of the republic, whether be it the strong republic of Cicero or its simulated afterlife in the age of Augustus, marking instead a sharp turn towards outright tyranny. On the literary front it is the “Silver Age” of Latinity, which means whatever merits it might have, the overriding mark of literature from this era will be its inferiority to the Golden Age that came before it. The space necessary for a robust, holistic rhetoric is thus doubly removed in both space and time; the power to transform ideas into deeds is isolated from the general population within a small, hidden elite, and the literary models of transformative eloquence are only to be found in the increasingly antique texts of an earlier era. The separation of *res* and *verba* is strongly associated with these dual moments, where political liberty fails and the rhetorical texts are calcified through canonization. As a result, writes Todorov, rhetoric devolves into a “festival of language”<sup>69</sup> completely divorced from what it was meant to be: language used pragmatically.

### *2c. Centripetal Rhetoric in the Early Modern Era: Method and Genius*

The southern humanists who rediscovered Ciceronian eloquence in the early modern period hoped to rejoin *res* and *verba*. The strict imitation of Ciceronian eloquence that would be so consistently (and successfully) attacked as the modern period goes on has in it a little piece of

longing for something that was lost, a trace of the old liberty lost with the decline of the republic. It is a spirit however conceived to exist mostly in the texts themselves, not necessarily in public life. Because the *res publica* could only be found in the Golden Age *verba*, the insistence on the purity of Latin found in Cicero's language often became a substitute for the republic itself, particularly after the political crises and retrenchments of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Following the political failings of the more utopian humanists of the southern renaissance, their influence would eventually be checked and even at times eclipsed by another strain of humanist who gravitated not to the holism of the original Cicero but to the centripetal tendencies of Plato and Aristotle.

It is well known how the modernist rejection of rhetoric constantly turns to Plato's authority; what is surprising is how often Aristotle's authority is evoked as well. Here is Peter Ramus: "all the tropes and figures of style, all the graces of delivery, which constitute rhetoric as a whole, truly and distinct from dialectic, serve no other purpose but to lead the vexatious and mulish auditor . . . These have always been studied on no other account than that of the failings and perversities of the audience, as Aristotle himself taught."<sup>70</sup> This is just a typical example of the curious phenomenon in the 16th century of Aristotle being quoted (or paraphrased in a distorted manner, as above) as a critic and not as a defender of rhetoric, on the authority of a work entitled *On Rhetoric*.

The turn to Plato and Aristotle by some in the 16<sup>th</sup> century shows the two paths that centripetal rhetoric took in the early modern era, paths which were able to lay themselves at the feet of Addison in a way that the holism of the centrifugal tradition would never quite manage to accomplish. It is clear from his writings that they came to Addison with a distorted paternity.

One path, the way of “method” associated by Addison with Cicero and Aristotle, can be confidently associated with a preference for Plato. But unbeknownst to Addison, the source of the other path, the path of wildness and genius, was not simply Montaigne or Seneca, but in an odd way Aristotle himself, and even Cicero in a sense, for we can trace through the Montaignian essay a strain of the 16<sup>th</sup> century discourse on “prudence” that was advanced in part on both their authorities, although to ends quite alien to their source. In fact, despite the modern need to joust with names of the past, the greater part of the tradition that Addison spars with in *Spectator* # 476 involves two names from the 16<sup>th</sup> century that he does not mention, names that we have not discussed at any length. These names are Peter Ramus and Marc-Antoine Muret.

When Peter Ramus looked at the pedagogical systems of the southern humanists from his vantage point in 16<sup>th</sup> century Paris, his gaze was scornful. His own educational system, he boasted, would serve "the cultivation of the mind alone, not the cultivation of mind and body after the manner of the Italians."<sup>71</sup> Ramus's disciplinary philosophy, determined to banish redundancies in the liberal arts, strove to deny to rhetoric the ability to generate its own content through the canons of invention or arrangement. For centuries, dialectic and rhetoric had existed on separate but parallel pedagogical tracks, with invention and disposition taught in both areas; dialectic stopped at the consideration of style and delivery, while rhetoric instruction continued on to such matters. This overlap in teaching invention and disposition twice to students, once in dialectic and once in rhetoric, was intolerable to Ramus. A strict division between disciplines would allow each to be properly objectified and ordered internally; mental operations in dialectic, physical operations in rhetoric. Ramus, by all accounts an accomplished orator himself, is scrupulous in crediting method and "logic", not eloquence or performance, with inspiring his

success.<sup>72</sup> Ramus the centripetal, spectatorial conception of rhetoric, in which the purpose of textuality and performance is to be transparent, to beckon us through the distortions of mere appearance to the original conception of the mind, a conception which is to be considered visual, not textual, in nature.

For Walter J. Ong, Ramus marks a decisive shift in the perceptual ecology of the West from an aural to a visual bias, “a drive toward thinking not only of the universe but of thought itself in terms of spatial models apprehended by sight. . . . Dialogue itself will drop more than ever out of dialectic. Persons, who alone speak . . . will be eclipsed insofar as the world is thought of as an assemblage of the sort of things which vision apprehends – objects or surfaces.”<sup>73</sup> This depiction of Ramus as an absolute dividing line between two incommensurable epistemological cultures has been successfully challenged: most of those aspects of Ramus's work that Ong identifies as paradigmatically visual, like the use of diagrams and even the spatial metaphor of “topics”, are of course of much older vintage than Ong gives them proper credit for.<sup>74</sup> But a recovery of a centripetal conception of rhetoric, plus the influence of contemporary social, political and cultural factors, does appear to have pushed Ramus to craft a particularly austere and rigorous version of a preexisting axiology of mind over body, thought over speech, and sight over sound. Furthermore, while there may be doubts over whether the invention of movable type actually inspired Ramist doctrine, as Ong strongly suggests, it is certain that the new systems of printing and publication made possible the rapid dissemination and adoption of Ramus's educational system.

Ong sums up the implications for what he sees as the new paradigm of spectatorship that Ramus ushers in:

the attitude towards speech has changed. Speech is no longer a medium in which the human mind and sensibility lives. It is resented, rather, as an accretion to thought, hereupon imagined as ranging noiseless concepts or "ideas" in a silent field of mental space. Here the perfect rhetoric would be to have no rhetoric at all. Thought becomes a private, or even an antisocial enterprise.<sup>75</sup>

Still, even Ramus acknowledges that the lonely dialectician lives in a world, a world that compels the thinker to be a communicator. The centripetal conception that views expression as a source of possible contamination demands from Ramus a completely separate treatment of style, of “pronunciation and action” considered in a technical vacuum, as with the Templar’s Cicero in the *Spectator*. Ramus does retain for dialectic an element besides logical invention, one that is treated by him with a sort of consideration of the eventual destination of ideas in the minds of others, although this destination is stripped of situational considerations. This element is arrangement, the second rhetorical canon, and the actual location of Ramus’ celebrated “method”:

Method is the arrangement of many good arguments. It is twofold, method of teaching and method of prudence. Not that both kinds do not make use of prudence, but rather that the latter has almost no training or art in it, depending on man’s natural judgment and prudence.

The method of teaching, therefore, is the arrangement of various things brought down from universal and general principles to the underlying singular parts, by which arrangement the whole matter can be more easily taught and apprehended. In such method, this alone has to be prescribed; that in teaching the general and universal explanations precede, such as the definition and a kind of general summary; after which follows the special explanation by distribution of the parts; last of all comes the definition of the singular parts and clarification by means of suitable examples.

. . . (N)evertheless one must be cautioned that there is not always place for what is best, and that such clarity of disposition cannot always be maintained, since frequently enough the audience is sluggish, the matter to be explained disagreeable, the time not suitable, the place strange. Hence it is advisable to employ prudence in invention and syllogism when dealing with this difficulty, so to see what is expedient. For over and above the foregoing rule of wisdom, no arrangement of this infinite variety of things common to all persons, questions, places and times can be given . . . Therefore, the summary of the matter, its definition, and the distribution of its parts has to be disguised. . . .

On this account, it will be advisable for one treating of important and complicated matters to attend to these ways of dialectical method, and especially when there is question of teaching serious matters of some sort of moral import to those willing to learn. It seemed so valuable to Plato that he considered it a discovery not of men but of the gods, and decided that he alone on whose teaching this light has shone could really be

said to be eminent as a true philosopher. But if at any time the approach to this route is consciously cultivated according to the rules of art be blocked, then one should make another road for native genius and prudence, and make use of every help which nature, custom, practice, and life provide, since one is deprived of art.<sup>76</sup>

Ramus further elaborates his distinction through two metaphors. For “method of teaching” he evokes a game of *blanque* wherein all the “rules, definitions, and divisions of grammar” that “have been truly and correctly judged” are mixed up and drawn randomly from an urn. “There is no need here of syllogism, because what is true here is already understood. Therefore, method and a sure way of arrangement alone are required” to reproduce proper order.<sup>77</sup> “Method of prudence” is conversely evoked using a stock image that since antiquity has indicated practical as opposed to contemplative wisdom: the ship at sea.<sup>78</sup> “Thus, although one be tossed about in the ocean in a storm, since one cannot hold by the right course, one will change sail, and with the aid of whatever wind is blowing, bring the ship safely to port.”<sup>79</sup> Ramus’ understanding of “prudence,” or adjustment to circumstances, is similar to Plato’s understanding of rhetoric as a “knack”: it is not an art, but a product of “native genius”. It is no surprise that later in Ramus’s work, this distinction is dropped entirely, for it might have complicated the neat separation between mental and physical operations underlying the dialectic/rhetoric split. “Method of prudence” appears to require some felicity in reading situations correctly and reacting appropriately to them, an ability presumably requiring elements such as perception, technical knowledge, and willpower. The protagonist of pure Ramist method, on the other hand, could easily be the man in the Chinese Box thought experiment beloved by AI

specialists, with *blanque chits* replacing pictographs.

With collaborator Talon's *Rhetorica* often published together with Ramus's *Dialecticae* (for example in the Fenner edition), an articulated simulation of the traditional rhetoric was available for study, minus the all-important attention to public knowledge that a “method of prudence” would have represented. Ramus's ideas quickly caught on in Europe, and were introduced to the British Isles in 1574 by Scotsman Roland MacIlmaine. At that time, Thomas Wilson's centrifugal *Art of Rhetorique* was, in the words of Gabriel Harvey, “the daily bread of our common pleaders and discoursers.”<sup>80</sup> But by the end of the century “the collision between Thomas Wilson's theory of dialectic and rhetoric and the Ramist theory as edited and translated by MacIlmaine and his successors resulted in a complete victory for the French invader.”<sup>81</sup> Part of the portability of Ramist doctrine was related to the adaptability of the *res/verba* split to diverse cultural forms, and to its success even when plagiarized; Dudley Fenner's 1588 adaptation, *The Arts of Logike and Rhetorike* did not even mention Ramus and substituted biblical passages for the classical *exempla* of the original.<sup>82</sup> In any case, the more streamlined rhetoric was a pedagogical success, and was doubtless a feature of Addison's early schooling at Charterhouse.

The concept of “method”, with or without the Ramist pedigree, was therefore deeply instilled into Addison's vocabulary and his habit of reading the classics. When Addison explains that his writings on “method” use Aristotle and Cicero as models, what he means by this is that he is imitating their modes of thought, not their means of expression. Ramus's method *per se* focuses not so much on the elements of thought themselves, which were to be derived by logic, but on the procedure of organizing them: “the general and universal explanations precede, such

as the definition and a kind of general summery; after which follows the special explanation by distribution of the parts; last of all comes the definition of the singular parts and clarification by means of suitable examples.” Ramus with the concept of “method” isolates mental ordering as the primary operation that determines the success or failure of a resulting discourse, an approach that Addison explicitly endorses. Ramus’s “method” prescribes appropriate mental operations for explaining something that is “fixt and immutable,” as Addison realized. For one who would imitate Cicero’s metaphysics, who strove to approximate the refined thoughts of a philosopher at rest considering the gods and eternity, such a procedure would be apt.

With expression parceled off into rhetoric, the propagators of Ramist dialectic were faced with the dilemma of disseminating “Method” without diluting its integrity with the distorting influence of rhetoric. The solution found is similar to Plato’s: a turn to allegorical imagery.

"When one picks up a Ramist logic", writes Rosamund Tuve, "one's eye is immediately caught by two striking differences. The book does not begin with a list of the predicaments but embarks immediately upon the Places of Invention. And place after place is illustrated by passages from poems."<sup>83</sup> What Tuve calls “the Ramist's virtual identification of poetry with dialectic,”<sup>84</sup> and the lack of practical engagement with "the predicaments" in the Ramist rhetorical system, combine to give us one strategy for a “rhetoric of no rhetoric of all.” It involves the use of imagery without application to the specific cases beloved by the rhetorical paradigm, imagery without recourse to empirical accuracy or the shared world of appearances that appear in the agora. Hence, *all-egorical* imagery meant to appeal to the thoughtful and mystify the sensual. "On the level of formal excellence, images were expected to please readers looking specifically and with well trained eyes for formal beauty rather than for a faithful description of a section, however

small, of the world of fact."<sup>85</sup> Tuve illustrates her point by citing Spenser's description of the isle of Phaedra in the *Fairy Queen*, II, vi, 13; "No tree, whose braunches did not bravely spring;/no braunch, whereon a fine bird did not sit." The imagist of the time, Tuve suggests, would have rejected sensuous standards of praise such as "rich, concrete, robust, full-blooded" in favor of "apt, pleasing, artificial, lively."<sup>86</sup>

If the images of the Elizabethan and Metaphysical periods are not particularly interested in reproducing sensual experience, then what are they interested in? What is important in allegorical imagery is not accuracy but inner illumination (*Enargeia*) created from the "aptness" of the image to the idea being expressed. The anti-sensualist perspicacity of metaphysical poems and sermons attempt to resolve the conceptual gap in centripetal rhetoric through an imagism that purports to illuminate physical reality without being one with it; image as thought-content survives its encounter with the imperfect world of extension by dominating it, and by giving audiences a glimpse of a world to come where truth is revealed without the intervening distortions of sensual experience. Allegory is, as Angus Fletcher emphasizes, essentially an apocalyptic mode of address, "a revealed transcendental language that tries to preserve the remoteness of a properly veiled godhead," a stylistic "garment" to be torn aside at the end of days.<sup>87</sup>

If it is apocalyptic, it is also iconoclastic. It may seem odd to label such an imagistic genre as allegory iconoclastic, but as Ronald Paulson emphasizes in his book *Breaking and Remaking*, only the purest and most austere of iconoclasms actually aim to destroy images as such. Rather, iconoclasts sought to remove images that appealed to base sensuality ("abused images") and replace them with images mnemonic of a reality beyond sense ("unabused

images”). Allegorical poetry was the most complete form of renewal available in the sense that words could refer the mind to such images rather than incorporating such images themselves. Thus “the essence of English iconoclasm was the substitution – on the walls of churches as well as in books – of words for visual images.”<sup>88</sup> This preference for words, of course, only held to the degree that they pointed to a reality beyond the senses and did not in themselves become sensual artifacts.

From one perspective, the substitution of allegorical texts (ones that provide clues for those initiated in the truths of method) for visual icons (ones that communicate with the masses via the senses) can be seen as a way of limiting access to meaning in an intensely undemocratic time. This is one way of interpreting *al-agera*, literally “outside” the agora. But the existence of 17<sup>th</sup> century iconoclasm as a mass movement suggests another sense of the word that asks the public inside the agora to look outside of its immediate concerns to more lasting, abstract notions. Then, the substitution of textual for plastic images can clearly be seen as a rhetorical program to educate the masses in Ramist abstraction. Allegory can be properly seen as the primary tool of the “method of teaching” that Ramus has sketched.

But what of the “method of prudence” that Ramus recognized at one time? What to do when “the audience is sluggish, the matter to be explained disagreeable, the time not suitable, the place strange”? When one is “deprived of art” and needs to turn instead to “native genius and prudence, and make use of every help which nature, custom, practice, and life provide”? For such a time the humanist tradition proscribed the art of *imitatio*, specifically the imitation of the language of the prudent orator. By learning the language of eloquence, one could approximate the genius of prudence. But post-Ramus, the way imitation was being conceived began to

change. England's most prominent early Ramist, Gabriel Harvey, demonstrates in his *Ciceronianus* how a Ramist approach changes the assessment of Cicero's importance. As Kendrick W. Prewitt comments:

The main point of the *Ciceronianus* can be simply stated: that, where before Harvey adopted the theory and practice of the imitation of Cicero at a superficial and strictly linguistic level, after the order of the Italians, he later could recognize the value of the *Ciceronianuses* of the Northern humanists Johannes Sturm, Johann Thomas Freigius, and Erasmus, as well as that of Ramus (p. 79). These latter treatises, he argues, propounded the idea of imitating not just Cicero's refined prose style, but his wisdom and statesmanship as well (p. 79). Harvey fashions his *Ciceronianus* in turn as a narrative account of his near-religious conversion from a superficial Ciceronianism--imitating Cicero's sentence structure and methods of arrangement--to a deeper and fuller version, a conversion based largely on adopting a fuller notion of *imitatio*. He looks back in self-reproach to having earlier used stylistic affectations and turns of phrase--"elegant phraseology and such flowers of rhetoric" (p. 65)--and to having dismissed Erasmus and his followers out of hand, simply because their Latin was not purely Ciceronian and because they did not imitate Cicero's language and thought as fanatically as he did.<sup>89</sup>

The "fuller notion of *imitatio*" that Harvey and other thinkers adopted attempts to see past the product, past the actual textual production of Cicero, directly to the thought processes that inspired them. The distinction between Cicero the virtuous Stoic thinker and Cicero the

overheated stylist starts here in the Northern Humanist works to which Harvey is reacting to: the Ciceronianuses. The appearance of these works denouncing the language of Cicero, or denouncing the stylistic imitation of the same, in the early-to-mid 16<sup>th</sup> century hardly seems coincidental. They are best seen as part of a moment that also includes Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, negative salvos in a shift to what Robert Hariman has described as a transparent "realist style," a strategy of "artfully professing artlessness."<sup>90</sup>

Although Victoria Kahn has argued that the move from "Southern Humanism" and Academic skepticism to "Northern Humanism" and Pyrrhonist skepticism are behind a growing distrust of rhetoric's ability to persuade popular audiences, she also holds that "Machiavelli and Castiglione represent two versions of the disintegration" of the Quattrocentro's synthesis of prudence, Academic skepticism, and faith.<sup>91</sup> For Machiavelli most certainly, prudence is not textual communion with the commons but a calculative ability, hidden silent and deep in ones heart, to size up opposing forces. Rhetoric *qua* mass communication serves propagandistic purposes only, while prudence is defined in distinction to popular communication. Likewise, the *spezzatura* of Castiglione's courtier's elevates deceit to an aesthetic principle; not a simple valorization of surface at the expense of depth, the concept emphasizes the laborious crafting of an illusory aura of spontaneity and nonchalance from behind the courtier's mask. For both Machiavelli and Castiglione, the predominance of the visual over the verbal is an essential element in their breaks with the tradition of rhetorical humanism. While Ramist style, as we have seen, also places importance on transparency, and strives to render in an undistorted fashion the top-down logical operations of method, the "realist" style, while purporting to show nature undistorted, really shows the nascent modernist subject in nature; coolly appraising it,

conquering it or craftily sidestepping its volatility. In short, what is being depicted transparently by such a style is the prudence of the individual in solitary battle with its environment.

Returning to Conley's distinction between centripetal and centrifugal rhetoric, it might be useful to make a similar distinction between ways of demonstrating one's prudence. In the Ciceronian or centrifugal conception of rhetoric, prudence is manifested in the message; all the preparation in the world is useless unless content makes it all the way through the canons towards expression. With a centripetal conception, one that evaluates messages according to their transparency, prudence is assumed to reside in the direct interaction of subject with fortune, an interaction which exists outside language. The representational burden of a "realist" style is ultimately not the depiction of "reality" that the user confronts, but showing that the user of the style is himself "a realist," one who understands reality. Kahn furthermore characterizes Machiavelli's perspective as "activist," which may get even more at the gist of things. It is not an inert reality that is being contrasted to the linguistic, but a reality shapeable by human action.

That this active mastery of the real, undertaken outside the realm of communication, is ultimately demonstrated primarily through a textual recounting of one's encounter with the real is an embarrassment that is dealt with via a rigorous stylistic protocol of transparency, of presenting "evidence" of effective action through description that mimes that activity. Ciceronian eloquence is therefore to be rejected in favor of a different style, a "style of no style at all" that is meant to draw attention to the non-linguistic qualities of the speaker, qualities which are, ironically enough, to be found in a certain kind of style, as described by Erasmus:

Even if I could attain perfection in portraying the figure of Ciceronian phrase, I should

prefer a style of speaking more genuine, more concise, more forceful, less ornate, and more masculine. And yet, though ornamentation has been lightly considered by me, I should not spurn elegance when it comes of its own free will. However, I have not time to polish what I write. Let them be Cicero's brothers who have leisure to spend three months on one short epistle.<sup>92</sup>

Among other things, the lack of eloquence that Erasmus strives for *communicates*: communicates, that is, Erasmus' own investment with an extra-linguistic reality, with his *prudence*. Such prudence is purportedly to be shown transparently, but in truth is *mimed* by the language. This is in fact the artistry of modernist rhetoric, the attempt to use language to mime a pre-linguistic prudence. This miming is held to happen in any and all discourses, whether consciously or not; Erasmus claims that this miming is also performed by the works of "Cicero's brothers" in that their stilted writing mimes the mental signs of luxury, ease, and lack of engagement with the physical demands of an active life.

That Cicero's name has become associated with such connotations would be unfathomable to the man himself. Todorov claims that such a result was in a sense inevitable, for Cicero's artistry was so striking that "the inevitable consequence of this stylization is that speeches may grow more and more beautiful, but they are no more apt to fulfill their (former) function, which is to convince, to act."<sup>93</sup> Rather than tie eloquence and function back together, a early modern movement in rhetoric chose to define eloquence and prudence as diametrically opposed, with Cicero placed squarely on the side of empty and impractical eloquence, to be opposed by an ineloquent prudence. One of the better sources for tracing this movement remains

a series of articles by Morris W. Croll at the beginning of last century. Sometimes called by him “Attic”<sup>94</sup> (thereby associating the movement with Cicero’s opponents in *Brutus* and *Orator*), sometimes “Baroque”<sup>95</sup> (thereby associating it closer with contemporary developments, seen from a modern perspective), and most often “anti-Ciceronian” (similar to postmodernism in the sense that the thing critiqued remains stubbornly a part of the term itself), the movement cannot be seen as opposing all elements of Cicero’s life and work, only specifically the centrifugal conception of its rhetoric as traced by Conley. In Croll’s words,

Expressiveness rather than formal beauty was the pretension of the new movement. It disdained complacency, suavity, copiousness, emptiness, ease, and in avoiding these qualities sometimes obtained effects of contortion or obscurity, which it was not always willing to regard as faults. It preferred the forms that express the energy and labor of minds seeking the truth, not without dust and heat, to the forms that express a contented sense of the enjoyment and possession of it.<sup>96</sup>

The rhetoric of “dust and heat” required the study of models that expressed ideas not with the artistry of traditional forms but with “energy and labor.” It was a rhetoric of “genius,” to use Addisonian language: a rhetoric of “singularity in writing,” “too full to be exact”, casting pearls before the swine of popular appeal rather than taking the time to present them with necklaces of eloquence. This shift in models is illustrated most dramatically in the career of the 16<sup>th</sup> century humanist Marc-Antoine Muret. Croll writes:

It is doubtful whether any other great literary reputation of the Renaissance has survived in so ambiguous and confused a state . . . the most important event in the history of literary ideas during that period was the controversy concerning the imitation of Cicero, and in that controversy and the various conflicts connected to it Muret was more or less engaged at all periods of his career. Yet modern history tells us . . . two conflicting statements. On the one hand he appears . . . in the stricter sect of the Ciceronians. . . This is certainly the commoner view among those who have any acquaintance with his name; for generations he has been held up to the admiration even of school-children as the modern Cicero. How confusing it is then to find that he also holds a conspicuous place in the sketches – few and inadequate – of the movement of opposition that that finally triumphed at the end of his century over the great rhetorical scheme of education! From his letters and orations one or two passages have been cited which outdo the sarcasm of Erasmus's *Ciceronianus*.<sup>97</sup>

Croll saw Muret's public lectures at the University of Rome from 1563 to 1583 as "a kind of microcosm in which we can study the rise of positivistic culture in Europe."<sup>98</sup> Muret was brought to Rome as a famed rhetorician who would teach moral philosophy and serve as the official orator of the Roman court. While he performed his duties in the latter position as an exemplar of the Ciceronian style of oratory, his pedagogy quickly moved in a different direction, and he soon announced his intention to teach courses in modern jurisprudence and the literature of Silver Age writers Tacitus and Seneca. Coming from one who was supposed to embody the glories of Ciceronian eloquence, it seemed to many of Muret's colleagues that he was willfully

celebrating bad writing, the “corrupt” forms of the Latin tongue. Prevailed upon to take up a vacant position in rhetoric, he announced what at first seemed like a recantation: a course of readings in Cicero’s *Tusculans* and a lecture to be entitled “The Method of Arriving at Distinction in Eloquence.” When delivered however, the lecture turned out to be a diatribe against Ciceronian rhetoric and an explanation of why “bad” writing, that is the anti-eloquence of jurors and the Silver Age, was actually “better.”

One of the theoretical touchstones of Muret’s encomium to anti-eloquence was Aristotle, his centripetal conception of rhetoric made more prominent in that the Aristotle Muret cited, as with Ramus, was a severely curtailed Aristotle. His discussion of the *Rhetoric* covers the first two books exclusively, with the third section of style left uncited. Muret’s rhetoric therefore is Aristotelean solely in its focus on, as methods of invention, the maxim and the example. In the avowed suitability of these types of rhetorical invention for the exhibition of prudence, Muret theorizes what Machiavelli had already accomplished in practice. But while Aristotle in Part III of the *Rhetoric* recommends a perspicacious or “urbane” style, when Muret comes to the question of style he recommends *obscuritas*:

For although a bare and clear style gives pleasure, still in certain special kinds of writing *obscurity* will win praise sometimes. By diverting discourse from common and vulgar modes of expression, it wins a dignity and majesty even out of strangeness (*peregrinitas*) and grips the reader’s attention. It acts as a veil, to exclude the view of the vulgar. Thus those who enter the dark crypt of a temple feel a kind of awful solemnity sweep in upon their souls. *Asperity* of style, again, has almost the same property as bitterness in wine:

which is thought to be a sign that the wine will bear its age well.<sup>99</sup>

While “method” in Ramism is an impersonal content that should conceivably be available to all who have access to the same mental technique, so long as it is transported through a transparent medium of language, Muret’s “prudence” is the possession of the solitary, ruthless, cunning genius who has learned to view the simplicity and gullibility of the plebian mass with contempt. The man of prudence and the public mass are to be protected from each other by a rhetoric of strangeness that occludes the transparent medium, like Tom Puzzle’s scuttle-fish. If one accepts the integrity of the method of prudence, then one is committed to certain habits of mind, to understanding the maxims and arranging them to meet the needs of fortune, whose worth is fully prior to the ability to communicate. Muret and the other strong wits pay their audience the backhanded tribute of not adjusting their ideas, their style or their performance to the audience at all, indeed quite the opposite. While on the one hand the style and the performance of *obscuritas* mimes the “dust and heat” of prudential thinking, on the other prudential thinking is conceived in a proprietary manner, to be kept hidden in the breast of the prudential man, and the act of communication is therefore quite literally a dilution of its value. *Obscuritas* both expresses rarified thinking and keeps such thinking rarified by preventing its circulation. It is a rhetoric that is *al-agora* in the most specific and limited sense, meant to move entirely outside of the public sphere.

It is one of the great ironies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Muret’s legacy would not long remain rarefied and separate from the public. Croll identifies Muret’s stylistic children as Lipsius, Bacon, and Montaigne, all of whom attained great popular success. Lipsius’ widely circulated

edition of Seneca ensured that the “Senecan amble” would define 17<sup>th</sup> century imitative style for many.<sup>100</sup> As for Bacon, Brian Vickers has denied that he had a “Senecan” style,<sup>101</sup> but we know that Bacon was at least aware of its popularity as model, and pronounced it a “sounder” alternative to the “copious and luxuriant oratorical manner” of Ciceronianism:

It consists wholly on this: that the words be sharp and pointed; sentences concised; a style in short that may be called “turned” rather than fused. Whence it happens that everything dealt with by this kind of art seems rather ingenious than lofty. Such a style is found in Seneca very freely used, in Tacitus and the younger Pliny more moderately; and it is beginning to suit the ears of our age as never before.<sup>102</sup>

But Montaigne's *Essais* were most decisive in evoking a mind in revolt against the traditional forms of prudential reasoning that had come before. Previously, the standard strategies for dealing with the randomness of experience may be exemplified by a choice between Boethius and Machiavelli: either retreating from experience in order to contemplate eternal truths, as does the prison-bound protagonist of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, or shaping experience with the audacious will of *virtu'*, as do the various models of prudential behavior exhibited in the *Discourses*. As a politician and a skeptic, it is obvious that Montaigne would reject the approach of Boethius. Yet his work is equally notable for his rejection of the idea that humans should work to manipulate fortune. Dan Engster argues that Montaigne's work is a specific critique of the Atlantic republican project as outlined by Pocock; i.e., the need for individual *virtu'* to prudently innovate in order to secure the precarious existence of human

society.<sup>103</sup> In open defiance of the Machiavellian doctrine that fortune can be beaten down or seized by hair and made to submit in language vividly suggestive of sexual assault, Montaigne announces that "I am the sort of man who readily commits himself to Fortune and abandons himself bodily into her arms, For which I have up to now had more occasion to applaud myself than to complain; and I have found her both wiser and more friendly to my affairs than I am. There have been some actions in my life the conduct of which might justly be called difficult, or if you wish, prudent. Even of those, put it that one-third was my doing, truly two-thirds were richly her doing."<sup>104</sup>

Montaigne's resistance to the human desire to imprint itself on fortune naturally rejects the program of Ciceronian eloquence,<sup>105</sup> and Seneca's rough incisiveness is preferred over Cicero's inability to come to the point.<sup>106</sup> The essay "On the Vanity of Words" is an important entry in the modernist attack on rhetoric in general.<sup>107</sup> Yet Montaigne invented a genre (the essay) and a style that was replicated and repeated throughout the 16th century, if not still today. The Montaignian essay, one that attempts to express without distortion the prevarications and ephemeral impressions of cognition and sense experience, became through virtue of its rejection of traditional eloquence a modernist genre par *excellence*. The meaning of the word *essai*, "trial", has several ironic connotations to the modernist shift in the style and purpose of rhetoric. The law trial was of course the institutional location of the emblematic Ciceronian genre, the forensic speech. The doctrine of the *im utramque partem* argument is meant to produce the most informed judgment on either side so that an approximate judgment can be made most fairly. Kahn describes Montaigne's use of *im utramque partem* as parodic of the Ciceronian doctrine.<sup>108</sup> Rather than leading to the best judgment possible in uncertain circumstances, Montaigne uses

two sided arguments to undermine the very idea of a human subject coming to judgment on any point beyond the renunciation of human judgment itself, resulting in the subjects' "letting himself be raised and uplifted by purely celestial means."<sup>109</sup> This pious statement in support of Montaigne's fideism notwithstanding, the essays do mark with their peregrinations a kind of evidence, not evidence usable in a trial of justice, but rather in a trial of strength, trial by fire.

If there is a positive statement of stylistic method in Montaigne, it is arguably that which defends a "crippled" or "monstrous" style. Recent scholarship focuses on two specific essays, "Of a Monstrous Child"<sup>110</sup> and "Of Cripples"<sup>111</sup> as metaphorical commentaries on the form of the *Essais*. For Gisele Mathieu-Castellani, "l'enfant monstrueux" is a "métaphore du texte,"<sup>112</sup> while Bernd Renner sees the essay on cripples "in many ways a continuation and elaboration of this undertaking" of defending of the design and style of the *Essais* through the metaphor of the differently abled.<sup>113</sup> Montaigne praises the "irregular movement of the lame woman" for increasing both sexual pleasure and weaving production.<sup>114</sup> Much as the crippled excel at these arts, Montaigne suggests that his "irregular" style is superior to every form of writing.<sup>115</sup>

The great irony, of course, is that Montaigne's claim during the 17<sup>th</sup> century would gain the assent of vast readership. The *Essais* were a sensation, proving that the style of the Silver Age of Latinity, the same style that Muret had recommended as a way of repelling popular audiences, could have considerable popular appeal. By the dawn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Earl of Shaftsbury could be heard to complain that "Senecan amble" was a "manner of writing so much admired and imitated in our age, that we scarce the idea of any other model. . . . All runs to the same tune and beats exactly one and the same measure."<sup>116</sup> And Addison, in the *Spectator*, could lament that "our general Taste in *England* is for Epigram, turns of Wit, and forced Conceits." It

was such a taste that Addison would set out to change, with considerable success. But his journey toward this position was a complex one.

## *2d. Addison and the Augustan Synthesis of Style*

One of Addison's earliest surviving literary efforts, and one that demonstrates the undigested conflict between method and genius that Addison inherited, is the Latin oration "Nova Philosophia Veteri Præferenda." Apparently a class exercise, Addison starts with a stylistic salvo patterned on Cicero's address against Cataline. But rather than denouncing a clear and present danger to the republic, Addison addresses a more bookish threat; the weight of dead learning. "Gentlemen of the university, how long must we slavishly tread in the steps of the ancients, and be afraid of being wiser than our ancestors?" he asks. "How long shall we religiously venerate the triflings of antiquity, as some do old wives' stories?"<sup>117</sup> Despite the Muret-like partisanship of the thesis, the exercise itself attests to the continued importance of Ciceronian styles of address, at the very least at Oxford, where Addison composed "Nova" at the age of 21. The issue of imitation does not end with the individual rhetor, however, nor with the individual text. In addition to the imitation implicit in the auditor who adopts the rhetor's line of reasoning, we also see a call to imitation via negation. The auditor is called upon to reject "the custom of many," the pedants who "venerate the idiocies of antiquity," idiocies that other "moderns" might paradoxically consider to include the conventions of Ciceronian imitation or even the use of Latin. The modern auditor is figured via a virile opposition to "the traces of the ancients," he is not "servile" but "daring." The oration thus utilizes a Ciceronian vehemence

meant to inflame the passions of an empowered assembly to address a spectatorial auditor of timeless, foundational truth.

Addison's *Nova* shows that he knew and valued both Descartes and Cicero. But the ancient model he chose for society to follow was, as it was for many during the so-called "Augustan Age" in England, the era of an enlightened despot -- albeit one who considered himself to be defender of the ideals, if not the political culture, of the republic -- who governed through art. Looking further back than the advocates of the Silver Age, but not quite ready to fully accept the susceptibility to fortune of republican Rome, Addison, like many, split the difference and chose instead to exalt Octavius Caesar, nephew of Julius, called Augustus Caesar, "Caesar the Majestic," widely praised for bringing political stability and cultural glory to Rome after the violent end of the Republic.

Why did Addison and others like him look to Augustus at this point in history? My sense is that the model of Augustan society best served the values of transparency expressed in Addison's principles of message production and reception . . . and vice versa. The internal contradictions of the imperial society that Augustan Rome was, and emerging Britain hoped to be, involved the surveillance and incorporation of vast territories and heterogeneous cultures. A unified and unifying aesthetic of wit, judgment and taste, one that was theoretically accessible to all classes and genders (and eventually in the colonial imagination, at least theoretically to all races) would help amalgamate potential differences between these social orders. Equally important, the sort of detachment, clarity and moderation that Addison prized would not easily thrive under the sort of tumult found either in a republic or in a truly violent and unchecked despotism. The fact that Rome under Augustus produced the sort of writing he prized so highly

was reason enough for him to extol the benefits of its political model.

Talk had begun to circulate about a “new Augustus” shortly after the execution of Charles I: first Cromwell, then Charles the second, then William of Orange (by Addison himself in one of his Latin exercises) were identified by poets as new versions of Augustus.<sup>118</sup> The idea that England had entered into an “Augustan Age” began to be mentioned with more frequency from the time of the Interregnum, until by the time of his Addison’s death, the word “Augustan” was being applied to his own style with confidence. His complete works were introduced by Thomas Tickell as exemplars of the “Augustan” standards of “good breeding,” “gracefulness,” “correctness,” “propriety of thought,” and “chastity of style.”<sup>119</sup> It was Addison’s destiny to be considered the exemplar of a new sensibility that combined the scientific knowledge of the modern world with the accessibility of the exalted writers promoted by Augustus: Virgil, Livy, Horace, Ovid.

The desire and perceived ability to encompass both influences received its first real programmatic statement with Francis Bacon in *On the Advancement of Learning*, and its attempt to mediate the quarrel between Cicero and Ramist reform. Bacon taught English humanists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century “how to reconcile their humanist *paideia* with the new science, how to combine *ancienneté* and modernity . . . the trick was to keep the old idea of the usefulness of the humanities to public life and to recognize the ancient achievement in rhetoric, oratory, poetry and history, while at the same time calling for a new natural philosophy liberated from all ancient authority.”<sup>120</sup> Bacon, in many ways a typical courtier still living under a strong monarchy, was liable to follow Montaigne in using Senecan bluntness rather than Ciceronian expansiveness in his own style. In fact, Bacon’s early attempts at populist oratory were

disastrous for him at court, placing his influence under a shadow from which it never fully recovered. But the 1644 Revolution and the subsequent fall of the absolutism of Cromwell would soon abrogate the political excuses for considering *obscuritas* prudent. Once Charles I at the end of his reign is forced to acknowledge that the crown does not have an overarching authority over all the realm, but rather simply constitutes one power among others (in *His Majesty's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions*), "government in England is no longer a direct emanation of divinely or rationally enjoined authority; it is a contrivance of human prudence . . . The government of England, in short, without ceasing to manifest the element of monarchy, is being presented as a classical republic."<sup>121</sup> Under both of the stylized, parodically corrupt and civically disengaged monarchs of the Restoration period, and the under the more professionalized, ceremonial monarchies that followed after 1688, it became increasingly clear that real social, political and cultural power lay outside the crown and the court, and a more popular rhetoric subsequently could become attractive.

The fact that poetry, and not oratory, grabbed the imagination of Addison and many others in his time as a popular form again suggests that the neo-Augustans were not quite willing to accept the republics of Cicero or Demosthenes as their social or stylistic model. The rather academic (if not elitist) presuppositions of neo-Augustanism were reflected in the focus on reviving the classical *paideia* of education in Latin and Greek; the idea was not to create a truly democratic literature that would instruct the masses in citizenship but to train a managerial class to mold society from above: such was the role for which the young Addison was being trained at Charterhouse and Oxford. The program, designed to restore the interest in civic education that had been rejected by Ramism, was promoted soon after the Restoration by figures such as John

Evelyn: in works like the 1666 *Publick Employment and an Active Life Prefer'd to Solitude*, he promoted the socially conscious model of Cicero and Isocrates as a necessary counterweight to the more pedantic demands of modern method, and cited Augustus as the proper model as ruler for Charles II in an inauguration panegyric.<sup>122</sup> With regards to the more practical side of pedagogy, Charles Hoole's book promoting the device of "double translation" (Latin to English then to Latin) became the most popular schoolbook of the Restoration period, establishing the continued relevance of the *imitatio*.<sup>123</sup> The efforts of Evelyn, Hoole and others managed to keep the ideal of Ciceronian eloquence somewhat alive, as is demonstrated by Addison's clear familiarity with the cadence of the speeches on Cataline. Yet the focus on Augustan Rome over and against Cicero's time as a proper model for literary and political form would for the most part suppress oratory as the rhetorical genre of choice in favor of didactic poetry.

By the time the "Battle of the Books" between Sir William Temple and members of the Royal Society was in full swing, the question whether or not the society of Augustan Rome was worth emulating was no longer an issue: that it was had become the common opinion. What was at issue was whether or not the English could equal or surpass their former masters. Against Temple's claim that ancient knowledge was incapable of being surpassed, William Wotton's riposte stated that moderns were not only more knowledgeable than the ancients; moderns actually knew more about ancient society and ancient literature than the ancients did themselves. "Modern philology and antiquities had given modern scholars an advantage both of method and substance unknown to previous ages. With their help, the whole past could be recovered more fully and accurately than ever before."<sup>124</sup> It is in the context of this exchange between Wotton and Temple that Addison most likely penned "A Discourse of Ancient and Modern Learning" in

the mid-1690s.

"A Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning" is not, as one might guess, a comparison of ancient and modern systems of knowledge; it is rather a speculative comparison of how ancient readers might have read their own contemporaries differently than modern scholars, in a way that might not be the equal of modern understanding but surpasses the moderns in one particular sense: a sensitivity to the perspicacity of the text. What Addison sees in classical writing is evidence of a society deeply in tune with the representational function of language, with a referential system firmly anchored in a rich and detailed visual experience. His concern, both as a Christian and a modern admirer of Newton and Locke, appears to be why it should be that ancient writings seem so much more *vivid* than modern ones, and why the world they depict, devoid of either salvation or physics, should be so attractive to him. Addison focuses on the vividness in the characterizations and the physical descriptions in Homer, Virgil and Theophrastus to argue that a kind of literal visual portraiture is at work, one necessary to a reading audience with so dense a web of physical and social referents. One of the benefits of this process, claims Addison, is a subconscious complication of form: one that promotes fidelity over mere didactic intent. In the moral character studies of Theophrastus, for example

. . . we may observe in most of his Characters something foreign to his Subject, and some other Folly or Infirmary mixing itself with the principal Argument of his Discourse. His eye seems to have been attentively fix'd on the Person in whom the Vanity reign'd, that other Circumstances of his Behaviour besides those he was to describe insinuated themselves unawares, and crept insensibly into the Character. It was hard for him to

extract a single Folly out of the whole Mass without leaving a little Mixture in the Separation: So that his particular Vice appears something discolur'd in the Description, and his Discourse, like a Glass set to catch the Image of any single Object, gives us a lively Resemblance of what we look for; but at the same Time returns a little shadowy Landskip of the Parts that lie about it.<sup>125</sup>

If the "mixture in the separation" complicates the didactic intent, it at the same time makes the portrait more vivid and true to life, therefore heightening its potency. Addison also finds in Homer the same insinuating circumstance framing character, an excess of detail that betrays real models, as for example the "honest Cocker, who had been very kind and serviceable to the Poet, and is therefore advanc'd in his Poem, to be *Ajax's* Shield-maker." While Virgil's character portraiture in the *Aeneid* is "barren" in comparison, he more than makes up for it in the specificity and richness of his description of place, descriptions which would have situated the ancient reader in familiar space.

How must a *Roman* have been pleas'd, that was well acquainted with the Capes and Promontories, to see the Original of their Names as they as they stand derived from *Misenus*, *Palinurus*, and *Cajeta*? That could follow the Poet's Motions, and attend his Hero in all his Marches from Place to Place? That was very well acquainted with the Lake *Amsanctus*, where the Fury sunk, and could lead you to the mouth of the Cave where *Aeneas* took his descent for Hell? Their being conversant with the Place, where the Poem was transacted, gave 'em a greater Relish than we can have at present of several

Parts of it; as it affected their Imaginations more strongly, and diffus'd through the whole Narration a greater Air of Truth. The Places stood as so many Marks and Testimonies to the Veracity of the Story that was told of 'em, and help'd the Reader to impose upon himself in the Credibility of the Relation.<sup>126</sup> (1914, p. 455-56)

While Addison grants the ancient reader an ability to feel the "Air of Truth" more than he can, by speculatively evoking the context within which those texts are read, he himself is responding to the "Air of Truth" that he himself finds in Virgil, Homer and Theophrastus, representing the "truth" of a unified ancient culture.

By defending the perspicacity of an ancient style of writing that evokes a collective visual culture, Addison is claiming that the clear superiority of the ancients in verbal arts, acknowledged by all but the most didactic of the moderns, did more than simply produce charming cultural artifacts. To value them for their charm, their exoticism, their otherness, misses their functional aspect of binding a culture together around a shared history of personages and places. It is this way of seeing that the modern attempt to recover the past through the piecemeal work of philology is blind to. As well, it is suggested by Addison that the modern attraction to ancient writing provides a glimpse of a perspicacity that is the product, not of an unrecoverable and irreproducible genius of the past, but of writers who were rhetorically committed to the social knowledge of their time, to the task of reflecting accurately the land and the people of ancient Greece or Rome. If this is true, there should be no reason why a modern writer, willing to turn a perspicacious eye to contemporary culture, could not accomplish such a feat.

Addison focused these general themes on a specific text when he was asked to write the introduction to John Dryden's translation of the *Georgics* of Virgil, as part of a project to present the famed Augustan poet's complete works in English. Up until Dryden's edition the *Aeniad* had been, understandably perhaps, the main focus of neo-Augustan interest, with its clearly political, patriotic, and didactic purposes. Addison's introduction to the *Georgics*, claiming the piece "the most complete, elaborate, and finisht piece in all Antiquity," no doubt helped to encourage the great Neo-Augustan interest in the georgic, a literary form reflecting cyclical renewal, specifically the depiction of the hard labor required to bring life to barren earth, to beat swords into ploughshares, to collectively move as a society away from the military struggle of all against all toward an economic struggle to create a society in rational harmony with nature. What Ronald Paulson describes as the "aesthetics of georgic renewal," in tune with the working of nature and socially binding in its clarity and accessibility, was Virgil's response to a long period of violence, intolerance and relentless social change, and English poets (most importantly Pope) would took up the form for its own renewing ends.<sup>127</sup>

Virgil's *Georgics* have been interpreted as a typical "mirror of the prince", the genre Isocrates and Machiavelli made such memorable contributions to, in this case using husbandry precepts to metaphorically give the newly crowned Octavian advice on how to rule.<sup>128</sup> But Addison treats the poem more as a popular form that uses poetic devices to make didactic content palatable to the masses, a strategy that he compares favorably with the lack of accommodation to popular taste displayed by the moderns. Modern writers (particularly practitioners of "Natural Philosophy") lack an "Air of Truth" when describing the natural world, an air that can only come from the richly evoked relationship with a living environment. The

genius of the georgic style, to Addison, is in how it relates precepts to the imagination through vividness of description:

Where the Prose-Writer tells us plainly what ought to be done, the Poet often conceals the precept in a description, and represents his Country-man performing the action in which he would instruct his reader. Where the one sets out as fully and distinctly as he can, all the *parts* of the truth, which he would communicate to us; the other singles out the most pleasing circumstance of this truth, and so conveys the *whole* in a more diverting manner to the understanding.<sup>129</sup>

While georgics and pastorals both evoke the countryside, the georgics deal in a poetically enhanced way with the activity of husbandry, not shepherding; it is with an air of productive engagement with the environment rather than a watchful stillness that Virgil describes nature. As in his other essay on ancient writing, Addison focuses on how the richness and complexity of a particular description evokes the world outside of the frame, allowing the imagination of the reader to fill in the context. " [In] the style proper to a *Georgic* . . . the Poet must lay out all his strength, that words may be warm and glowing, and that every thing he describes may immediately present itself, and rise up to the reader's view."<sup>130</sup> By focusing on the individual details in a way that suggests the presence of greater complexity, as does Theophrastus, Virgil creates descriptions that "suggest a truth indirectly, and without giving us a full and open view of it, to let us see just so much as will naturally lead the imagination into all the parts that lie concealed. This is a wonderfully diverting to the understanding, thus to receive a precept, that

enters as if it were through a by-way, and to apprehend an Idea that brings a whole train after it."<sup>131</sup> Virgil may, like the natural philosophers, focus on parts instead of on the whole, but he chooses those parts in such a way that they relate, holographically, to the total process of human interaction with nature that husbandry (and by suggestion, human endeavor in general) entails.

Virgil and Theophrastus represent, for Addison, the two poles of a practice of ancient visual eloquence, using description of nature and character respectively to invoke a social totality, thus making ancient writing more pleasurable, more accessible and more didactically effective than modern writing. It was a balance he strove to master in his own practice, steeped in the Hoolean revival of *imitatio*. But Addison did not only operate by adopting a model for imitation. Perhaps more important was the identification of negative models. The “Augustan style” that Addison would come to exemplify defined itself in strict opposition to the early modern craze for the “Senecan amble” and Muret’s style of *obscuritas*. In polemicizing against such a style, Addison chose to label it with a term designed to evoke the exact opposite of Rome at its highest influence, power, and self-confidence: Rome under Augustus. For Addison, such obscure writing evoked not that great society but rather the barbarous forces that later brought Rome to its knees: it was “Gothic.”

Addison was not the first critic to use Gothic as an expletive, or the first to indulge the rather spurious linkage the term evokes between medieval Christian culture and the barbarians who sacked Rome. Alfred Longueil traces the critical term to the early Renaissance and helps to explain the articulation it embodied:

Because the Goths, being Teutons, conceived and built upon an ideal of beauty foreign to

the world they overset; and because medieval men, in fashioning their new world, rebuilt it nearer to the Teutonic than to the classic heart's desire; and because to Renaissance skeptics the Gothic ideal, wrought in castle and cathedral, seemed dark and thwarted beside the measure of a Parthenon, it came to pass, in the early Renaissance, that the term "gothic" took on a new and colored meaning, a meaning that masked a sneer. To the Renaissance, medieval or Gothic architecture was barbarous architecture. By a trope all things barbarous became "Gothic."<sup>132</sup>

By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century France the pejorative adjective *gothique* was being used by Boileau to designate both old-fashioned, uncouth writing and a similar sort of social behavior,<sup>133</sup> and as Addison was an assiduous reader of that French critic,<sup>134</sup> it is most likely that it is there that he picked it up for this particular use. The clearest demarcations of Augustan verses Gothic styles of writing can be found in #409, where after lauding Augustan literature Addison complains that

Our general Taste in *England* is for Epigram, turns of Wit, and forced Conceits, which have no manner of Influence, either for the bettering or enlarging the Mind of him who reads them, and have been carefully avoided by the greatest Writers, both among the Ancients and the Moderns. I have endeavored in several of my Speculations to banish this *Gothic* Taste which has taken Possession among us.

And earlier, in no. 62:

This [the Augustan style] is that natural Way of Writing, that beautiful Simplicity, which we so much admire in the Compositions of the Ancients; and which no Body deviates from, but those who want Strength of Genius to make a Thought shine in its own natural Beauties. Poets who want this Strength of Genius to give that Majestick Simplicity to Nature, which we so much admire in the Works of the Ancients, are forced to hunt after foreign Ornaments, and not to let any kind of Wit of what kind so ever escape them. I look upon these writers as *Goths* in Poetry, who, like those in Architecture, not being able to come up with the beautiful simplicity of the old *Greeks* and *Romans*, have endeavored to supply its place with all the Extravagances of an irregular Fancy.<sup>135</sup>

With Addison's writings on "Gothic" poetry, read in mind of "Ancient and Modern Learning" and the discussion in *Spectator* #476 on the difference between method and genius in writing, we can unpack the complex relationship between perspicacity and genius in Addison's thought. Whereas in #476 Addison places genius, "too full to be exact," apart from simplicity, here he associates genius with the ability to "make a thought shine in its own natural beauties." No clearer a statement of the organizing principle of centripetal rhetoric can be found. For Montaigne and Muret, a thought's "natural beauty" was wrapped up in its irregularity and obscurity, and genius consisted in following the peregrinations of natural thought without succumbing to the homogenizing pressures of form or the need to make thought palpable to a mass audience. Addison's view of nature as "majestic simplicity" reflects a different view, and for him irregularity can only be ornamentation, not natural thought itself. "Strength of genius"

here really means the ability of genius to be transparent, to efface itself. Furthermore, as “Ancient and Modern” make clear, such strength of genius Addison can only find among ancients, not moderns. The “strength of genius” required to be transparent is one that he associates with antiquity; it is a product of a society built upon the principle of perspicacity. Modern “writers of genius” are in fact counterfeit geniuses; they seek to simulate genius by interposing a complex veil upon the naked simplicity of true thought.

Addison’s intended foils are the metaphysical poets and restoration wits; however, the contrast between Addison and the uncouth “Gothic” tendencies he decried can be found as readily between him and his closest journalistic collaborators, Richard Steele and Jonathan Swift. The contrast between Addison and Swift in style as well as in politics is the most striking, but the same contrast exists in a far more subtle form between Addison and Steele, although it is harder to recognize because in actual practice their approaches were so harmonious and complimentary. The contrast between the three elicits an understandable curiosity regarding how the three came to be collaborators in the first place. Despite differences in political outlook that would cause their friendships with Addison to end (Swift first, Steele much later) they all were equally interested in delving beneath the swirling controversies of their time to address more fundamental concerns, concerns that later could be categorized under the general heading of *culture*. The focus of their efforts, the emergence in 1709 of their journal the *Tatler*, represented a novel approach toward depicting and conceiving of British society as a cultural totality, a first attempt toward creating a cultural format that would reproduce the socially binding perspicacity of the ancients.

The main protagonist of the *Tatler*, Issac Bickerstaff, Esq., astrologer and “Censor of

Great Britain”, was an invention of Swift’s that was borrowed by Steele to serve as the reigning voice of the new paper: a man who used eccentricity as a strategy to be outspoken. The origin of the character lay in a public prank against a certain John Partridge, “a quack astrologer, whose predictions were ridiculously positive yet vague and equivocal.”<sup>136</sup> Swift issued *Predictions for the Year 1708* prophesying Partridge’s death, with a follow-up after the predicted date confirming Partridge’s demise. Partridge’s own vehement protests that reports of his death had been greatly exaggerated only added to the popular success of Swift’s jest. The figure of Bickerstaff thus came to the *Tatler* with a conceptual pedigree that could go either way on the questions of singularity and genius. In a blow for common understanding against the forces of distortion and obscurity, the fictional Bickerstaff had made his name by deflating one who gained a measure of authority through mastery of an arcane and esoteric lore (astrology). But the macabre humor exhibited in the prank on Partridge was also an example of Swift’s tendency to use sharp, even cruel satire to make his points, as heir to what Morris Croll described as the libertine program, shared by Muret and Montaigne, of “startling ‘plebeian intelligences’.”<sup>137</sup> As Brian McCrea observes, Swift’s collaboration with Addison and Steele, the latter who claimed that satirists should “express themselves with Smartness against the Errors of Men, without Bitterness towards their Persons,” was perhaps doomed.<sup>138</sup>

As for Addison and Swift, at first they were roughly equal in their contributions to a journal predominantly being composed by Steele. Their friendship appears to be genuine, with Addison labeling Swift the “most Agreeable companion, the Truest Friend and the Greatest Genius of his Age” (although recall the complex feelings Addison has about the idea of “genius”) and Swift’s referring to Addison as “*le plus honnete homme du monde*.”<sup>139</sup> But

friendship quickly fell victim to politics, and when the Tories achieved a brief reversal of fortune by winning control of Parliament from 1710-1712, Swift shocked his friends by embracing the new leadership and issuing a paper, the *Examiner*, devoted to applying Swift's corrosive style of satire upon the political positions of his former collaborators. The extent to which this ruined Addison and Swift's friendship is suggested by a pamphlet, "The Late Tryal and Conviction of Count Tariff," in which Addison lampoons Swift as "the Examiner,"

. . . a person who had abused almost every man in *England*, that deserved well of his country. He called Goodman *Fact* [Addison's Whiggish hero] a liar, a seditious person, a traitor, and a rebel . . . It was allowed that so foul-mouthed a witness never appeared in any cause. Seeing several persons of great eminence, who had maintained the cause of Goodman *Fact*, he called them ideots, blockheads, villains, knaves, infidels, atheists, apostates, fiends, and devils: never did man show so much eloquence in ribaldry.

The copious invective of "the Examiner" figure in "Count Tariff" is inspired by the dizzying vehemence of Swift's attacks upon the temporarily deposed Whigs. Typical of Swift's style is the following passage from *Examiner* #39, in which he claims the Whigs are the real allies of "Popery, Arbitrary Power, and the Pretender":

A Dog loves to turn round often; yet after certain *Revolutions*, he lies down to *Rest* : But Heads, under the Dominion of the *Moon*, are for perpetual *Changes*, and perpetual *Revolutions*; like the girl at *Bartholomew-Fair*, who gets a Penny by turning round a

hundred Times, with Swords in her Hands. . . . To conclude, the *Whigs*, have a natural Faculty for bringing in *Pretenders*, and will therefore probably endeavor to bring in the great One at last: How many *Pretenders* to Wit, Honor, Nobility, Politicks, have they brought in these last twenty Years? In short, they have been sometimes able to procure a majority of *Pretenders* in Parliament; and wanted nothing to render the Work compleat, except a *Pretender* at their Head.

Addison responded to Swift's betrayal in the summer of 1710 with the *Whig-Examiner*. Much of the Addison's work in the *Whig-Examiner* takes a defensive role, as the title indicates. Swift's multiple charges and quickly mutating analogies and metaphors were particularly irksome to Addison, for they could not very well be met with an elevated tone. Like a debater trying to out tech his opponent, Swift makes so many charges that to try to answer them point by point would be fruitless. The *Examiner* represents the virtuosity of a genius attempting to dazzle his audience into submission, not an interlocutor trying to find common ground. Addison's main approach is to define the *Examiner*; not as a legitimate political argument to be refuted, but as "nonsense," albeit "high nonsense":

Low nonsense is the talent of a cold, phlegmatic temper, that in a poor, dispirited styl creeps along servilely through darkness and confusion. A writer of this complexion gropes his way softly amongst self-contradictions, and grovels in absurdities. *Videri vult pauper; et est pauper*: He hath neither wit nor sense, and pretends to none.

On the contrary, your high nonsense blusters and makes a noise, it stalks upon hard words, and rattles through polysyllables. It is loud and sonorous, smooth and periodical. It has something in it like manliness and force, and makes one think of the name Sir Hercules Nonsense in a play called Nest of Fools. In a word, your high nonsense has a majestic appearance, and wears a most tremendous garb, like Aesop's ass clothed in a lion's skin. . . .

Low nonsense is like that [small beer] in the barrel, which is altogether tasteless and insipid. High nonsense is like that in the bottle, which has in reality no more strength and spirit than the other, but frets, and flies, and bounces, and by the help of little wind that got into it, imitates the passions of a much nobler liquor. (*Whig-Examiner* #4)

Addison's exasperation with Swift on the level of style foreshadows the move to the *Spectator*: rather than debating the fine points of policy, Addison prefers to attack the lack of good taste and right thinking that leads one away from the "common sense" that would naturally allow one to support Whig policy. In this endeavor he had an ally in his fellow Whig and Charterhouse schoolmate Steele. Their differences lie less in their goals and general outlook than in their methods, but these differences are nonetheless considerable. Steele's work is that of a writer for whom self-expression is still paramount; he uses his writing to render accurately the subjective reactions of a man of sensitivity to a world lacking in it. The popular interest in sentimental literature and "sensibility" in the century that would follow is more an extension of Steele's world view than is of Addison's. Part of Steele's perspective may have been related to

his interpretation of Ciceronian decorum:

It would be a noble Improvement, or rather a Recovery of what we call good Breeding, if nothing were to pass amongst us for agreeable which was the least Transgression against that Rule of Life called Decorum, or a regard to Decency. . . . *Tully* says Virtue and Decency are so nearly related, that it is difficult to separate them from each other but in our Imagination. . . . As Beauty of Body, with an agreeable Carriage, pleases the Eye, and that Pleasure consists in that we observe all the Parts with a certain Elegance are proportioned to each other; so does decency of Behavior . . . obtain the Approbation of all with whom we converse, from Order, Constancy, and Moderation of our words and Actions.<sup>140</sup>

This is an insightful interpretation of decorum that is missing an important element, that of artfulness. For Steele, decorum is the almost automatic expression of a Christianized virtue. While Addison was tied to the Oxford notion that moral instruction is best done through poetry, Steele was trying to do the same through the theater, a much more dicey proposition given the immoral reputation of the Restoration stage.<sup>141</sup> Steele, in such works as *The Funeral* and *The Christian Hero*, was trying to use the drama to present figures of moral virtue. With his theater background came a keen awareness of the performative dimension of “good form”, a form that would distinguish his own heroes from the clownish immorality of the rakes of Restoration comedies. Steele’s great innovation in starting the *Tatler* was in redirecting these interests into textual form, turning London into a stage, albeit a stage where simultaneous action could be

envisioned going on at several different locations, which Steele termed “departments”. Unlike the proscenium stage, tethered not only to neoclassic dictates of “unity of action” but to the limitations of scenery, costumes and props, the *Tatler’s* capacity for depicting moral action was topographically liberated.

This was an ambitious scheme, and it is perhaps one of the most significant failures of the *Tatler* that this founding conceit gradually falls away until the vast majority of the writings are issuing from the desk of Issac Bickerstaff alone (addressed “from my own Apartment”). The sense that Bickerstaff is any more than a mouthpiece for Steele’s moralizing observations fades away, until in the final issue the charade drops completely, with Steele confessing what must have been all too readily apparent to his readers:

I never designed in it to give any Man a secret Wound by my Concealment [compare this to Swift’s attack on Partridge], but spoke in the Character of an old Man, a Philosopher, an Humourist, an Astrologer, and a Censor, to allure my Reader with the Variety of my Subjects, and insinuate, if I could, the Weight of Reason with the Agreeableness of Wit. The general Purpose of the whole has been to recommend Truth, Innocence, Honour, and Virtue, as the chief Ornaments of Life; but I considered, that Severity of Manners was absolutely necessary to him who would censure others, and for that Reason, and that only, chose to talk in a Mask. I shall not carry my Humility so far as to call myself a vicious Man; but at the same Time must confess, my Life is at best but pardonable. And with no greater Character than this, a man would make but an indifferent Progress in attacking Prevailing and fashionable Vices, which Mr. *Bickerstaff* has done with a

Freedom of Spirit that would have lost both its Beauty and Efficacy, had it been pretended to by Mr. *Steele*.<sup>142</sup>

Despite his unsuccessful attempt to maintain the mask of Bickerstaff, Steele's writings, like Montaigne's, are most notable for their transparency. Both writers' style exhibits a stream of consciousness reaction to the stimuli of experience; but while Montaigne was a wit and a skeptic, Steele is a sentimentalist, a moralist, and is eventually revealed as a hypocrite. While Montaigne is open and accepting of his lustful and gluttonous appetites, Steele clumsily and unsuccessfully tries to hide them, and earnestly moralizes in spite of his illegitimate children and notorious drunkenness. Steele's pious hope that his own intensely felt sense of morality would result in spontaneously decorous prose is betrayed by the critic's readiness to see his sloppy writing as a sign of a sloppy moral compass, and to see his moral platitudes as self-serving. This element of Steele's work was often recognized in the critical literature that turns on the comparative merits of Addison and Steele, until "it becomes almost commonplace in the nineteenth century that Steele is a careless writer, a writer who works spontaneously and sentimentally, while Addison is a careful writer, a writer who achieves moral significance through formal design."<sup>143</sup> Steele has his defenders, however, notably his biographer George A. Aiken:

His work was generally done in haste, under all kinds of difficulty; he had no time to alter and realter his phrases. Yet what he wrote is always of interest, and often exercises a fascination over us through the earnest manner in which he speaks from the heart of the questions that most concern mankind; we feel the author to be a friend, for he describes

the actual life that he saw around him, and the whole is told with a kindly humour and genuine pathos easily distinguishable by their lightheartedness and truth.<sup>144</sup>

The intimacy of Steele's work appeals to those who would find Addison cold and remote, and who are willing to overlook Steele's inconsistencies in light of his emotional honesty and authenticity. His irregularity is a sign of his humanity, just as it is for Montaigne. Swift similarly writes in a spontaneous manner, but in his prose it suggests not an endearing guilelessness so much as it does an "expression that seems to spring directly from the imagination without any intermediate process of elaboration."<sup>145</sup> While such thorny irregularity is part of what had made Swift a more prominent figure today in English departments than Addison or Steele<sup>146</sup>, it is not a part of the Augustan program with its pastoral concerns; the hard work of forging swords into ploughshares and reforming a society torn asunder by bad writing is too momentous a challenge to admit any sort of sloppiness or carelessness. What Ralph Cohen has called a hallmark of Augustan compositional style, its procedure of "accretion with revisions and additions,"<sup>147</sup> is far removed from Steele's or Swift's habits of writing.

But that style of composition does accurately describe Addison's own approach. For every anecdote of Steele producing hastily written issues at the last minute, there is seemingly one of Addison endlessly revising and re-revising, and holding up the press to make last minute additions.<sup>148</sup> The carefully wrought architecture of his prose contains myriad design elements, of which perhaps the most common and most telling is the pleonasm. In *Spectator* #256 alone, Jan Lannerling counts 36:

1. passions and tempers
2. depress and vilify
3. Notice and Observation
4. Errors and Infirmities
5. Satisfaction and Complacency
6. Errors and Infirmities
7. Mirth and Laughter
8. Satyr or Libel
9. Reception and Approbation
10. expose and turn
11. taken down and humbled
12. Reports and Opinions
13. dark and intricate
14. Detraction and Defamation
15. Weaknesses and Infirmities
16. conspicuous and observable
17. Slips and Unwarinesses
18. noble and triumphant
19. Spots and Sullies
20. broken and disappointed
21. Stains and Blemishes
22. die away and disappear

- 23. Weaknesses and Infirmities
- 24. Slips and Misconducts
- 25. Height and Splendour
- 26. Life and Motion
- 27. flags and languishes
- 28. surprising and extraordinary
- 29. restless and uneasy
- 30. known and eminent
- 31. Satisfaction and Acquiescence
- 32. cast down and disappointed
- 33. Scandal and Defamation
- 34. Rest and Repose
- 35. Fancies and Imaginations
- 36. sensible and afflicting<sup>149</sup>

Lannerling, striving to identify genetic markers of the stylistic debates of early modernity, is interested in the prevalence of redundant pleonasm – word pairs that do not illustrate conceptual range, but which utilize synonyms for rhythmic or affective purposes – as an indicator of “Ciceronianism.” Such a definition is direct from Bacon, and simply means the use of words unconnected to “things.” More to the point, I submit, is the relationship of the pleonasm with abstraction, linking it closer to Ramus than Cicero: “pleonastic pairs . . . are used in modern prose almost solely for abstract notions in exposition. . . . that this is the case with Addison

should be clear from the foregoing lists of examples. . . . To put it the other way round: whenever Addison philosophizes – and in his case philosophizing in nine cases out of ten means moralizing – he has recourse to parallelism in a marked degree.”<sup>150</sup> This is an important qualification; when writing his “immutable” papers, those that are written with “method”, we should expect to see the redundant pleonasms. Such pleonasms divert prose away from the "rich, concrete, robust, full-blooded" nature of sensual observations in favor of the "apt, pleasing, artificial, lively" images of Ramist allegory.

In turning to the very first *Spectator* however, the issue that specifically introduces the character of the Spectator and places him in a particular time and space, the use of redundant pleonasms is extremely limited. There instead exists a preponderance of “illustrative” or “ranged” pleonasms suitable to sketching, processing and coding the multifaceted nature of physical, sensual reality. The very first paragraph is typical of Addison’s “Occasional” papers:

I have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure ‘till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of the author. To gratify this Curiosity, which is so natural to a Reader, I design this Paper, and my next, as Prefatory Discourses to my following Writings, and shall give some Account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this Work. As the chief Trouble of Compiling, Digesting and Correcting will fall to my Share, I must do my self the Justice to open the Work with my own History.<sup>151</sup>

This excerpt is, as already stated, typical for an “Occasional” paper in the absence or relative paucity of redundant pleonasm. The types of word groupings used do not amplify an abstract principle through repetition, but illustrate a set of interpretive dichotomies (black/fair, mild/cholerick, married/bachelor) or a process in time (compiling/digesting/ correcting). Consequently, these writings are embedded in a differentiated time and space, in the dark confusing wood of quotidian existence. The excerpt also neatly summarizes a kind of knowledge production at odds with the Ramist project of carefully deriving conclusions from set, immutable principles. Compiling, digesting, correcting: these words limn an empirical process that works from the particulars upwards. Furthermore, the result of such a procedure is always in doubt; although Addison promises to “gratify” the reader’s curiosity, the account he gives of his origins is merely suggestive, a puzzle and a hall of mirrors rather than a picture portrait. From a Ramist perspective, such a process lacks self-evidence, the assurance that a specific principle will be definitely arrived at; it is not an “art” in Ramus’ Platonic sense of that word. In terms of the dichotomy sketched, such a procedure can be aptly defined as “method of prudence.”

Addison’s demonstrated ability to toggle between these two forms of writing, the top down “method of teaching” depicting set principles through carefully proportioned images, and the down top “method of prudence” that throws unstrung pearls before an audience inviting them to compile, digest and correct for themselves, represents a significant achievement in the self understanding of modern rhetorical culture. It deepens the widened perspective already demonstrated by Bacon in his ability to perceive the shift from Ciceronianism to Senecanism in his own time, and his ability to understand how stylistic formations have a history, how they rise and fall according to the needs and aspirations of the overall culture. Addison takes Bacon’s

reflexivity even further by exhibiting a willingness in practice (if not in theory, as his disparagement of his occasional, prudential writing illustrates) to see multiple styles of address as simultaneously available for his use.

Such an understanding is not exactly a return to a centrifugal conception of rhetoric; it is differently articulated, maintaining the modernist sense that the ultimate goal of textual production is to mime habits of mind. But Addison does have a freedom in his writing that Swift and Steele do not, one that seems to acknowledge that habits of mind may be adjusted according to circumstances. The habits of mind of Swift and Steele dictate to them a certain style of writing that they are committed to, and this makes them relatively insensitive to occasion and audience. Addison is free to make a larger commitment to audience, and it is the nature of this commitment that we will investigate in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE: ADDISON AND AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

### 3a: *The Nature of the Spectator's Audience*

On Monday, March 12, 1711, in *Spectator* # 10, a little more than a week after introducing the character of the Spectator to his readers, Addison turned the spotlight on to the public he was addressing. Interestingly enough, the subject of the *Spectator's* readership had already been raised the previous Monday by Richard Steele, Addison's collaborator, writing as the Spectator in issue #4. A comparison of the first paragraph of each essay is revealing. First, Addison in *Spectator* #10:

It is with much Satisfaction that I hear this great City inquiring Day by Day over these my Papers, and receiving my Morning Lectures with a becoming Seriousness and Attention. My Publisher tells me, that there are already Three Thousand of them distributed every Day: So that if I allow Twenty Readers to every Paper, which I look upon as a modest Computation, I may reckon about Threescore thousand Disciples in *London* and *Westminster*, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless Herd of their ignorant and unattentive Brethren. Since I have raised to my self so great an Audience, I shall spare no Pains to make their Instruction agreeable, and their Diversion useful. For which Reasons I shall endeavor to enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality, that my Readers may, if possible, both Ways find their Account in the Speculation of the Day. And to the End that their Virtue and Discretion

may not be short transient intermitting States of Thought, I have resolved to refresh their Memories from Day to Day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate State of Vice and Folly into which this Age is fallen. The Mind that lies fallow but a single Day, sprouts up in Follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous Culture. It was said of *Socrates*, that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses.<sup>152</sup>

Compare this to Steele, the previous week:

An Author, when he first appears in the World, is very apt to believe it has nothing to think of but his Performance. With a good share of this Vanity in my Heart, I made it my Business these three Days to listen after my own Fame; and as I have sometimes met with Circumstances which did not displease me, I have been encountered by others which gave me as much Mortification. It is incredible to think how empty I have in this Time observ'd some Part of the Species to be, what mere Blanks they are when they first come abroad in the Morning, how utterly they are at a Stand till they are set a going by some Paragraph in a News-Paper: Such persons are very acceptable to a young Author, for they desire no more in any thing but to be new to be agreeable. If I found Consolation among such, I was as much disquieted by the Incapacity of others. These are Mortals who have a certain Curiosity without Power of Reflection, and perused my papers like Spectators

rather than Readers. But there is so little Pleasure in Enquiries that so nearly concern our selves, (it being the worst Way in the World to Fame, to be too anxious about it), that upon the whole I resolv'd for the future to go on in my ordinary Way; and without too much Fear or Hope about the Business of Reputation, to be very careful of the Design of my Actions, but very negligent of the Consequences of them.<sup>153</sup>

Rhetoric scholars have learned to be wary of claims to know the minds of those whose discourses we study: still, one can easily imagine Addison rushing to put another issue out on the subject of audience, to counter and undo the possible damage of the earlier essay by Steele. Once one reads at all deeply into the *Spectator*, it becomes clear that Steele's entry is a serious misfire amongst early attempts to define the mission and tone of the journal. Steele gives the *Spectator* a lyric sense of self-estrangement from his milieu, with a displayed disdain for the reader serving as his marker of integrity and authenticity. This *Spectator*, with his air of surly eccentricity, is closer to Sir Issac Bickerstaff, the iconoclastic astrologer invented by Jonathan Swift and fleshed out by Steele in the *Tatler*. The rhetorical attitude is likewise in the tradition of Montaigne and Muret; the integrity of self-expression is extolled at expense of the desire to make things more intelligible to the reader.

Addison, on the other hand, makes it quite clear that he plans to be anything but "negligent of the consequences" of his writing upon the audience, promising to "spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable." Addison's focus on his audience is partly solicitous and partly rhetorical, for he desires not just the pleasure of his audience but also the creation of certain effects. He hopes his readers will "distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd" by

reading the *Spectator*, and aspires to recover them “out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen,” via the application of “a constant and assiduous culture.” He shares the suspicion (as well as the vocabulary) of Steele in reference to a reading public that are mere “spectators” when they misread and “blanks” when they don’t. But rather than turning away in lofty disdain, Addison performs a speech act that is one essential marker of rhetoric -- challenging the audience to use their volition toward positive ends.

But the challenge to the audience is different in nature than in most rhetoric. While rhetorical criticism has often concerned itself with appeals to “judges,” the empowered, institutional audiences of the Aristotelian genres of judicial and deliberative oratory, it is clear that what Addison is challenging the audience to do is in essence to *be* spectators, to embrace the derisive term that Steele hurls at them. As Addison defines the specific audiences he intends to address, their common denominator appears to be a removal from the sort of concerns that animate the judges of the “practical” rhetorical genres. He first recommends his work to “well regulated Families, that set apart an Hour in every Morning for Tea and Bread and Butter; and would earnestly advise them for their Good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a Part of the Tea Equipage.” A scene farther removed from the urgent imperfection of political exigency, the “rhetorical situation” as defined by Lloyd Bitzer,<sup>154</sup> could scarce be imagined. Addison then goes on to embrace the “spectators” and “blanks” of Steele’s essay. The spectators he accepts by acknowledging the obvious fact that he is a “spectator” himself:

I would recommend this Paper to the daily Perusal of those Gentlemen whom I cannot

but consider as my good Brothers and Allies, I mean the Fraternity of Spectators who live in the World without having any thing to do in it; and either by the Affluence of their Fortunes, or Laziness of their Dispositions, have no other Business with the rest of Mankind than to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative Tradesmen, titular Physitians, Fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and Statesmen that are out of Business. In short, every one that considers the World as a Theater, and desires to form a right Judgment of those who are the Actors on it.<sup>155</sup>

He similarly recuperates the Blanks, by changing the view towards them from a gaze of withering disdain to “an eye of great Commiseration:”

. . . I have heard them [the Blanks] asking the first Man they have met with, whether there was any News stirring? and by that Means gathering together Materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of, till about twelve a Clock in the Morning; for by that Time they are pretty good Judges of the Weather, know which Way the Wind sits, and whether the *Dutch* Mail be come in.<sup>156</sup> As they lie at the Mercy of the first Man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all Day long, according to the Notions which they have imbibed in the Morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their Chambers until they have read this Paper.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, “there are none to whom this Paper will be more useful, than to the female

World”:

I have often thought there has not been sufficient Pains taken in finding out proper Employments and Diversions for the Fair ones. Their Amusements seem contrived for them rather as they are Women, than they are reasonable Creatures; and are more adapted to the Sex, than to the Species. The Toilet is their great Scene of Business, and the right adjusting of their Hair the principal Employment of their Lives . . . tho’ I know there are Multitudes of those of a more elevated Life and Conversation, that move in an exalted Sphere of Knowledge and Virtue . . . I hope to increase the Number of these by publishing this daily Paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent if not an improving Entertainment.<sup>158</sup>

The grouping of audiences has, of course, a satirical edge to it (something often missed by those who would take the section on “the female world” at complete face value). Yet for all that, it is clear in reading through the *Spectator* that its overarching mission is to use the very isolation from praxis displayed by spectators, blanks, and women to focus their attention, as well as the attention of others, away from the strife of party politics and toward the everyday realm of commerce, taste and social interaction. Nowhere is this shift more apparent than when Addison rewrites Aristotle’s famous statement on the *zoon politicon*; “man,” Addison states in *Spectator* # 10, “is a social animal.”

If Addison’s writing clearly exhibits an appeal to audience judgment, that judgment is not conceived as the *krisis* of an empowered judge confronted with political contingency but as the

leisured exercise of a spectator exercising “taste.” The shifting of the paradigm of judgment from *krisis* to taste, which *The Spectator* marks as precisely as any other text of the period, is often held as one of the more lamentable intellectual developments of the modern era in the view of rhetoric’s champions, as it institutionalizes the “systematic and fundamentally anti-rhetorical dichotomy between the prudential and the aesthetic.”<sup>159</sup> There is sufficient evidence to lay much blame for this development at Addison’s door, clearly marking such a divide as he does in his world; furthermore, by explicitly excluding political concerns from his rhetoric, he arguably removes from his audience the civic context that would allow them to intervene in public life. Instead, the audience as spectator appears isolated in an a-temporal context, protected and shielded from contingency.

At its best, spectatorship defined from this perspective represents an inert audience stance whose amelioration is the generic marker of rhetoric itself. Such an audience is unable to “grasp” the circumstances that they are contingently embedded in, circumstances that unbeknownst to them require their positive and practical action, and it is the task of the rhetor to grasp those circumstances for them. At its worst, the marker of bad rhetoric is the actual production of spectatorship. In a paper about the mainstream U.S. news coverage following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Kevin Cummings proposes a form of reading that evaluates a text according to the degree in which it is either “conductive to an active and critical citizenry or whether it calls into being a spectator.”<sup>160</sup> Cummings elaborates: “If a discourse calls for a critical citizenry to test ideas and arguments for their merit then the discourser is productive and indicates democratic behaviors. If the discourse makes the audience spectators who are expected to blindly accept simple premises then the discourse is especially dangerous and should be

cautiously examined.”<sup>161</sup> The coverage of Oklahoma City for Cummings is a textbook example of media attempts to overwhelm audiences with a experience of trauma that leads them to give up their sovereignty and their ability to properly judge the policies wrought in their name.

Such a zero-sum conception of the relationship between spectatorship and political action has an attractive clarity for the ethical evaluation of rhetoric. But the sharpness of this distinction also begs the question of whether certain sorts of spectatorship are actually compatible with rhetoric. Ronald Beiner’s study *Political Judgment* represents one of the more important and influential attempts in recent years to theorize the relationship between spectatorship, so conceived, and the ideal of an empowered judgment. As one commentator sums up the resulting theoretical perspective, the space of judgment is divided or internally bifurcated between “the antagonistic role orientations of actor and spectator . . . adopting the role of orientation of actor or participant enables the individual to focus strategically on the specific choices that are available for achieving instrumental ends and purposes, whereas the more withdrawn stance of the spectator allows individuals to appreciate the significance of the events that are occurring around them and provides them with the opportunity to organize their perceptions and determine the meanings of events.”<sup>162</sup>

To be sure, the specific ways in which Beiner develops his account are open to debate, particularly the exemplars he chooses to illustrate the main concepts. Beiner selects Aristotle and Kant as partisan and dichotomous advocates for the two opposing positions, in order to then create a rapprochement wherein both may contribute to a “comprehensive perspective.”<sup>163</sup> To do so he admits to presenting only a partial view of the Aristotelian rhetoric that he uses to epitomize the actor stance. He states that the *Rhetoric* is “a study of political judgment”<sup>164</sup> but

quickly delimits himself to “practical judgment.” Considering the typology of political (deliberative), legal (forensic) and ceremonial (epideictic), Beiner states that only “the first two types have to do with practical judgment, and it is primarily these that occupy us here.”<sup>165</sup> Other than one parenthetical aside (to admit that epideictic could be said to offer “‘judgments of character’, though these are not practical judgments, strictly speaking”)<sup>166</sup> Beiner proceeds as if political and legal oratory are all that Aristotle is concerned with. Thus cleansed of epideictic, the *Rhetoric* may be now joined to the *Nicomachian Ethics* to present a complete statement about *phronesis* to be set against Kant. Meanwhile, this truncated Aristotle is joined to an arguably inflated Kant, in that his account relies on Hannah Arendt's highly speculative reading of the *Critique of Judgment*, one that seeks to find an “unwritten political philosophy” in that apparently most autonomous and aesthetically-minded of his treatises.

Still, Beiner's account is highly useful because it approximates two of the major ways that spectatorship – and the rhetorical genre that deals with spectatorship exclusively, epideictic – has been viewed in rhetorical theory. The first perspective has been to see epideictic as a kind of problem child, a supplement that, if it cannot be ignored, must be somehow reconciled to the pragmatic concerns of Aristotelean rhetoric. The observation made in passing by Beiner that epideictic can, through “judgments of character,” impact practical reasoning is key; epideictic's task here is eventually to provide a gallery of virtuous action in the public sphere: a database, if you will, of public memory, one that can be productively drawn upon to evaluate rhetorical action in the contingency of the now. Such an interpretation of the *telos* of epideixis has been most recently advanced by Gerald Hauser; it also makes an appearance in Jeffrey Walker's influential *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*. But yet another perspective, argued most

extensively by Lawrence Rosenfield, would maintain epideictic's autonomy from the pragmatic genres while expanding its concerns to the “witnessing” of existence in all of its various forms. The ad hoc quality of practical rhetoric is seen as operating within a wider horizon of contemplation of Being in the Heideggerian sense; the supplement here has become the ground.

We can see reflections of both these approaches in Addison's work. Addison, trained in the art of political verse, first made a name for himself by creating the sorts of laudatory encomia on public virtue that Hauser sees as synonymous with the epideictic genre; and it was in this role, as the author of such poems as “The Campaign,” that Addison's contemporaries mostly knew him. But under the guise of “the Spectator,” the mature Addison aimed to cultivate in his audience a contemplative, detached spectatorship of the sort that Rosenfield defines, a spectatorship meant not to celebrate acts of virtue in the political realm but to bear witness to the unfolding of a new world order, ideologically epitomized by the dual emergence of international capitalism and the British empire at the dawn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is this clear link between the doctrine of taste and a specific political program that can allow us to appreciate (if not necessarily to admire) a political end that emerges from epideictic itself, without necessarily having to detour its influence through deliberative or judicial forums in order to achieve rhetorical relevance.

### *3b. The reevaluation of epideictic: two strategies*

In their influential account of the genre of epideictic in *The New Rhetoric*, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca begin by relating the “standard” history of the genre:

[It] had, unquestioningly, asserted itself vigorously. Most of the masterpieces of academic eloquence, the eulogies and panegyrics of a Gorgias or an Isocrates, showpieces famous throughout Greece, were speeches of the epideictic kind. Unlike *political* and *legal* debates, real contests in which two opponents sought to gain the adherence on debated topics of an audience that would decide on the issue of a trial or on a course of action to be followed, epideictic speeches had nothing to do with all that. A single orator, who often did not even appear in public, but merely circulated his written composition, made a speech, which no one opposed, on topics which were apparently uncontroversial and without practical consequences. Whether it be a funeral eulogy, the eulogy of a city for the benefit of its inhabitants, or a speech on some subject devoid of current interest, such as the praise of a virtue or of a god, the audience, according to the theoreticians, merely played the part of spectators. After listening to the speaker, they merely applauded and went away.<sup>167</sup>

The genre of epideictic seems to have been created by Aristotle as a mere placeholder for types of rhetoric that did not fit easily into his civically minded defense of rhetoric as a “contingent” art, one that governs the practical need to render judgment in concrete situations. This assertion that the “habitation” of rhetoric is to be found in matters of the contingent was “originally put into play to blunt Plato’s charge that rhetoric is a nomadic, hence unspecifiable disciple.”<sup>168</sup> Aristotle turns the tables on Plato, turning rhetoric’s faults into strengths and making it possible to disdain Plato’s version of philosophy as ungrounded and civically

meaningless. Cicero does something like this as well in *De Inventione* by critiquing Hermagoras of Temnos' assertion that rhetoric deals in both general ("what is virtue") and specific ("what is virtuous in this time and place"?) issues. "Everyone understands," the young Cicero sniffs, "that these [general] questions are far removed from the business of the orator."<sup>169</sup> Instead, Cicero endorses Aristotle's view that the orator's interest must be associated with the rhetorical genres that Aristotle identified: institutional situations with specific audiences.

Such a location is difficult to find when it comes to the genre of epideictic. Edward Schaippa and David Timmerman write that Aristotle combined at least three previously found genres into the epideictic genre, all reduced to variations of the same theme: praise and blame.<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, according to Ekaterina Haskins, "Aristotle assigns epideictic a very narrow and inconsequential role. Compared with the institutionally constrained yet still action-orientated contexts of court and assembly, the discourse of praise and blame does not lend itself to a classification according to an easily recognized pragmatic exigence . . . . Because its *telos* is confined to praise and blame, epideictic for Aristotle constitutes a catch-all category for speeches that do not seem to do much outside what they say."<sup>171</sup>

If we see the way in which Aristotle is mostly referenced today, his sequestering of epideictic was greatly successful, to the extent that it can be plausibly said "for Aristotle, the contingent is the unproblematic scene of rhetoric."<sup>172</sup> And to the extent that this sequestering has influenced the field, it may also be said that this identification of rhetoric with contingency continues to be "a key, but largely unnoticed, assumption in contemporary rhetorical theory."<sup>173</sup> One can see this assumption in, among other things, the pervasiveness of Lloyd Bitzer's concept of the "rhetorical situation," a contingent state where audiences, defined as "mediators of

change,” are driven to ameliorate an “*exigence* . . . an imperfection marked by urgency.”<sup>174</sup>

Aristotle’s designation of a particular kind of rhetorical audience, spectators, and his invention of a rhetorical genre that is addressed to spectators, not judges, appears to be a way for Aristotle to acknowledge and then to minimize in importance the fact that rhetoric occasionally takes forms that lie outside of the contingent. In the words of Eugene Garver, “the existence of epideixis provides a mooring in goods independent of particular desires and particular situations . . . [as a genre] epideictic practice is itself not very interesting from the point of view of practical rhetoric.”<sup>175</sup> An audience conceived as independent of particular desires and situations is furthermore an audience that is bereft of the sort of situational embeddedness that rhetoricians value. Their independence places them on the wrong side of what Gadamer has identified as the “distinction between the ideas of *sophia* and *phronesis* . . . first elaborated by Aristotle, developed by the Peripatetics as a critique of the theoretical ideal of life. The humanistic tradition on which rhetoric is based understands that “practical knowledge, *phronesis*, is another kind of knowledge. Primarily, this means that it is directed towards the concrete situation. Thus it must grasp the ‘circumstances’ in their infinite variety.”<sup>176</sup>

By separating out epideictic, what these scholars do is separate out the role of spectatorship in Aristotle’s system. Aristotle famously says in the *Rhetoric* that “the hearer determines the speech’s end and object.” Accordingly, the separation of audiences into “judges” or “spectators” would seem to be an essential theoretical point in Aristotle’s theory. The “deliberative” and “forensic” genres of rhetoric are both addressed to “a *krites*, with a decision to make”, while the epideictic is addressed to an “*theoros* concerned with the ability” of the speaker;<sup>177</sup> in other words, to an aesthetic judgment whose interest “terminates upon the object

itself.”<sup>178</sup> Lest Aristotle confuse us schematically with his temporal location of epideictic in the “present” (where a contingently engaged civic judgment could conceivably be located), it becomes clear from the discussion that the location of spectator judgment is not a contingent present, from which a decision projects force backwards or forward in time, but an a-temporal perspective that does not intervene in civic life.

As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca continue, the temporally orphaned epideictic was neglected in the history of rhetoric:

The Roman rhetoricians abandoned its study to the grammarians, while they trained their pupils in the two other forms of oratory which were deemed relevant to practical eloquence. To the theoreticians, it was a degenerate kind of eloquence with no other aim but to please and to enhance, by embellishing them, facts that were certain or, at least, uncontested. . . . The epideictic genre of oratory thus seemed to have more connection with literature than with argumentation. One result is that the division into oratorical genres helped to bring about the later disintegration of rhetoric, as the first two genres were appropriated by philosophy and dialectics, while the third was included in literary prose. Whately, writing in the nineteenth century, will criticize Aristotle for having paid too much attention to epideictic rhetoric.<sup>179</sup>

But as it soon becomes clear, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca reject this standard history. Epideictic has been greatly misunderstood, for it in fact “forms a central part of the art of persuasion.”<sup>180</sup> Rather than being focused on the display of the speaker’s skill, it is

argumentation addressing the audiences' values, values that are being "constantly recast and remodeled" by the art of epideictic. Richard Graff and Wendy Winn have identified the main *telos* of Perelman's epideictic as *communion*, what Perelman's mentor Eugène Dupréel termed *rappports sociaux*.<sup>181</sup> This sociological perspective "rejects the purely aesthetic understanding of the genre by emphasizing first and foremost its social function" in "the strengthening of the audience's adherence to communal values."<sup>182</sup> While admittedly epideictic "typically arouses no controversy and calls for no immediate action . . . this should not be taken to imply that for them epideictic oratory is *non-argumentative* . . . effective epideictic speech reaffirms values that will play a part in subsequent discourses that urge action. Moreover, it stirs or strengthens in audience members a *disposition* to act,"<sup>183</sup> for "without such common values, upon what foundation could deliberative and legal speeches rest?"<sup>184</sup>

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca establish one strategy for the rehabilitation of epideictic: turning its subordination beneath "practical" oratory into a foundation for that same oratory. Epideictic discourse is a social laboratory where the attitudes that guide practical judgment are founded. This strategy of rehabilitation has been given voice again most recently in the work of Jeffrey Walker:

In this view, "epideictic" appears as that which shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives; it shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves; and perhaps most significantly, it shapes the fundamental grounds, the "deep" commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine

decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums.<sup>185</sup>

What are the sorts of values that epideictic invites spectators to achieve communion over? Two different proposals come from Gerald Hauser and Lawrence Rosenfeld. Hauser focuses on the importance of “public morality” for rhetoric in general, particularly from an Aristotelian point of view. In his account, Aristotle sets up a number of ethical preconditions for the ability of rhetoric to succeed at all, given the highly problematic nature of the popular audience. Hauser places the *Rhetoric* in its immediate historical context: the disastrous aftermath of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides and Xenophon both gave much space in their histories of that conflict to the disastrous demagogical performances of figures like Kleon and Alcibiades.<sup>186</sup> What is at stake in such performances is the distinction between *techne* and *dynamis* in rhetoric that also marks the boundary between mechanical proficiency and virtue. While Kleon and Alcibiades used rhetorical *techne* to manipulate an audience for their own ends, the *dynamis* or capacity for seeing the available means of persuasion in each case is endowed by Aristotle with a deeply ethical importance, argues Hauser.<sup>187</sup> In ancient Athens, “making and judging public arguments presupposed then, as now, literacy in the community’s political and moral values as an a priori condition to assessing their relative importance to collective judgment on a particular issue.”<sup>188</sup> While the role of such a *dynamis* in deliberative or forensic rhetoric is clear, Hauser admits that epideictic “has a murkier relationship to the necessities of political life.”<sup>189</sup> But Hauser locates one in “the responsibility for telling the story of lived virtue.”<sup>190</sup>

By observing an epideictic performance, citizens experience the story of the golden mean

as it is lived in their community. The mimetic function of the encomiast provides the moral story of the community; it provides models for overcoming the city's partisan imbroglios. Epideictic offers instruction on recognizing virtue and thereby on retaining persuasion as an alternative to authority or force in the public domain.<sup>191</sup>

Hauser's epideictic is a gallery of positive (and one assumes negative) role models drawn from political culture. Its sphere of influence is eventually the same as deliberative and judicial rhetoric, only now seen at a temporal and/or spatial remove. For Hauser, encomium is the crucial epideictic genre, and "the encomiast presents the story of individuals and deeds worth imitating . . . Epideictic encouraged the constitutive activity propaedeutic to action: reflecting on public norms for proper political conduct."<sup>192</sup> Thus defined, epideictic fits neatly in the political realm as a means of sustaining the tradition of effective rhetorical action by "attuning citizens to civic virtues that may guide public judgment."<sup>193</sup> By stressing the identity of encomium and epideictic, and by neatly linking the eventual goal of epideictic to the guidance of public judgment, Hauser reclaims epideictic for the pragmatic program of rhetoric.

One of the first things about Lawrence W. Rosenfield's account of epideictic that catches notice, particularly after reading Hauser, is how he explicitly denies the identity that Hauser's later essay finds so essential: that of epideictic and encomium. Rosenfeld argues that if Aristotle had wanted to make epideictic and encomium synonymous, he would have used that older term.<sup>194</sup> By coining a new phrase, Aristotle signals that he expects the genre not to praise "accomplishments" in others, nor to "assess" public action in a way that pronounces success and failure in any particular actor.<sup>195</sup> Epideictic is derived from *epideixis*, which Rosenfeld follows

Heidegger in translating as “to shine forth.”<sup>196</sup> Epideictic rhetoric thus allows virtues to “shine forth” without reducing their “radiance” to a merely pragmatic success or failure in promoting an effective political culture. “Recognizing the wonder of letting be [is] the root experience of epideictic.”<sup>197</sup>

By associating epideictic with “the wonder of letting be,” Rosenfield signals his desire to emphasize, rather than ameliorate, the divide between epideictic and the other Aristotelian genres. Rosenfield is particularly keen to disavow any semblance of pragmatic judgment in regards to epideictic. This is not to say Rosenfield feels that, *contra* Perelman, Walker and Hauser, that epideictic responses will not eventually have some effect on the pragmatic modes of discourse; they may, but such effects are secondary and far from their most essential and important aspect. He chooses to translate *theoros* as “witness,” not “spectator,” with an eye to dignifying the activity of “not [being] asked for a judgment of the present state of those matters, but to be a *theoros* (“witness”) to the radiance emanating from the event itself.”<sup>198</sup> Anticipating Hauser, he states

It therefore makes no sense to claim that epideictic “rehearses” an audience in ethical maxims because the blessing of reality’s disclosure is a nonmaterial encounter to which the audience can only respond as a spectator . . . how the listener may behave tomorrow, or how greatly impressed he is at the moment, is of less import than his power to behold, to reach out through the speaker’s representation to a potential for mortal perfection which envelops us but ordinarily chooses to hide from the common view of men. Insofar as auditors can join the speaker as spectators of the noble and excellent in this fashion,

they will rejoice with him in their liberation and thereby make more permanent in the collective memory this confirmation of momentarily disclosed reality.

Contrasting “celebration” and “appreciation” with “judgment” and “evaluation,” Rosenfield finds in epideictic an alternative to rhetoric’s focus on argumentation and *krisis*, discrimination and the choice between alternatives. Epideictic has no *stasis* in the same sense as other rhetorical genres. Instead of argumentation, epideictic discourse centers on *amplification*, which Aristotle defines as a sort of enthymeme, though one wholly lacking in inference.<sup>199</sup> The spectator is not asked to evaluate, to grade an object like a teacher grades a test.<sup>200</sup> Rather, the auditor is asked to approach the unveiling of *aletheia* with *thaumadzein*, “an overwhelming sense of exultation that sweeps over us when we catch a glimmer of excellence abiding in a familiar object or event . . . Wonder is almost antithetical to the calculation needed for argumentation.”<sup>201</sup>

Rosenfield’s focus is mainly on the exultant, celebratory mode of epideictic. Certainly, the sort of detachment he conceives as essential might be hard to defend when confronted with the negative. But he does offer an example of such an encounter: Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s masterpiece *The Gulag Archipelago*. Rosenfield’s choice here to emphasize the role of the auditor not as a spectator but as a “witness” brings epideictic a giant step back toward the judicial, even if the judgment is one of “history” or “humanity,” not of a specifically empowered body that can mete out specific punishments:

Because he willingly bore witness to the entire degradation of the Soviet concentration camps, because he gazed unflinchingly at a monstrosity that the rest of mankind chose to

look away from, Solzhenitsyn's commemoration testifies to our capacity for life, truth, and human dignity even as it disparages the venality of those responsible for the evil. The survivor's scream, rooted as it is in a concern for life itself, shatters the complacency of those whose selfishness compels them to cling – in a conspiracy of silence – to a comforting, but false, view of life. To treat such a work as polemical misconstrues it. Can those outside the salon place a value on senseless human suffering? What can it mean to bring genocides to justice? No, we must take the survivor at his word: beyond despair comes a passionate dedication to record and an appreciation of horror as observed. It is worth considering in passing whether or not such records may come to represent the most authentic epideictic literature produced by our age.<sup>202</sup>

To insist on a type of hermeneutic that disavows judging pragmatically, to assert the value of a view that does not act, but simply appreciates, even if the appreciation is one of horror, cannot be said to rest upon any dichotomy that is intrinsic. As Walker has well demonstrated in his study of the kinship between poetic and rhetoric in the ancient world, such a dichotomy between pragmatic and epideictic discourses does not exist in practice; they exist on a continuum, not in rival camps.<sup>203</sup> To make such a distinction, as Rosenfield does, is a political act, political in a way that only the delineation of a putatively non-political realm can be. This paradox deserves further consideration, one that can be best served by engaging with a thinker who is an acknowledged influence on Hauser, Rosenfield, and Beiner: Hannah Arendt. Arendt's engagement with republican humanism in *The Human Condition* and with modernist aesthetics in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* present a paradoxical program that offers first

one, and then another, model for the efficacy of the spectatorial.

### 3c. Hannah Arendt's two models of public judgment

*The Human Condition*, a work whose influence on Habermas' theory of the public sphere is acknowledged,<sup>204</sup> offers a model of a public realm into which Hauser's vision of a gallery of ethical figures could fit comfortably. Arendt's discussion of public space occurs in context of the "human condition" of existence in a world of other people, people whom we experience as features of "the impact of the world's reality upon human existence," an impact which "conditions" the terms of our own existence.<sup>205</sup> She exalts public space as a place where we encounter the pluralism of the world and define ourselves in contradistinction to it. People acting in the public world therefore constantly submit themselves to our judgment through their visibility; this is what makes public life "public". The "appearance" of people and things in public space is "a condition of their reality."<sup>206</sup>

What makes public performance important is the ways that public personae model the human condition by demonstrating the conditioning encounters of human agents with the limiting influence of persons and things one cannot control. For republican thought, the great tradition to which Arendt is heir, the shifting nature of this conditioning force has a name: *fortuna*. The shifting, percolating nature of the public realm is identified with *askholia*, or unquiet, as opposed to the quiet contemplation that allows one to attain the language-transcendent silence of *nous*. Public performance in this sense performs *virtu*; one submits

oneself to encounters with fortune in the public arena with all its uncontrollable, limiting power and attempts to control one's fortune through public deportment or decorum, thus achieving immortality (or infamy) as one's dealings with fortune occur in the stark light of public perception.

The distinction between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, which relies on either the acceptance or abandonment of the realm of unquiet, is reflected in yet another distinction, one between eternity and immortality. "Immortality means endurance in time, deathless life on this earth and in this world as it was given" while "the philosopher's experience of the eternal, which to Plato was *arrheton* ('unspeakable') and to Aristotle *aneu logou* ('without word') . . . can occur only outside the realm of human affairs and outside the plurality of men." The ideal of the *vita activa*, growing out of a Greek world where the divine is anthropomorphic, offers a realm where mortals can produce

works and deeds and words – which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos whereby their capacity for the immortal deed, by their ability to leave non-perishable traces behind, men, their individual mortality notwithstanding, attain an immortality of their own and prove themselves to be of a "divine" nature. The distinction between man and animal runs right through the human species itself: only the best (*aristoi*), who constantly prove themselves to be the best (*aristeuein*, a verb for which there is no equivalent in any other language) and who "prefer immortal fame to mortal things," are really human; the others, content with whatever pleasures nature will yield them, live and

die like animals.<sup>207</sup>

The formally human inhabitants of such a realm could be said to constitute an aristocracy, a society of “the best for the best” or, “the really human for the really human,” if not for the tricky verb that Arendt locates in Greek: *Aristeuein*, to “prove” oneself to be the best. A true aristocracy, assuming that it could not rely on its own members, would struggle to find a suitably noble audience that one could prove itself superior to. The great achievement of the republican public sphere is to define the mission of such an aristocracy, not as achieving the perpetuation of the *aristoi*, but to achieving the perpetuation of a public realm where *aristeuein* is even possible; such an attitude recognizes that “aristocratization” comes not from above but from below, by the public acclamation of the society that one serves. That such an aristocracy would accept this tethering to the judgment of the commons is an indicator of the emergence of a republican public sphere, and the concurrent shift of focus from the possible immortality of the individual to the possible immortality of a free society:

[The common world] is what we have in common not only with those who live with us, but also with those who were here before and with those who will come after us. But such a common world can survive the coming and going of the generations only to the extent that it appears in public. It is the publicity of the public realm which can absorb and make shine through the centuries whatever men may want to save from the natural ruin of time . . . For the *polis* was for the Greeks, as the *res publica* was for the Romans, first of all their guarantee against the futility of individual life, the space protected against this

futility and reserved for the relative permanence, if not immortality, or mortals.<sup>208</sup>

One can see now how the sort of epideictic that Hauser emphasizes, centered on the encomium, is perfectly suited to sustain “the striving for immortality which originally had been the spring and center of the *vita activa*.”<sup>209</sup>

In reading *The Human Condition* this way, one could be excused in thinking Arendt a fierce partisan of the *vita activa* as opposed to the *vita contemplativa*. Arendt treats the Christian withdrawal from the world in the Middle Ages with an unmistakable disdain, as for example when she says of the principle of charity that, while “it is incapable of founding a public realm of its own, [it] is quite adequate to the main Christian principle of worldlessness and is admirably fit to carry a group of essentially worldless people through the world, a group of saints or a group of criminals, provided only it is understood that the world is doomed.”<sup>210</sup> The tone is similar when she discusses *theoria*, Aristotle’s “spectatorship” from the *Rhetoric*, defined by Arendt as “the word given to the experience of the eternal.”<sup>211</sup> Regarding Aquinas, she notes that “politically speaking, if to die is the same as to ‘cease to be among men,’ experience of the eternal is a kind of death, and the only thing that separates it from real death is that it is not final because no living creature can endure it for any length of time.”<sup>212</sup> Arendt’s citation of Plato’s allegory of the cave is meant to highlight the lack of civic friendship assumed by the *vita contemplativa*: “the philosopher, having liberated himself from the fetters that bound him to his fellow men, leaves the cave in ‘perfect singularity,’ as it were, neither accompanied nor followed by others.”<sup>213</sup>

But in the decade following publication of *The Human Condition* Arendt embarked on

*The Life of the Mind*, a sustained engagement with the idea of the contemplative life mediated particularly via an encounter with the work of Emanuel Kant. This is the Kant that Beiner selects to pair with Aristotle, a Kant filtered through the lens of Arendt, and her provocative claim that one can find an “unwritten political philosophy” in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (not where one might usually think to find it, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*). Arendt’s reading has been greeted with some degree of skepticism, even somewhat recently from Beiner himself.<sup>214</sup> Despite Kant’s almost exclusive philosophical interest in personal autonomy in the realms of epistemology, ethics and aesthetics, Arendt combines statements by Kant regarding his hope for a popular readership, various traces and hints throughout the third critique, and works such as *Perpetual Peace* and *The Context of the Faculties* to proclaim Kant a philosopher of sociality.

Beiner’s edited edition of Arendt’s *Lectures On Kant’s Political Philosophy* is prefaced by Arendt’s remarks on “judging” from the first book of *The Life of the Mind* series, remarks that start with the comment (sure to offend rhetoricians) that “not until Kant did this faculty become a major topic of a major thinker”<sup>215</sup> (Beinart will attempt to correct this apparent overstatement in *Political Judgment* by staging an encounter between Aristotle and Kant). The making of judgments thus understood represent a “distinct capacity of our minds” because they “are not arrived at by either deduction or induction – in short, they have nothing to do with logical operations.”<sup>216</sup> It is therefore elusive to the philosophically minded. “Judgment deals with particulars, and when the thinking ego moving along generalities emerges from its withdrawal and returns to the world of particular appearances, it turns out the mind needs a new “gift” to deal with them.”

As the lectures commence it becomes clear that it is not simply the gap between

particulars and generalities that makes this new terrain hostile for the philosophically minded. This “entirely new human faculty” that Kant has discovered “behind taste”<sup>217</sup> (the original title of the *Critique of Judgment* was *The Critique of Taste*) is tied up with the question of pluralism, the “human condition” of conditioning and being conditioned by our encounter with others. As Arendt is at pains to point out, the majority of Kant’s project, and synecdochally philosophy as a whole, focuses on “the conduct of the self in its independence of others.”<sup>218</sup> The consideration of judgment breaks new philosophical ground by dealing with not only with particulars, but with sociality as well. For the essential interest of judgment is not the fact that we come to judgments about particulars but that we are then compelled to share and defend such judgments, despite the fact that we cannot point to a general rule to explain them.

Judgment, as Kant defines it, is linked with Plato in the sense that aesthetic judgment invites interlocutors. In a depiction quite at odds with the way she depicted Plato in *The Human Condition*, Arendt notes that Socrates did not sequester himself in a sect or a school of dogmatism:

What he actually did was to make *public*, in discourse, the thinking process – that dialogue that soundlessly goes on within me, between me and myself; he *performed* in the marketplace the way the flute-player performed at a banquet . . . He became the figure of *the* philosopher because he took on all comers in the marketplace – was entirely unprotected, open to all questioners, to all demands to give an account of and to live up to what he said. The schools and sects are unenlightened (in Kantian parlance) because they depend on the doctrines of their founders. Ever since Plato’s Academy, they have stood

in opposition to “public opinion,” to society at large, to the “they.”<sup>219</sup>

What the concept of “taste” offered to Kant is access to the realm of “common sense” that the philosopher has traditionally opposed himself to, and Kant, aspiring to the Enlightenment ideal of “the public use of one’s reason,” worked diligently to publicize his philosophy so that it could be evaluated by that same common sense. But Kant himself would be included by most of his contemporaries and predecessors in this group of philosophers opposed to common sense, by virtue of his counter-intuitive conclusions in the first *Critique*: their inaccessibility first of all, and second their almost scandalous denial of common-sense reality. Mendelssohn called him the “all-destroyer”<sup>220</sup> and Hegel who along with the German Idealists pushed the heterodox implications of the first *Critique* far beyond where Kant would have been comfortable, expressed with confidence the view that

Philosophy is by its very nature something esoteric which is not made for the mob nor is it capable of being prepared for the mob; philosophy is philosophy only to the extent that it is the very opposite of the intellect and even more the opposite of common sense, by which we understand the local and temporary limitations of generations; in its relation to this common sense, the world of philosophy as such is a world turned upside down.<sup>221</sup>

Of course the crux of the biscuit is the definition of common sense at play in Hegel’s statement; it is *doxa* as opposed to *episteme*, something shifting, shapeless and local as opposed to something clear, distinct, and universal. To the extent that this distinction is in play in Plato

and Kant as well, there is a tension between the two central concepts of critique and publicity, a tension that is played out in the relationship of critic and public. If the critic is firmly on the side of *episteme*, and the public is on the side of *doxa*, then the relationship is top down only, and aggressive to boot; the philosopher strives above all else to shatter the complacent common-sense of the mob. Many of course have taken on this iconoclastic role gleefully, as did Muret, Montaigne, Swift and the Scriblarians, and the other “strong wits” that followed their lead. Yet Kant (“in distinction to all other philosophers” claims Arendt<sup>222</sup>) always pictured a popular audience for his work, even writing in the first *Critique* of the hope that the “narrow footpath for the few would become a high-road [for all],”<sup>223</sup> and devising a plan to popularize it. When confronted with the incomprehensibility of his own work, “he regretted this deeply and never gave up hope that it would be possible to popularize his thought.”<sup>224</sup> For those who saw Kant as Heinrich Heine did, as “that great destroyer in the realm of ideas, [who] far surpassed Maximilian Robespierre in terrorism,”<sup>225</sup> the second *Critique* was a pandering failure of nerve, an attempt to curry favor with the sort of conventionally minded public that Heine caustically personifies in the figure of “old Lampe,” Kant’s manservant:

There is another play to be performed. After tragedy comes farce. So far Immanuel Kant has played the tragic part of the most inexorable philosopher, he has stormed heaven, he has put the entire garrison to the sword, the Supreme Lord of the world, unproved, is weltering in his blood, there is no longer any universal compassion, no fatherly love, no reward in the next life for self-denial in this one, the immortality of the soul is about to give up the ghost – it’s gasping and groaning – and old Lampe is standing by with his

umbrella under his arm, a sorrowful spectator, sweating with terror, and the tears are running down his face. Then Immanuel Kant has mercy, showing that he is not only a great philosopher but a good man, and he thinks for a bit, and he says with a mixture of kindness and irony: ‘Old Lampe must have a God, otherwise the poor man can’t be happy – but man is meant to be happy in this world – so says practical reason – all right then, practical reason may as well guarantee the existence of God.’ In consequence of this argument Kant distinguishes between theoretical reason and practical reason, and with the latter, as though with a magic wand he restores to life the corpse of deism, which theoretical reason had killed.<sup>226</sup>

Yet in letters to Mendelssohn and Christian Garve, written two years after the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant’s agonizing over his lack of popular appeal seems to focus less on the issue of religious heterodoxy and more on the compositional style of the *Critique*. In a letter to Mendelssohn he writes:

[Though the *Critique* is] the outcome of reflections which had occupied me for a period of at least twelve years, I brought it to completion in the greatest haste within some four or five months . . . with little thought of . . . rendering it easy of comprehension by the reader . . . since otherwise, had I . . . sought to give it a more popular form, the work would probably never have been completed at all.<sup>227</sup>

And in another letter to Christian Garve’,

Every philosophical work must be susceptible of popularity; if not, it probably conceals nonsense beneath a fog of seeming sophistication.<sup>228</sup>

While Arendt implies that Kant's interest in popular audiences is an act of rebellion against philosophic tradition as significant as any in his "Copernican Revolution," the immediate context suggests that Kant was not breaking from away from a mold but aspiring to fill one. His correspondence and friendship with Mendelssohn, the widely celebrated public intellectual and "German Socrates" to whom "no stranger who came to Berlin failed to pay his personal respects,"<sup>229</sup> is telling as a possible model; and in many senses, the popular moral essayist that Mendelssohn was and that Kant aspired to be was a role that Addison above all else had pioneered and made possible. Heine, for one, would not have seen in Kant's assertion of the necessary susceptibility of philosophy to popularity a bold break from the past, but instead, a regressive sop to current practice. In good Attic tradition Heine even praises the style of the first *Critique*:

But why did Kant write the *Critique of Pure Reason* in such a grey, dry, wrapping-papery style? I think that, having rejected the mathematical form of presentation adopted by the followers of Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff, he feared that science might forfeit some of its dignity if he uttered its views in a light, agreeable, cheerful tone. He therefore gave it a stiff, abstract form, which coldly rebuffed any familiarity from the lower intellectual classes. He wanted to stand haughtily aloof from the popular philosophers of the day,

who aimed at middle-class directness.<sup>230</sup>

While Heine wants to claim Kant for the iconoclastic project of startling plebian intelligences, Arendt wants to credit him with the concept of a popular philosophy. Arendt's own view of Kant as a solitary figure in this regard can be explained somewhat by her dismissal of the 18<sup>th</sup> century concern with taste as a discourse "behind which" it was necessary for Kant to "discover" judgment. For Arendt, the 18<sup>th</sup> century concern with common sense and taste is so unphilosophical that it takes a work like the *Critique of Judgment* to make those subjects respectable. This may be overstating the issue, and Arendt is certainly capable of overstatement. But the third *Critique* retrospectively glosses the concern with taste that Addison embodied, and to an extent serves as a vindication of that concern.

But Arendt goes even further. For her, the *Critique of Judgment* addresses "a Kantian topic that – literally speaking, is nonexistent – i.e., his nonwritten political philosophy."<sup>231</sup> This "innovative"<sup>232</sup> claim by Arendt needs to be looked at by us closely, for Kant's third Critique is in fact evaluating a project that by and large can be attributed to the *Spectator* and to Addison in particular. Certainly Addison was not the first modern figure to discuss "taste" (he himself cites Gracian as innovating the topic<sup>233</sup>) but he was one of the first to make the discourse of "taste" a *public* phenomenon, and it is the sense of the judgment of taste as a public phenomenon that Kant is addressing philosophically in the *Critique of Judgment*. If Arendt can find a political importance to Kantian judgment, such an importance is equally relevant to Addison and the achievement of the *Spectator*.

Arendt tried to anticipate objections to her thesis elsewhere by admitting that Kant

expounds two political philosophies which differ sharply from one another – the first being that which is generally accepted as such in his *Critique of Practical Reason* and the second that contained in his *Critique of Judgment*. That the first part of the latter is, in reality, a political philosophy is a fact seldom mentioned in works on Kant; on the other hand, it can, I think, be seen from all his political writings that for Kant himself the theme of “judgment” carried more weight than that of “practical reason.” In the *Critique of Judgment* freedom is portrayed as a predicate of the power of imagination and not of the will, and the power of imagination is linked most closely with that wider manner of thinking which is political thinking par excellence, because it allows us to “put ourselves in the minds of other men.”<sup>234</sup>

Kant’s critique of the judgment of taste focuses on the following points. Taste deals with particulars and particulars only. It does not judge whether or not roses in general are beautiful, but whether this particular rose is beautiful. To the effect that the subject of an aesthetic judgment is situated in space, it remains a contingent judgment. Yet aesthetic judgment is detached from the sort of temporal pressures that practical discourse imposes. It is not “kairotic” judgment in the sense that it doesn’t matter when and where the aesthetic judgment is made (the fact that a beautiful rose has withered and died does not force a revision of the aesthetic judgment that the rose was beautiful while in bloom). But while the immediate encounter with an object may promote pleasure or displeasure, aesthetic judgment is not concerned with “interest”, or the promotion of the existence of an object simply because it gives one pleasure. If that was

all there was to aesthetic judgment, there would be no need to communicate the judgment to others. Yet it is the need to assert such a judgment to others that is the hallmark of aesthetic judgment. An assertion that says “that rose is beautiful to me” says little more than something about the taste of the individual. But the assertion “this is a beautiful rose” is an attempt to persuade an interlocutor to agree, to establish the rose’s beauty as an objective fact. The mere presence of pleasure in the experiencing subject is not enough to persuade; there must be something in the object that is capable of causing pleasure not just in ourselves, but in others. This aspect of aesthetic argument yokes it closer to rhetorical principles in the sense that it is not a private judgment but a public one that intrinsically seeks assent from others.

This detachment of the aesthetic object from its temporal immediacy, and its apotheosis into a truth claim by the aesthetic appeal, is reflected in the odd way that the sense “taste” is appropriated by the concept “taste.” First, unlike sight, hearing and touch, senses which “clearly give us objects of the external world and therefore are easily communicable . . . smell and taste give inner sensations that are entirely private and incommunicable.” Furthermore, discrimination in these senses is immediate and apparently divorced from rational judgment. “One can withhold judgment from what one sees and, though less easily, one can withhold judgment from what one hears or touches. But in matters of taste or smell, the it-pleases-me-or-displeases-me is immediate and overwhelming. And pleasure and displeasure are again, totally idiosyncratic.” Sharing the same “taste” cannot be a question of sharing the same pleasure, for such pleasures are purely subjective. It is the sharing of the *idea* of taste, of taste elevated to a conceptual level, that is the *telos* of aesthetic argumentation.

Arendt died before writing the book that would have fully explored the implications of

her political reading of the *Critique of Judgment*. But Beiner in *Political Judgment* attempts to address the nature of that political commitment, and does so by placing Kantian aesthetic theory on a collision course with the ancient ideal of *phronesis* that drives the encomiastic model of epideictic. The immediacy of taste, as in Kant's account of duty in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, presents a way of getting around what Kant sees as the calculating and eventually deceiving nature of prudential reasoning. Prudence is driven by the desire for personal happiness, like the interest in personal possession that aborts aesthetic judgment. In his article "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, But it Does Not Apply in Practice,'" Kant criticizes the pursuit of happiness on the grounds that "motives involving happiness always require a great deal of resourcefulness and deliberation."

A will which follows the maxim of happiness vacillates between various motives in trying to reach a decision. For it considers the possible results of its decision, and these are highly uncertain; and it takes a good head to find a way out of the host of arguments and counter-arguments without miscalculating the total effect. On the other hand, if we ask what duty requires, there is no confusion whatsoever about the answer, and we are at once certain what action to take.<sup>235</sup>

For this reason, Kant lauds the statesman who lacks prudence but is nevertheless in the right: "the legislator may err in judging whether or not the measures he adopts are *prudent*, but not in deciding whether or not the law harmonizes with the principle of right." This gives the legislator "an infallible *a priori* standard . . . and he need not wait for experience to show

whether the means are suitable.”<sup>236</sup> Compare this with an exemplar of the encomiastic text like Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*. There, experience is all; agents are depicted against a ground of expediency and judged on their ability to adapt to circumstances and find success.

Machiavelli's greatest scorn is reserved for those individuals whose adherence to *a priori* principles causes them to act foolishly or imprudently when faced with the demands of experience, what Machiavelli would refer to as *fortuna*. For Kant, such individuals would be lauded, for they followed their sense of duty to the end without allowing practicality to dilute the purity of that duty. “I cannot exchange my duty for a rule of expediency which says I ought not to attempt the impracticable.”<sup>237</sup>

Much as duty offers immediate access to knowledge of right action, unsullied by means-ends rationality, taste provides a model of judgment without the possible distorting influence of deliberation. Judgments of taste cannot be deliberated away; they are not susceptible to “tutelage.” Judgments of taste reflect the ideal of autonomy that Kant feels is the essential component of Enlightenment. Kant's rejection of interest in aesthetics is of a piece with his rejection of prudence in ethics; both reject a calculative ideal that *persuades* in favor of an immediate one that *convinces*. Thus both are also linked together with Kant's adamant rejection of the rhetorical tradition. And according to Beiner, these convictions of Kant are linked by his politics. The political principles are isomorphic with his theory of taste, and therefore come from the same source:

The chief reason why Kant exalted the immediacy of political right and duty was, purely and simply, because he was such a committed democrat (as was also the case with

Rousseau). If political rectitude is “immediately” accessible, unmediated by knowledge formed and shaped by mutual discourse, then it is accessible to all, the common people no less than the wise. It thereby dispenses with 'reflective' deliberation, in the sense that 'reflectivity' demands a higher insight accessible only to the few. The latter supplies a role for political wisdom, a role circumvented by Kant's insistence upon moral immediacy. Kant's democratic renunciation of prudence is, then, a rebuke to the aristocratic principles of the ancients.<sup>238</sup>

It is this isomorphism between duty and taste that leads Arendt, and Beiner after her, to see a link between the democratic principles behind duty and the autonomy of aesthetic taste. But while Arendt sees the will to pronounce the judgment of taste as a means of bringing freedom into a “social” realm dominated by expedience (thus forming a link with *The Human Condition*), Beiner sees the anti-teleology of Kant's aesthetic theory as having a negative influence on his political theory. Consequently, Beiner proceeds to import Aristotelean teleology into Kantian politics, while positioning aesthetic autonomy as a necessary counter weight to the pursuit of ends. In other words, aesthetic judgment must once more be cycled through political practice in order to achieve ultimate meaning. While the autonomy of aesthetic judgment manifests the democratic principle that everyone is entitled to judgment (as opposed to the “aristocratic” principle that Beiner locates in prudence), eventually judgment still has to submit to an assessment of its teleological success or failure. It is in fact this meta-judgment that Beiner identifies as the ultimate goal of the spectator, and like Hauser, Beiner turns to Thucydides, historical consciousness, and the encomiastic to define the true end of spectator judgment:

We know what political judgment is, in this sense, only when we encounter *exemplars* (or examples) of judgment, that is, men or women who judge with impeccable consistency and skill . . . We shall grasp the nature of political judgment only when we are presented with exemplary judges of political affairs (just as we were able to clarify the notion of a lack of judgment only by considering an exemplary figure, namely Eichmann). Political judgment discloses itself only in an exemplary performance, just as aesthetic judgment only discloses itself when we witness someone actually rendering the appropriate verdict upon some particular aesthetic object. Judgment cannot be fully rendered by abstract definition or analysis: we know it when we see it, and when we see it, we see it embodied in some exemplary judging subject.<sup>239</sup>

Beiner turns to encomium (for these exemplars of judgment are most surely charged with “attuning citizens to civic virtues that may guide public judgment”) for the same reasons that Perelman, Hauser, Walker and others do, to channel aesthetic judgment into practical ends. They aim to rescue spectators from themselves, to enlist them in an “active and critical citizenry.” Such a process, it is assumed, works by restoring to the spectator a practical teleology, a means of judging the judges' ability to achieve the practical goals of redress and expediency. Yet without the hindsight of a Thucydides, a Livy or a Machiavelli, how are we to make such teleological judgments? According to Beiner, where it comes to the civic virtue of exemplary judgment, “we know it when we see it.” This leaves a troubling question: is the immediacy due to a naturalization of teleological judgment that comes with being educated in the political

process? Or is it a matter of taste, an intrinsic judgment that arises without deliberation? Is such a judgment a teleologically minded reflection on the ultimate effectiveness of the public figure, or an immediate sense of goodness abiding in the figure that the judge will follow despite or even because of their practical failure?

The message of Kant to rhetoric is eventually not ignore this aspect of judgment. If we do, we are intrinsically accepting his dichotomy. Detachment and the rejection of pragmatism may seem to mark a space beyond the scope of rhetoric. But they are forces that have shaped our political and public lives and therefore deserve to be examined as rhetorical phenomena. And where it comes to such impulses we need to go back further than Kant to the so-called “pre-philosophical” origins of taste and/or aesthetic “disinterest”: we need to go back to the summer of 1712 when Addison, in *Spectator* 409-421, laid out in detail the sum of his ideas about aesthetics and artistic production in a series of papers come to be known as “The Pleasures of the Imagination,” which in the view of many establish the grounds of British aesthetics.<sup>240</sup>

### 3d. *The Pleasures of the Imagination and the Politics of Taste*

If, as Ronald Paulson notes, “disinterestedness has become the term that most commonly distinguishes aesthetic perception,” we have the work of Jerome Stolnitz to thank. Stolnitz, in a much cited article,<sup>241</sup> credits Lord Shaftsbury (in *Characteristics*, published in 1701) with first developing an *ethics* of disinterest, an ethics which moreover is “indistinguishable from an aesthetic theory.”<sup>242</sup> Stolnitz places Shaftsburian disinterest in opposition to Hobbesian egoism and Lockean contract law, as he rejects even the positive manifestations of egoism and rational

self-interest in the pursuit of good works.<sup>243</sup> Shaftsbury urges “that genuine moral and religious concern are with what is intrinsic and that they are therefore terminal.”<sup>244</sup> Stolnitz sees Shaftsbury’s ethics of disinterest as a nascent aesthetics written in an ethical vocabulary. The ground is now ready for Addison, who in *Spectator* # 409 announced to his readers the following:

I shall next *Saturday* enter upon an *Essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination*, which though it shall consider that Subject at large, will perhaps suggest to the Reader what it is that gives a Beauty to many Passages of the finest Writers in both Prose and Verse. An Undertaking of this nature is entirely new, I question not but it will be received with Candour.

Addison, in previewing his essays, “promises something 'entirely new' . . . they were just that” says Stolnitz.<sup>245</sup> Addison brings the aesthetic theory hidden in Shaftsbury's ethical theory out into the open, Stolnitz argues, by examining “disinterest” as a specific aesthetic phenomenon, as an attitude of attending to the world that is presented to one's senses. Although some of Addison's papers about the imagination do refer to the reception of artistic creation in the restricted sense of the term aesthetics, it is ultimately placed in the context of aesthetics in the expanded sense, one that refers to sensual experience in general. Specifically, Addison takes on the issue of disinterested perception, the phenomenon by which

A Man of a Polite Imagination is let into a great many Pleasures that the Vulgar are not

capable of receiving. He can converse with a Picture, and find an agreeable Companion in a Statue. He meets with a secret Refreshment in a Description, and often feels a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of Property in everything he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated Parts of Nature administer to his Pleasures: So that he looks upon the World, as it were, in another Light, and discovers in it a Multitude of Charms that conceal themselves from the generality of Mankind.<sup>246</sup>

Stolnitz argues that Addison's achievement here is in isolating “aesthetic disinterest” within a particular faculty. “The rubric 'imagination' marks off this experience and names it. The 'Essays' are devoted to 'the Imagination' because imagination provides a habitat for disinterestedness.”<sup>247</sup> This seems true enough within Stolnitz's own paradigm, although his thesis that such a phenomenon as “aesthetic disinterest” exists at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or indeed at all has been challenged by George Dickie and most recently by Miles Rind.<sup>248</sup> The debate is an important one within the technical field of aesthetic theory, but even if we accept Rind's conclusion that Shaftsbury and Addison champion disinterestedness in the “ordinary” rather than the “aesthetic” sense of the word, that is, as the appreciation of objects “without regard to any profit it might bring one,”<sup>249</sup> it is clear that both Shaftsbury and Addison value “aesthetic disinterest” in the way that Kant, and for that matter Rosenfield do, as a programmatic alternative to the practical teleology of prudential action.

Still this leaves us with the important question of whether Addison, in marking off the experience of disinterestedness and locating it within the faculty of imagination, is also marking

it off in terms of who may or can have access to it. Recall Beiner's claim that Kant championed immediate judgments such as taste or duty at the expense of prudence because "he was such a committed democrat." Because immediate judgment is "unmediated by knowledge formed and shaped by mutual discourse," it "dispenses with 'reflective' deliberation" that is "accessible only to the few." Consequently, Beiner suggests that the political importance of Kantian aesthetic judgment lies in the way that it, like duty, constitutes "a rebuke to the aristocratic principles of the ancients."<sup>250</sup> Such a distinction seems odd in light of the trajectory of recent social theory, which sees taste as even more of a social marker than deliberation. In rhetorical theory, in fact, deliberation is more likely to be seen as exhibiting potential as a *lingua franca* than are judgments of taste.<sup>251</sup>

There are two primary strategies for rejecting the democratic potential of judgments of taste (other than the explicit assumption that taste is inherently an aristocratic value, which removes the terms of debate). The first is to link taste to explicit doctrines of exclusion and hierarchy underlying liberal thought, while the second is to link it to the same doctrines, now implicit instead of explicit, once liberalism has learnt to denounce such doctrines. Carole Fabricant chooses the first strategy when she asserts that Addison in "Pleasures" affirms "a hierarchic Chain of Seeing" which "justifies social distinctions by converting them into epistemological, aesthetic, even biological categories."<sup>252</sup> She cites the following passage as evidence of this tendency in Addison:

For, to have a true Relish, and form a right Judgment of a Description, Man should be born with a good Imagination. . . . The Fancy must be warm, to retain the Print of those

Images it hath received from outward Objects; and the Judgment discerning, to know what Expressions are most proper to cloath and adorn them to the best Advantage. A Man who is deficient in either of these Respects, tho' he may receive the general Notion of a Description, can never see distinctly all its particular Beauties: As a Person, with a weak Sight, may have the confused prospect of a Place that lies before him, without entering into its several Parts, or discerning the variety of its Colours in their full Glory and Perfection.

By relating the faculty of imagination (for Stolnitz the “habitat” for disinterestedness) to physical difference, Fabricant suggests, Addison links his aesthetics to wider discourses of inequality. Under the rise of bourgeois ideology, this discourse of hierarchical difference concerns class<sup>253</sup>, gender<sup>254</sup>, and race,<sup>255</sup> and its specific purpose is to limit and create exceptions to the doctrine of universal equality enshrined in liberal doctrines of universal right. The need for limits and exceptions to rights along class, gender and racial lines has of course, been a feature of debate in democratic societies, with the explicit demands for such exclusions shrunk to what proponents insist are extraordinary circumstances (i.e., debates over extending benefits and basic rights to same-sex partners, felons, and undocumented immigrants). This is a significant change from the mainstream insistence on broad powers of exclusion that was a prominent feature of U.S. politics through *at least* the 19<sup>th</sup> century (the explicit assertion of racial privilege being a primary feature of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and our being less than a century out from women's suffrage). The marker of the exclusionist doctrines we are considering here is their inability to be ameliorated through meritocratic procedures; the bare fact of physical difference is

enough.

In the context of these concerns, Kant's own choice of a counter-example to the principle of aesthetic judgment, “that Iroquois chief who said that nothing in Paris pleased him more than the restaurants,”<sup>256</sup> does not provide comfort. Addison gives in the *Spectator* # 50 his own account of this story, whose presence in Kant is not attributed. The city is London, not Paris, the “Indian Kings” number four, not one, and restaurants are unmentioned. The Kings in reality were in London to solicit aid against the French, which makes Kant's version of the tale even more suspect.<sup>257</sup> Still, the point of the story is still the conceit of a “savage” taste confronted with “civilization,” and one needs to be on the lookout for signs that any deficits in the aesthetic judgments of the Indian Kings are attributed to phenotypic difference, that they suffer from racially inflected “weak Sight.”

Addison reports on receiving from the King's host and then having translated “a little Bundle of Papers, which he assured . . . were written by King *Sa Ga Yean Qua Rash To*.”<sup>258</sup> The “King”, literate and a Christian, comments on the greatness of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the comparative smallness in the piety of its worshippers. “It is probable that when this great Work was begun . . . there was some Religion among this People. However, upon attending a service I could not observe any Circumstance of Devotion in their Behavior . . . instead of paying their Worship to the Deity of the Place, they were most of them bowing and curtsying to one another, and a considerable Number of them fast asleep.”<sup>259</sup> The courtiers accompanying the Kings, true to Queen Anne's vacillation on matters of party, consist of both a Whig and a Tory. Each warns of the other, the Tory that Whigs “would be apt to knock us down for being Kings,” while the Whig warns that Tories “would treat us ill for being Foreigners.” The King soon interprets these

tales of Whigs and Tories as “Misrepresentations and Fictions . . . of such Monsters as are not really in their Country.”<sup>260</sup> The king also comments on the bizarreness of other British customs and fashions: breeches and petticoats, wigs and beauty patches. In short the King critiques shallow devotion, party rage, and extravagant dress. “Amidst these wild remarks” concludes the Spectator, “there now and then appears something very reasonable.”<sup>261</sup> But of course, these opinions of the King are Addison's own.

By using the four kings as examples of “detached spectatorship,” whose identities as sojourners gave them the required critical distance to render appropriate judgments upon London culture, Addison theoretically adds them to his gallery of spectators from *Spectator* #10, a group that can now be said to be diverse among racial and gender lines. Thus we can discount the suggestion that Addison's aesthetic constitutes an *explicitly* exclusionary agenda; it is more complex than that. A clue about how we might think about the politics of Addison's aesthetics can be found in William Walker's article on the “Pleasures,” which attempts to refute the common assertion that they “are exhibits in the case for eighteenth-century aesthetics as bourgeois ideology.”<sup>262</sup> Citing myriad critiques of C.B. MacPherson's landmark 1962 work *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* that established Locke as a bourgeois ideologue,<sup>263</sup> Walker argues against Addisonian critics like Fabricant and Erin Mackie who rely on MacPherson to make claims that Addison's essays offer “the aesthetic equivalent of Locke's political theory . . . which begins with essentially egalitarian or liberal-democratic assumptions about the natural individuals' right to property, each man's right to his own labor, and the essence of free and equal beings in the state of nature, and ends with a defense of monopoly capitalism and class division,”<sup>264</sup> To this view, Walker opposes J. G. A. Pocock's observation that

Marxist and *marxisant* historians . . . feel obliged to explain all social opposition or radical thought in preindustrial eighteenth century Britain – unless it can be dismissed as “traditional” or outright “reactionary” -- as the ideology of a bourgeoisie, to be contrasted with that of a feudal, paternalist, or hierarchical; this bourgeois radicalism must further be integrated with a “liberal” possessive individualism associated as closely as possible with the name of Locke, who has become a necessary actor in their scheme of things.

Historians of this persuasion have been offended by the suggestion that radicalism in the eighteenth century consisted largely of a polemic against a system of public credit dominated by a landed aristocracy, that it was conducted largely in the name of classical-republican and agrarian-military values, and that it was in the defense of the Whig aristocracy that an ethos of commercial individualism was first elaborated.<sup>265</sup>

Works like Pocock's shift the focus of political analyses of eighteenth century culture away from the classic bourgeois verses aristocracy conflicts of Marxist analyses towards the “Whig” verses “Tory” debates over the rise of British Empire: an imperial project that involved an active collaboration between the financial classes and the aristocracy that together constituted the “monied interest.” It is within this sphere of mercantile-aristocratic proto-imperial culture that Addison moved throughout his career: as a social climber who eventually married a Countess, and as a Chief Secretary and Keeper of Records for Ireland, he cannot be purely defined according to the narrow definition of a bourgeois directly engaged in the selling and buying of human capital. Consequently, the imagination on display in the *Spectator* is not one of

bourgeois acquisitiveness. Rather, it opposes the detached, speculative surveillance of the monied interest to a notion of personal property not yet bourgeois but rather associated with republican “image of the 'patriot,' the individual rendered independent by his property and permitted an autonomous engagement in public affairs, a figure featured most prominently at this time in the English neo-Machiavellian writings of James Harrington. This image was regularly opposed to that of the man of commerce, and the latter figure “had to fight his way into political recognition in the teeth of the 'patriot' ideal.”<sup>266</sup>

The polemics of this struggle often turned on the notion of “imagination” and “speculation” in the wake of the founding of the Bank of England and the establishment of an expansionist, militarist and imperial Britain that relied on public credit. It was patriot virtue, the security and independence of fixed property, which “the Financial Revolution seemed to challenge:”

Government stock is a promise to repay at a future date; from the inception and development of the National Debt, it is known that this date will in reality never be reached . . . Government is therefore maintained by the investor's imagination concerning a moment which will never exist in reality. The ability of merchant and landowner to raise the loans and mortgages they need is similarly imaginary. Property – the material foundation of both personality and government – has ceased to be real and has become not merely mobile but imaginary . . .

[As a result] government and politics seemed to have been placed at the mercy of

passion, fantasy and appetite, and these forces were known to feed on themselves and to be without moral limit. . . . this was seen as leading not only to corruption, but to the despotism of speculative fantasy. Booms and busts, bulls and bears, became the determinants of politics . . . and this was all seen as placing politics at the mercy of a self-generated hysteria (in the full sexist sense).<sup>267</sup>

This feminized and deracinated figure of Whig commerce exhibits the fact that when we find doctrines of explicit exclusion in early capitalism, they are coming from a Tory, landed, country position that also fears the white males of the Whig, monied, city establishment may become allied with their others in the imperial project. Whereas the country patriot was rooted in the soil and sure of his own opinions, the city man was feminine in his pursuit of pleasure, his changeableness of opinion, even in his erotic pursuit of women.<sup>268</sup> Likewise, what we may refer to anachronistically as the “rootless cosmopolitanism” of the Whig establishment laid them open to the claim that they were effectively foreigners in their own land (and in fact, every land), and therefore ready to sell out patriotic concerns for love of profit. Such a sentiment could and was used as a critique against empire, specifically against empire's expansive need to incorporate foreign cultures, which could be said to poison the imperial host.<sup>269</sup>

Meanwhile, for the imperial Whig ideology, the incorporation of women and the foreigner as potential members of a community of “polite culture” both acknowledges the cultural attacks of the landed party and reverses the ground of the argument. If we read Addison on how the “prospect” of a property is to be preferred to “mere possession” of it, this celebration of detachment also expresses disdain for the embedded nature of male patriot virtue (to the critics

of this attitude, “prospect” without “possession” is of course a code for reliance on credit). Addison's celebration in *Spectator* # 10 of spectators and blanks, not to mention female and foreign spectators there and elsewhere, can also be seen as a rejection of the sort of vigorous pursuit of nativist masculine virtue that the landed patriot represents, a move that Pocock sees as wholly consistent with Whig ideology. He says of “Addisonian politeness” that

It could be used against the uncouth virtue of the Spartans and Romans – of Cato the Elder, with his distrust of all philosophers – being exalted by the neo-Harringtonian critics of the regime, and against the radical deists with whom some were still associated. . . . Placed in a counter-Harringtonian context, the ethos of politeness is seen to make an appeal to that historical movement discussed by both Fletcher and Defoe, in which the rise of commerce and culture had led to the replacement of the armed citizen by the leisured taxpayer under parliamentary government. But the exaltation of politeness is not just a way of saying that the acquisition of culture is worth the price; in the *Spectator* essays, politeness becomes an active civilizing agent. By observation, conversation, and cultivation, men and women are brought to an awareness of the needs and responses of others and of how they appear in the eyes of others; this is not only the point at which politeness becomes a highly serious practical morality . . . it is also the point at which Addison begins to comment on the structure of English society.<sup>270</sup>

Addison's “comment” was on society's need for both discursive and monetary exchange, with the assumption that the landed gentry, both in their uncouth and unpolished inability to

enter into conversation and in their intention to protect their own land from prospective speculation, were preventing such exchange from being structurally viable. That such exchange is essential to the doctrine of taste is more pronounced in Addison than it is in Kant, whose latent intersubjectivity needed to be teased out considerably by Arendt's reading of the third *Critique*. Whereas Kant devotes considerable space to asserting the subjective autonomy of taste, Addison explicitly relates it to the consensus of a reading community:

If a Man would know whether he is possessed of this Faculty, I would have him read over the celebrated Works of Antiquity, which have stood the Test of so many different Ages and Countries; or those works among the Moderns, which have the Sanction of the Politer Part of our Contemporaries. If upon the perusal of such Writings he does not find himself delighted in an extraordinary manner, or, if upon reading the admired Passages in such Authors, he finds a Coldness and Indifference in his Thoughts, he ought to conclude, not (as is too usual among tasteless Readers) that the Author want those Perfections which have been admired in him, but that he himself wants the Faculty of discovering them.<sup>271</sup>

Not only does this seem to close the door on the critical autonomy of taste so essential to Kant, but it tends to reinforce the assumption made by critics like Fabricant that Addison's account of taste reflects a doctrine of inbred hierarchy. Still, Addison goes on in the essay to mitigate these concerns somewhat. His counter example to good taste is not an Iroquois king but one of “the most eminent Mathematicians of the Age” who “has assured me, that the greatest

Pleasure he took in reading *Virgil*, was in examining *Aeneas* his Voyage by the Map.”

Subsequently, the deficit of taste to Addison is not figured as racial inferiority but as Burkean “occupational psychosis.” The gallery of tasteless individuals that Addison satirizes throughout the *Spectator* is vast and diverse, ranging from city to country and comprising multiple classes and both sexes, although, as we see in the piece on the Four Kings, he tends away from explicit racial caricature, tending in this case rather towards a typically imperial paternal condescension. Rather than an inbred deficit of taste, which he acknowledges may occur to some unlucky individuals, Addison's concern is mostly with a sort of cultivated tastelessness that might result if an individual is not “conversant” with our “most Polite Authors” and does not pursue “conversation with Men of a Polite Genius:”

A Man who has any Relish for fine Writing, either discovers new Beauties, or receives stronger Impressions from the Masterly Strokes of a great Author every time he peruses him: Besides that he naturally wears himself into the same manner of Speaking and Thinking. [Yet] it is Impossible for a Man of the greatest Parts to consider any thing in its whole Extent, and in all its variety of Lights. Every Man, besides those general Observations which are to be made upon an Author, forms several Reflections that are peculiar to his own manner of Thinking; so that Conversation will naturally furnish us with Hints which we did not attend to, and make us enjoy others Men's Parts and Reflections as well as our own. This is the best Reason I can give for the Observation which several have made, that Men of great Genius in the same way of Writing seldom rise up singly, but at certain Periods of Time appear together, and in a Body; as they did

at *Rome* in the Reign of *Augustus*.<sup>272</sup>

Rather than a monolithic canon with an authoritative critical response, Addison proposes what is now a familiar philosophy of canon-making: it will be comprised of dense and complex works that elude a finalization of interpretation, especially when such interpretation is produced by “Mechanical Rules which a Man of very little Taste may discourse upon.”<sup>273</sup> Similarly, the critical community is sustained not by rigid consensus over approved readings but by recognition of perspectival differences. We can see hints of Kantian autonomy and cosmopolitan respect for diversity emerging, albeit within an oligarchic order of taste. But admission to this order is predicated on novelty in interpretation, and the way is blocked to “mechanical”, monomaniacal styles of reading. Nor should one accept either canon or interpretive community simply because it is the current consensus, as Addison's fight to “banish this *Gothic* taste,” a tastelessness comprised of mechanical or closed systems of meaning, makes clear. Addison's Augustan project negates the implication that taste is a matter of mere conformity with current opinion. Rather, proper taste is conformity with a principle of openness, almost to a fault; it is an openness that is predicated on a principle of disinterest that few can truly attain. But the exclusiveness implicit in the principle of disinterest is one that reverses the republican ideal of the freeholder tied to the land. Rather than ensuring the ability to enter into publicness, the very stability of inherited property, property that is effectively removed from circulation, actually prevents it.

Addison's account of spectator judgment eventually matches up well with his stylistic concerns. Much as he opposes the rejection of audience implicit in the writer of “genius,” he opposes the insular interpretive schemes of the “tasteless” spectator. Addison's detachment is

best understood, therefore, not as detachment from the object per se but from an interested subject-position that might promote mechanical or self-serving interpretive schemes that cannot enter into the conversation of taste. In the *Spectator*, examples of such mechanical interpretive positions are myriad. Unlike encomium, which praises public virtue, the discourse of taste promotes in a kind of mirror image the depiction of social vice. A social vice is quite different than a public vice, where the antonym for encomium, vituperation, is well established as the vehicle for the condemnation of corruption, exhibiting all the republican *pathos* of defending the *res publica* from the parasite within. The denouncer of public vice is furthermore often proud to be a violator of social mores, which most likely constitute a veil to mask the operations of corruption. Comparatively, the mere criticism of inept social performances, performances that stall the free exchange of perspectives that constitute a community of taste, must take on a different tone. The offender is not an evil agent attempting to destroy freedom and enslave good men, but one who for whatever reason is stuck in a critical cul-de-sac.

There is something lacking in this type of social critique, and that is the pathos of teleological reasoning. The tasteless are a nuisance but they do not threaten the republic as do the corrupt. Rather they are placed in the metaphorical frame of society as system. They gum up the works, and the system would no doubt work cleaner and more efficiently without them, hence working at reducing their number is still a worthy endeavor. But they do not and cannot prevent the system from functioning at all. Hence they are not worthy of vituperation, only of being the object of a mildly disdainful “Satyr.” Steele, writing as Bickerstaff in *Tatler* # 242, expresses the tone best when he asserts that “good nature” is

an essential Quality in a Satyrists, and that all the Sentiments which are beautiful in this Way of Writing must proceed from that Quality in the Author. Good-Nature produces Disdain of all Baseness, Vice, and Folly, which prompts them to express themselves with smartness against the Errors of Men, without Bitterness towards their Persons.<sup>274</sup>

As is the case with Addison's view on writing style, his opposite in the realm of the satirical is Swift. Much as Swift chose a dizzying virtuosity over perspicacity in his writing, his aim was to share a "savage indignation" with his readers rather than the mere disdainful recoil of a man of taste. In the Preface to *A Tale of a Tub* he describes satire as "but a *Ball* bandied to and fro, and every Man carries a *Racket* about Him to strike it from himself among the rest of the Company." The very point is to penetrate through such a fog of self-delusion and get to the heart of individual vice and folly, and to assess individuals as destructive agents. For Steele, Swift would be a mere "backbiter. "Satyrists describe the Age, and Backbiters assign their Descriptions to private Men."<sup>275</sup>

This is not to say that the satirical targets of the *Spectator* are not depicted as full human beings; in fact it is they who are most vivid: figures of social virtue (like the defender of free trade, Alexander Freeport) are ghostly presences compared to them. However they are amalgams, not specific treatments of individuals, much in the sense that it is quite unlikely that the tasteless reader of the *Aeneid* is actually Newton, as has been surmised by some. They are not specific individuals, nor are they meant to be condemned with anger or spite. This is well illustrated by the unfashionable activities of the Tory country knight Sir Roger de Coverley. Liberal satirical visualization is not meant to depict the infamous murder of public space and

public virtue by corruption and credit, but instead strives to gently show the ultimate insignificance of those left behind by progressive social change. Coverley, when coming from country to town, often reveals his personal oddness through a lack of social decorum; this failing is seen, again, not as infamous but as an occasion for comedy, as for example when crossing the Thames:

I do not remember I have anywhere mentioned, in Sir ROGER's character, his Custom of saluting every body that passes by him with a Good-morrow or a Good-night. This the old Man does out of the Overflowings of his Humanity, though at the same time it renders him so popular among his Country Neighbors, that it is thought to have gone a good way in making him once or twice Knight of the Shire. He cannot forbear this Exercise of benevolence even in Town, when he meets with any one in his Morning or Evening Walk. It broke from him to several Boats that passed us by upon the Water; but to the Knight's great Surprise, as he gave the Good-Night to two or three young Fellows a little before our Landing, one of them, instead of returning the Civility, asked us what a queer old Putt we had in the Boat; and whether he was not ashamed to go Wenching at his Years? with a great deal of the *Thames-Ribaldry*. Sir ROGER seemed a little shocked at first, but at length assuming the Face of Magistracy, told us, *That if he were a Middlesex Justice, he would make such Vagrants know that her Majesty's Subjects were no more to be abused by Water then by Land.*<sup>276</sup> (*Spectator* no. 383)

Modern readers may still enjoy Addison's humor, for we have retained the modern frame

of the social; we understand that the sophisticated intercourse of modern life makes the studied courtliness of Sir Roger simply unpragmatic. Although one might harbor him no ill-will, it is unlikely that one would take him out “in public” without exposing oneself to ridicule. What is more, Sir Roger’s behavior is coded so that contemporary readers would understand the political implications of Roger’s behavior as indicating one who is out of touch with modern ideas about commerce, which fuels British politics starting at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

So we can see that spectator judgment is not simply a prerequisite for entering into an autonomous attitude or even into a community of taste. It is, more, the prerequisite for entering into a form of politics, a form epitomized by what Charles Taylor has defined as the “modern social imaginaries.”<sup>277</sup> The imagination is not only the habitat of aesthetic disinterest, it is also a medium for new political institutions that started to rise in Addison’s time: the state, the market, and the public. In the next chapter, we will investigate what social structures and imaginaries Augustan style and disinterested taste prepared the way for in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ADDISON AND THE PUBLIC IMAGINARY

### 4a: *The Spectator*, the “Augustan Debate,” and the Formation of the Public

In *Spectator* #1, Joseph Addison introduces the famed periodical with a reflection upon print culture’s mediation of identity:

I have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure 'till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, or a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an Author. To gratify this Curiosity, which is so natural for a Reader, I design this Paper . . . <sup>278</sup>

The *Spectator* starts, then, by addressing the tension between public and private, recognizing this tension as constitutive of print culture. Addison's fine tuned awareness of the particularities of public communication allows Michael Warner, in a programmatic series of essays that aim at clarifying and solidifying the analytic force of the concept “public,” to use the *Spectator* as an exemplar.<sup>279</sup> What Addison is winking at in this opening statement is the idea, intuited by him and defined by Warner centuries later, that “a nation or public or market in which everyone could be known personally would be no nation or public or market at all.”<sup>280</sup> Yet despite this fact, modern forms of public print culture combine this relationship of “strangerhood” with a demand for intimacy. “The development of forms that mediate the

intimate theater of stranger relationality must be surely one of the most significant dimensions in modern history, though the story of this transformation in the meaning of strangers had been told only in fragments.”<sup>281</sup>

Whence comes the significance of Mr. Warner's “strangerhood”? It comes from the ability of such forms to constitute what Warner and Charles Taylor have mutually defined as “the modern social imaginary,”<sup>282</sup> which in Taylor’s account constitutes the “imaginaries” of the nation, the public and the marketplace.<sup>283</sup> The “constitutive and normative environment of strangerhood is more . . . than an objectively describable *Gesellschaft*; it requires our constant imagining.”<sup>284</sup> Our participation in the market, the public and the nation requires faith in that which transcends our personal experience. Such faith is not placed in abstract ideals so much as in a conception of an entire population engaged in similar practices. To the extent that we know that there are buyers and sellers, readers and fellow British subjects, than these “social imaginaries” are not fictional; still, the scope of personal participation in these entities are such that they must be “imagined.”

The relevance of this discussion for early 18<sup>th</sup> century England is in how this vocabulary matches in valuable ways the self-understanding of what was happening to the country and its population under its transformation into the British empire. As previously discussed, it was the polemical position of those opposed to the Whig imperial ascendancy that the new power structure was enslaving English subjects beneath a “despotism of fantasy.” While the modern social imaginaries described by Taylor arise in opposition to feudal hierarchy, they could also be opposed to the strong personalism and materialism of neo-Machiavellian republican thought.<sup>285</sup> This tradition upheld the virtues of tangible material foundations, specifically land and

traditional systems of trade, against the evils of finance, credit and “stockjobbing.” They upheld traditional practices against the critique of modern opinion. And they upheld membership in an ancient social order rooted in the soil against the expansive and evolving model of empire. All these republican positions of course can, and have, been revealed to have imaginaries of their own. But such imaginaries rooted their constituents within a living and continuous past, one symbolized by land, birthright, and the performance of social rituals handed down since time immemorial. They lacked an essential aspect of the new imaginaries, their evocation of simultaneity. It was this very evocation of a contemporary strangerhood that this neo-Machiavellian perspective would denounce as imaginary.

In this context, if we accept Jerome Stolnitz’s position that Addison identified the imagination as “a habitat for disinterest,” this can clue us into the substance of the Whig response to this polemic. The imagination is not a vehicle for the corrosion of landed virtue, but the very means of participating in the modern, dynamic, emergent society being revealed through media of simultaneity (primarily print culture). Turning the Tory polemics on their head, a person who “lacks imagination” is not a person who resists fancy in favor of a “common sense” focus on the material grounds of existence. Rather, one who lacks “imagination” really lacks “common sense” to the degree that they are isolated in the specificity of their immediate needs and desires. Participation in an imaginary strangerhood is disinterested participation, not so much because the participant seeks no advantage, but because the participant’s own personality and desires are overshadowed by the collective. This relates to aesthetic experience in the sense that it involves a submission to a greater reality, a reality that cannot be shaped and tamed by individual volition.

At least not easily, for it should be noted that the fantasy of manipulating market, public opinion and state power for personal gain remains an essential part of public culture. Modern lay conspiracy theories exist in part as the loyal opposition to these three social imaginaries. Coupled with the outrage the idea of corruption inspires in the republican imaginary is an optimistic core from the perspective of *virtu'*, for behind what seems like the operations of an abstract system embodied in a ghostly collective of strangers, is the possibility that individuals of exceptional drive and pluck can still bend *fortuna* to their will. Opposed to this conspiratorial bent is the liberal faith in rational institutions, supported by the detached interactions of a public collective freely submitting to the greater good of the social imaginary; a vision of disinterested harmony whose evocation we can trace in part to Joseph Addison and the *Spectator*.

When Pocock refers to the first salvos of this ongoing conflict between disinterested imagination and virtuous personalism as “the Augustan debate,” he is using the adjective as a handy historical label and is not referring to the aesthetic meaning of the term. Yet the aesthetic dimensions are highly relevant. In Chapter Two we saw how Addison celebrated the perspicacity of classical literature of the Augustan era both for its power to evoke an imaginary world and for its ability to use the workings of that world to illustrate didactic precepts. In Chapter Three, we saw how the “pleasures of the imagination” was celebrated as a way to connect isolated individuals both within a community of taste and beneath the unfolding of a providential nature. Perspicacity and taste are opposed to Gothic obscurity and pedantic tastelessness, both of which isolate individuals in self-referential cells of private meaning. Augustan aesthetics provide a platform for the curing and taming of eccentricities and oddities in expression and reception, and thus helps to integrate recalcitrant individuals into the overarching framework of social

imaginaries, a process seen by those opposing them from the right (the Tory, “landed” interest) or the left (today's “counter-publics”) as corrosive to the integrity and agency of the individual. In short, the *Spectator*, as the primary textual vehicle for these aesthetic values, was constitutive in forming the social imaginaries that made participation in, and rejection of, these modern institutions possible.

In England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 we can see the establishment of institutions that gave material grounding to what were in fact, as recognized by polemics of the time, imaginary (or what one might call “speculative”) relationships. The establishment of the Bill of Rights by parliamentary decree in 1689, and the establishment of the Bank of England and the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1694, together made political representation, financial credit, and access to publication available for all British citizens, at least those not excluded via race, gender or religious belief. Representation, in the sense of representation *of* a public rather than a representation *to* a public (to follow Jurgen Habermas’s distinction<sup>286</sup>), is at the core of all these systems, as is stranger sociality. Parliament is expected to act in the name of a stranger citizenry, credit represents a willingness to make promises to stranger lenders, and publication represents strangers to even stranger audiences. It is best to see Addison as falling into this representative system of stranger sociality at its earliest articulation, as we consider how his writings addressed these “modern social imaginaries” in their formative stages.

The rise of these imaginaries marks the period whose label Pocock accepts as “Augustan . . . a period until recently little studied, but nevertheless of great importance . . . not the least because, strictly speaking, it witnesses [the country’s] transformation from ‘English’ to ‘British’ in the year 1707.”<sup>287</sup> He attributes the neglect partially to the fact that “between the Englishman

John Locke at the beginning of the period so designated, and the Scot David Hume commencing his work as it closed, no political theorist or philosopher to be ranked among the giants emerged in Anglophone culture; and yet the period was one of change and development in some ways more radical and significant even than those of the Civil War and the Interregnum.”<sup>288</sup> While there were many engines driving such change, one gets pride of place. “The acceptance of William III as king proved to mean something not fully foreseen or desired by those who invited him over: the commitment of England – of English troops and money – to a sequence of major continental wars.”<sup>289</sup> It was through this new “forward leaning” imperial strategy that the British character was “forged,” as Laura Colley writes in her *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*:

We can plausibly regard Great Britain as an invented nation superimposed, if only for a while, onto much older alliances and loyalties . . . it was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it. They defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world’s foremost Catholic power. They defined themselves against the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, militarist, decadent and unfree. And, increasingly as the wars went on, they defined themselves in contrast to the colonial peoples they conquered, people who were manifestly alien in terms of culture, religion and color. National identity, Peter Sahlins has written, ‘like ethnic or communal identity, is contingent and relational: it is defined by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and by

implicit negation, the other.’ In other words, men and women decide who they are by reference to what they are not. Once confronted with an obviously alien ‘Them’, an otherwise diverse community can become a reassuring or merely desperate ‘Us’. This was how it was with the British after 1707. They came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores.<sup>290</sup>

It was not only explicit warfare that shaped this transformation, but commerce, which Pocock argues was understood by most at the time as “an aggressive action, an acquisition to the trading society’s self of something which might have been acquired by another, an end to which war might or might not be an appropriate means.”<sup>291</sup> England was now above all a competitive nation, competing with other countries both on the field of battle and in the marketplace. But such competition was extrinsically focused: unlike almost every other European nation in this period, Great Britain never experienced a major invasion from without. As a result, it never had to resort (though it came close to it) to implementing mass conscription.<sup>292</sup> This fact had two primary consequences that would structure political debate throughout Addison’s career. First of all, it could be said of Britain that, despite much fearful speculation regarding the aggressive aspirations of foreign powers, it only ever truly entered into conflicts of choice. In that sense then, the military and economic adventures of the emerging empire could rightly be described as *speculative* in nature.

Second, the primary means by which the English *cum* British subject could participate in such conflicts of choice was not militarily, as part of a citizen’s militia protecting a fragile vessel

of freedom from rapacious adversaries, but financially:

In what has been called the “financial revolution” that began in the nineties, means were found of associating the national prosperity directly with the stability of the regime, the expanding activities of government and – most significant of these – the prosecution of the war. The institutions of the new finance, of which the Bank of England and the National Debt came to be the most important, were essentially a series of devices for encouraging the large or small investor to lend capital to the state, investing in its future political stability and strengthening this by the act of investment itself, while deriving a guaranteed income from the return of the sum invested. With the aid of invested capital, the state was able to maintain larger and more permanent armies and bureaucracies . . . and as long as its affairs visibly prospered, it was able to attract further investments and conduct larger and longer wars.<sup>293</sup>

Varying attitudes about these developments, overlying more deeply seated opinions over the legitimacy of the Glorious Revolution that preceded them, mark the primary political divide of the age, and “the main lines of argument in all these debates are strikingly consistent, to the point where, with Defoe in 1698 and the Walpolian writers thirty-five years later, one can see the lineaments of a “Court” theory of economics, politics and history, constructed to meet the challenge of what have become known as the “Country” ideology.”<sup>294</sup> And, as in so many other areas, we can determine a “Court” and a “Country” debate over publicness as well, a debate over what form public action should take. And in this debate, one of the primary terms of contestation

was “virtue. The stress laid upon [virtue] is so great that we have to recognize that the first chapter in the history of political economy is also a further chapter in the continuing history of civic humanism.”<sup>295</sup> Thus the debate will turn on the possibilities for virtuous action in the emerging British Empire, and as such it is no surprise that much of the debate would be carried out via encomium and (especially) vituperation.

As we saw earlier, Addison’s ideas about style and judgment prescribed a process of transcending one’s individual peculiarities. Addison gave grudging respect to writers of “genius,” but ended up recommending and practicing perspicacity above all else. Likewise, good taste for Addison presumed an active membership in a community of taste, one that rejected those persons of poor taste who could not converse properly about their individual aesthetic responses. Poor writing and poor reading were eventually the result of isolation, usually of the self-directed and prideful kind. Such approaches to message production and reception in turn presupposed a certain kind of social order, one quite different than the agonistic republican model or the static feudal model it would compete with or replace: a model based upon civility. Taylor discusses the foundational importance of civility for the “modern idealization of order”:

The basic normative principle is, indeed, that the members of society serve each others’ needs, help each other, in short, behave like the rational and sociable creatures they are. . . . In other words, the basic point of the new normative order is the mutual respect and mutual service of the individual who make up society. The actual structures [of society] were meant to serve these ends and were judged instrumentally in this light. . . . in the modern ideal, mutual respect and service is directed towards serving out ordinary goals:

life, liberty, sustenance of self and family. The organization of society, as I said above, is judged not on its inherent form, but instrumentally. Now we can add that what this organization is instrumental to concerns the basic conditions of existence as free agents, rather than the excellence of virtue.<sup>296</sup>

“Excellence of virtue,” in either the feudal sense of harmonizing with eternal structures or in the republican sense of bending fortune to one’s will, does not mesh with this new order. A new sense of virtue is emerging, one that will eventually be given its strongest formulation by Kant in the form of “duty.” In this sense, virtue is primarily an achievement of the imagination, in the same way that the Kantian “kingdom of ends” supposed by the categorical imperative is a posited state of affairs. This is not to say, of course, that Taylor’s modern social imaginaries of the state, the public and the market represent “kingdoms of ends” in the same way that Kant would come to understand this concept. But all three “imaginaries” cause virtue to be assessed through reliance on interactions with strangers, in a far different way than the feudal and the republican forms of virtue were assessed, deriving their meanings as they did from complementary or agonistic relationships between known, particular individuals. By engaging in modern systems of virtue, one pledges allegiance, not to one’s self or one’s lord, but to social imaginaries.

#### *4b. Print Culture and Political Context: the Media and Ideological Milieu of the Spectator*

Before we investigate further the textual role of Addison’s work in addressing these

social imaginaries, we should consider the role of print culture itself in making such social imaginaries possible. In other words, we should consider what Michael Warner refers to as the “Whig-McLuhanist model of print history”: that advanced by the technological determinists of the “Toronto school,” Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and Eric Havelock.<sup>297</sup> The debate can be summed up rather loosely by reference to McLuhan's famous thesis: is the “medium” really “the message”? There are two major claims from this group that have some relevance to Addison's writing: the shift from orality to mass literacy providing a “visual bias” to communication, which would explain the visual emphasis in Addison's work as marked by the title of the *Spectator* itself, and the “decontextualization” effect of print media, which would certainly be one way of explaining the importance of disinterest in Addisonian aesthetics. The possibility that the *Spectator's* influence on the modern social imaginary is a purely technical achievement in media, separate from any ideational, formal or rhetorical content, must be considered. At the very least, the impact of the press as a media format cannot be discounted, as it clearly both opened up and closed possibilities for invention and reception for Addison and his readership.

Interest in investigating the “visual bias” of print can be traced to Harold Innis, whose separation of media into orally focused “time-binding” media and visually focused “space binding” media influenced a generation of media scholars like his student McLuhan and McLuhan's brief colleague Walter J. Ong. continued his work. McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* popularized the concept that movable print sparked a visual revolution in Western consciousness, while Eric Havelock's work on Ancient Greece established that the visual bias of Western culture certainly predated print, although admittedly not with the same scope. Ong, whose work on Ramus has been cited earlier, considered movable print a necessary precursor to Ramist method,

an achievement that is echoed in Addison's own methodical approach to rhetorical invention. The best place to make an analogy between Addison and what Ong saw as innovative, print-inspired diagrammatic invention in Ramist thought can be found in Addison's own account of methodical writing, in which he claims to “have the whole Scheme of the Discourse in my Mind, before I set Pen to Paper.” Addison's cinematic writing, which shifts from scene to scene fluidly, and his insistence of the taciturnity and silence of the Spectator character (especially when compared with the loquaciousness of Steele's Issac Bickerstaff in the *Tatler*), appears to illustrate the bias of “space binding media” quite accurately.

The “decontextualization” thesis is the product of the work of Alvin Gouldner and Paul Ricoeur.<sup>298</sup> Gouldner looked to print technology to help him to create an account of rationality not based in a “state of being.” Instead of an ideologically driven account of the evolution of Western consciousness, the material development of print technology alone creates the decontextualization, multilinguality and reflexivity required for modern thought.<sup>299</sup> Paul Ricoeur has called this process “distanciation,” the radical dissociation of a recorded action with regard to the context that produced it. The process of distanciation for Ricoeur is absolute in principle, although an “activity of discernment” of contextual operations may serve to “produce a relatively univocal discourse” that lies atop of the actual decontextualization and heterogeneity of the textual field. The hermeneutic complications that set in provide another source for the reflexivity that Gouldner finds in written discourse. Gouldner and Ricoeur describe what is essentially a spatialization of thought brought into being by print culture, coming at the idea of a “visual bias” from a different angle altogether.

The problem with these lines of inquiry, argues Warner, is their “fundamental premise –

that technology has an ontological status prior to culture,” a premise which “must be rejected at the outset if we are to post the question of printing's relation to republican enlightenment, or to anything else.”<sup>300</sup> The problem is the assumption that the various sociological phenomena of modernity, “science, capitalism, republicanism, and the like appear insofar as they are affected by printing, not for the way they have entered into the constitution and meaning of print in the first place. The result is that enlightenment and democratization, instead of being seen as the politically contested aspects of social organization, now appear as the exfoliation of material technology.”<sup>301</sup> Rather than the technical logic of printing, Warner suggests we look instead at the sociological phenomenon of how

at a certain point printing came to be specifically defined as publication, now *in opposition* to manuscript circulation. . . . publication in the new sense would take on a special political meaning involving a new way of defining the public. These changes were not dictated by any feature of the technology, but they did change our fundamental perceptions of the technology. It is because publication is a political condition of utterance that we meaningfully distinguish between books impressed by types and those impressed by pens, where we do not make the same kind of distinction between those impressed by plates and those sprayed by lasers.

With this theoretical debate as background, let us turn to the century and a half of press history in England preceding the appearance of the *Spectator*. The textual explosion of 1695, when the Licensing Act lapsed and the “free press” as we know it came into being, did not come

out of nowhere, but was the quickening of a tendency toward simultaneity that had been building in England since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, and indeed throughout Europe since the Renaissance. It was journalism that rose up to fill this need to report the now, first through such early forms as the “relation” and the “coranto”, then in increasingly standard and periodic fashion from 1641 onward with the parliamentary manuscript, the “diurnal,” the “mercury” and the “intelligencer.” These new textual forms served to inform an interested public on matters of import occurring in secular time, matters that promised or threatened immediate social change on a wide scale. Pre-modern understandings of social order saw society as constituted exteriorly by a higher transcendent order that existed outside of secular or profane time, to the effect that secular events suffered in relative importance to that transcendent order. In contrast, the rise of news in the early modern period showed how a reading public was starting to form over a shared interest in the twist and turns of the emergence (in secular time) of a new self-constituting order, one that challenged a royal authority that saw itself as the manifestation of transcendent form.

As recently as Queen Elizabeth’s reign, the primary source of news for the populace at large was the ballad. The earliest printed news to be distributed was in the form of transcriptions of these narratives. While the ballads treated recent events and personages of the day (the earthquake of 1569, the armada campaign, Mary Queen of Scots) the ballad form did not by its very nature create a secular sense of simultaneity, a desire to get information quickly and efficiently. The form was “pre-modern” in that sense, providing listeners with cultural symbols for identity formation within a hierarchical order, not a simultaneous social relation with equivalent strangers. The prevalence of such 16<sup>th</sup> century print forms as the news ballad gives the

lie to those technologically determinist histories of print that see certain practices and epistemologies as following from the print media itself. In fact, the initial move towards the “decontextualization” of speech appears to be found in the handwritten newsletters that were commissioned by diplomatic and commercial interests. The newsletters, provided by hired correspondents, provided steady streams of personalized information for those who could afford the exorbitant prices. The specialization of its distribution patterns, the high overhead of production, and lack of wherewithal to put such specialized information into action initially prevented such news from becoming a more popular concern. These handwritten works can then be said to offer decontextualization without publicity, much in the way that a specialized technical journal would operate today.

Two early 17<sup>th</sup> century wars began to widen the desire for “factual” information in England: the Thirty Years War in Germany and the Turkish-Austrian war in the Balkans and Central Europe. It was around this time that the first “relations,” “corantos” and “diurnals” appeared, at first mostly translations of foreign reports. In these forms the “decontextualization” assumed by Alan Gouldner and Walter Ong to be promoted by the technology of print was certainly in evidence. That these “relations” were stylistically different from news ballads were immediately apparent; they were “curt”, “terse” and often “obscure” in Baroque style of a Muret:

We understand from France, that the King of France caused yet many horse and foote to march toward Italy, and had sent many hundred crownes to the Constable Ladiguere to pay his soldiers.

The souldiers which are come from the Hanse-Townes and East-Land are all in very good apparell, and the most part of them have followed the warres.

The Marquis Spinola caused yet lately seaven or eight strong sconces to bee made with double contre-points, and furnished each of them with fower of five peeces of Ordinance, besides great store of municion, whereby it appeareth, the hee will not as yet remove his Campe which lyeth before Breda. (items from *Continuation of Our Weekly News*, May 19, 1625)

Rather than springing purely from the medium, these news items can more accurately be conceived as the popular flowering of “Baroque” style that would eventually be ridiculed by Addison as “Gothic.” While C. John Sommerville associates the new terseness with “the use – really the invention – of the unadorned, Baconian fact”, Bacon was participating in an already developed movement in style, with predecessors in Lipsius and Muret. The sixteenth century revolt against overarching interpretative frameworks was a prevalent feature of the intellectual climate that produced both Bacon and the early newsbooks. As coranto publisher Nathaniel Butter told his readers in 1638, “Because there is fraud in generalities, we thought it fit to acquaint you with each particular.”

Another kind of print retained the ancient view, captured in the coda of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, of text as the recording and extension of speech. Increasingly, reports focused on a novel occurrence: the English Parliament, asserting its authority under the “ancient constitution,” was challenging royal authority on such unprecedented topics as foreign policy, the church, and the

appointment of ministers. At first, the “domestik newes” that circulated was most often transcriptions of parliamentary speeches. As such, they were representations of the “event” of publicness wherein individuals confront each other on a common and agonistic ground. These manuscripts filled a need for knowledge of the political changes being wrought by parliamentarians, a need that was not being filled by the official journals. “The rigid and narrowing definition of the role of the journals excluded personal details, debates and speeches. They represented empirical details, not the process or the engagement of ideas and principles. Perhaps for this reason the members kept their own records, which spilled out to the public.”<sup>302</sup> The distribution of these “Diurnall Occurrences” proliferated despite the increasing attempts by the Parliament to suppress the practice. There was a demonstrated market for frequently updated information on the momentous political events that were occurring.

To be sure, this results also in a form of “decontextualization.” But the tendency of decontextualization that existed in the pamphlet, as extension of parliamentary debate or pulpit preaching, was limited by the specifically occasional, secular, controversial character of their contents; they are filled with a overdetermined wealth of deictic elements that attempt to fix meaning for their intended audience, aiding in the hermeneutic task of producing univocal discourse. For the partisan press, then, the idea of the press as an extension of speech meant that thematic coherence was just as often advanced as was a quality of disassociation. Even the periodical structure of print journalism is predated in the periodical structure of the weekly sermon and the parliamentary season; thus the move to periodicity was no great leap for either the sermon or the political speech.

This is not to say that the hermeneutic task of which Ricouer speaks, creating a univocal

discourse from the new print technologies, was easy. The lack of a framework with which to process this vastness of information was disturbing to intellectuals of the time who, like Richard Burton and Ben Johnson, came from a humanist tradition that stressed unity of action and thought; Burton, in his 1628 revision of his *Anatomy of Melancholy* denounced the

vast confusion of vows, wishes, actions, edicts, petitions, lawsuits, pleas, laws, proclamations . . . tidings of weddings, maskings, mummeries, entertainments, jubilees, embassies, titles and tournaments . . . One rumor is expelled by another . . . all of which we do hear at first with a kind of admiration, detestation, consternation, but by and by they are buried in silence . . . ‘Tis heavy, ghastly, fearful news at first, in every man’s mouth, table talk; but after a while who speaks or thinks of it?

Ben Johnson, in his satire *The Staple of News*, provides an early critique of news as a product that is produced for commercial purposes “by the same entrepreneurs who supplied them [the public] with adulterated lard.” In short, the news industry was “a weekly cheat to draw money.”<sup>303</sup>

Adding to the displacement was the effect the press was having in supporting the cause of Parliament. While there was no end of seditious pamphleteering, even the ostensibly neutral reportage on the monarchy-defying activities of the parliament focused publicity upon the agents of change. To the extent that this effect was noticed, the most important critic of the press in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the Stuart court, to the extent that they could institutionalize their objection through censorship. Their policy can be summed up in William Cavendish’s famous advice to

Charles II just before he resumed the throne:

There is an other Error that doth over heate your people extreamly and doth your  
Majestie much hurte, which is that Every man now is becomed a state man, & itt is merly  
with the weekly Corants, Both att home & a broad, therefore they should bee forbid  
Eyther Domesticke or forayne news.

What were at stake here were the specifically political uses to which the technical aspects of the print medium were being used. The decontextualization of print removed the ability to firmly locate state authority in the court itself, in a direct challenge to the privileging of the royal perspective. Coming along with this change was the inability to clearly *visualize* the source of a message, in the same sense that Addison is referring in *Spectator* # 1. Consider the account of Habermas in *Structural Transformation*, which *contra* the thesis of the Toronto school actually praises the rise of the print based public for its *opposition* to the visual, particularly in its break from what he refers to as the “representative publicity” of feudalism. Defined as “something like a status attribute . . . the staging of the publicity involved in representation was wedded to personal attributes.” Such a type of publicity is opposed to the type of legitimate representation in civil society whereby a lawyer “represents” a client and a politician “represents” a constituency. Instead, of “representing” the nation, the feudal lord “presents” himself as the embodiment of the nation “for” his subjects.<sup>304</sup> In contrast, the “bourgeoisie . . . by its very nature, could no longer create for itself a representative publicness . . . . The nobleman was what he represented; the bourgeois, what he produced.”<sup>305</sup>

Charles the First's immersion (later cynically parodied by son Charles II) in his role as the earthly manifestation of an external and transcendent reality, in "representative publicity," put him at a severe disadvantage in the secularized press. The royal Stuart imaginary of the great chain of being was illustrated, as John Brewer shows, in the court masque:

The object of the masque was, in the words of Ben Johnson, 'the studie of magnificence'; it praised the mysteries of kingship, the organic unity of an obedient polity and the virtues of the monarch. The masque's extravagant costume and complex machinery were elaborately coordinated into a harmonious whole representing both court and nation. They revealed a natural order centered on the king: as Sir Thomas Davenant put it in the masque *Britannia Triumphant*, performed in 1638, 'Move then in such a noble order here/As if you each his governed planet were/And he moved first, to move you each in his sphere.'<sup>306</sup>

This sense of representative publicity as the manifestation of a certain type of "courtly style," is still with us, not only in the cults of personality that arise in totalitarian societies but in the Hollywood glamour of contemporary celebrity culture.<sup>307</sup> In fact, to the extent that the representatives of the public in modern democracies are increasingly judged on the strength of their personalities (representing the state) rather than the policies they support (representing *for* the state), we could identify the return of representative publicity as one symptom of the "refeudalization of the public sphere" that Habermas speaks of at the conclusion of his book. Yet the identification of representative publicity with feudal systems threatens to reproduce the same

oversimplified Marxian historical narrative of the conflict between a representative aristocracy and a productive bourgeoisie, and leaves out an important source of representative publicity: the republican form that depicts the figure of *virtu'* against the ground of *fortuna*. Distanciation not only disrupts the figure of the feudal lord but that of the patriot as well. In this sense, the reinscription of personality into the contemporary media landscape may be seen as not simply a return to courtly values, but an attempt to expose modern imaginaries, as not orderly self-regulating systems but as scenes of agonistic struggle between the virtuous and the corrupt.

To the extent that the press did in fact threaten the feudal order, Charles I & II, James II and Cromwell all alternated between wholesale suppression of the press and attempts to monopolize it for propagandistic purposes. But either attempt needed constant and maintained pressure: the many censorship measures undertaken between 1632 and 1695 lapsed during those times of crisis (the Civil War in 1642, the Exclusion Crisis of 1679) when the flood of reportable incident was too great and the crown was too busy to devote energy towards prosecution. When the Licensing Act lapsed in 1694, however, the situation was quite different; the “Glorious Revolution” had taken place, a Dutch Protestant king, William of Orange, was installed, the Parliament was in control, and domestic crisis had been institutionalized through the rise of party politics. Censorship was allowed to perish because “Whig” and “Tory” alike came to a common realization that the press afforded ample opportunities for both political ideologies. Consequently the intrinsic properties of press publicity were exploited differently according to ideological ends.

Such journalism was an extension through time and space of what essentially was periodical oral argument, modeled on the pulpit or on parliament. The English public, socialized

into periodicity through the church and attentive to periodic political debate since 1641, provided an avid readership for periodic and partisan argument whenever it was available. The novel and momentous events of the previous century and a half with its wars, revolutions, and discoveries meant that the topical field was ever changing and challenging, with such issues as regicide or the possible non-existence of matter openly discussed and debated. Obscenity and blasphemy were ready sources of invention along with classical allusions and reference to the most recent scientific and cultural discoveries, with shards of the old mythological worldview cropping up in reports of dragons in Scotland or Queen Anne's curing disease by the laying on of hands.

The result was a political culture such had never been seen and possibly never will again, a fresh arena encountering new possibilities for argument without restraint. What was conspicuously lacking in the partisan press was the Enlightenment ideal of consensus; the public field retained the spirit of the *agora* where warring arguments clashed in a competitive setting. The "force of the better argument" here did not come from its relationship either to a material ground or a transcendental norm but through performative efficacy, through the effective mobilization of public knowledge in a space of novel political possibilities. A change in the electoral machinery, causing more frequent elections, may have also prompted the desire for ready access to means of public persuasion. Rather than engage censors to suppress the press, the political parties would engage writers to press their case. A new professional road to advancement, the party propagandist, was born.

Such was the role that Addison attained after leaving Oxford, and it was in this capacity that he first encountered Steele, at the *Gazette*, a paper which offered "a sketch of the political imagination of Steele's ministerial employers":

If the referential geography of the *Gazette* were mapped, something like the ministerial imagination would emerge as a formal shape: a world with centers of gravity in Paris and Rome, lines of strong attraction from Harwich to Barbados strung through Guinea, weaker links to Calcutta strained by the voyage around the Cape.

Addison was in a sense following in Steele's footsteps at the time the *Tatler* was conceived. He, higher placed as he was in the ministry, was Steele's source for the diplomatic dispatches that provided much of the foreign news published in the *Gazette*. He also was trying to establish himself in the theater, like Steele hoping to use the form to advance models of ethical action and Christian virtue. What influence he had on the synthesis between news and theater that the *Tatler* represented can only be guessed. While his political profile was higher owing to the success of "the Campaign", Addison had a considerably lower public profile than Steele, and at the time had only two theater works to his credit (a disastrously received opera, *Rosamond*, and a shelved play, *Cato*). Most likely the paper's concept was ultimately Steele's, and the didactic nature of the *Tatler* reflected his straightforward, sentimental style. Steele's great innovation in starting the *Tatler* was in combining the physical reach of his public journalism with the ethical platform of the sentimental drama, turning London into a stage where simultaneous action could be envisioned going on at several different locations, which Steele termed "departments". Unlike the proscenium stage, tethered not only to neoclassic dictates of "unity of action" but to the limitations of scenery, costumes and props, the *Tatler's* capacity for depicting moral action was thus topographically liberated.

The *Tatler*, as the name suggests, retained in many ways the established form of print as an extension of speech; the difference was that now the speech was arrayed upon a graphical representation of London as a field of simultaneous action. Whereas previously the give-and-take of charge and counter-charge between various rhetorical sources led readers to seek out the development of public debate piece by piece, thereby constructing such a public space implicitly in their minds, the *Tatler* presupposes the unity of simultaneous action as a given. Hence a single issue could bounce back and forth between different coffee houses (like White's, department for "Accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment", Will's, for poetry, St. John's for "News Foreign and Domestik", etc.). Such a public field was, however, still strictly background; the main focus of the *Tatler* was still the voice and not the eye. It was left to the *Spectator* to make that leap into a more forthright visual eloquence; the *Tatler* remained a dialogue between discrete and mutually defined subject-positions, an encounter between eccentric and singular subjects.

In the *Spectator's* more forthrightly visual style, we make a clean transition from the ear of the *Tatler* to the roving eye of Mr. Spectator. While Bickerstaff more and more would speak from his own apartment, Mr. Spectator roams through the entire city, through its theaters and even its dreams, and out into the country for a few memorable visits with the Tory squire Roger de Coverley. The visual nature of the journal not only expanded the scope of what it could cover, but also restricted it, for the visual emphasis consequently de-emphasized the partisan, orally based, controversial atmosphere of the political pamphlets and broadsides it was competing with. Such a bias no doubt helped advance Addison's political concerns. The Whigs' self-understanding was that their plan for England was based on both divine providence and natural law, and dissent to the Whig position in the face of such a grounding amounted to, in Addison's

own terms, nonsense. The agonistic approach to argument, based upon the aural phenomenon of voices competing in the agora, was a distraction from the truths a calm, rational yet tastefully educated mind could discover through detached contemplation. To the extent that a public could be persuaded by such a sublime vision instead of verbal fireworks, support for the Whig agenda could be solidified. To serve its purpose such a vision could not be seen as the argument of a single, partisan party but must appear as the detached contemplation of a visual field, a contemplation which could be joined by any who assumed the same vantage point. Rather than the “us” and “them” of controversial argument, the axis would extend from a roving “I” that in every instance becomes an implied “we”.

#### *4c. Allegory, Wit, and the Apotheosis of Experience*

The previous discussion has illustrated that the constitutive effects of print culture itself can vary considerably, and cannot be simply categorized as taking one or another form. While the development of the press in the 17<sup>th</sup> century did show signs of the distancing associated with the a “visual bias,” as often as not the press presented itself as a means of extending the audience of predominantly oral forms, from ballads to sermons to political debates. This is not to deny that distancing and visual bias were two possible effects, only that these elements could either be exploited or worked against according to cultural or ideological needs. The *Spectator* happened to choose to emphasize these elements of print because they happened to serve specific ideological needs: in this case, the promotion of the state, the market, and the public.

To the extent that liberal virtue relies upon these social imaginaries, we can posit the

essential role in forming and maintaining these modern imaginaries of a specific rhetorical form: allegory. That allegory should become important at this time is no accident, as Robert Hariman notes: “to the extent that the genre of allegory has a history, it is one of eternal recurrence at periods of loss and fragmentation produced by the expansion of a new, somewhat alien civilization. Allegory arises when Greek rationality overpowers archaic myth, when Christendom engulfs pagan culture, when early modern thought displaces Christian hegemony, when modernization destroys traditional social order, when late-modern technocracy colonizes the lifeworld.”<sup>308</sup> That is, allegory is a form suited to explaining vast social changes that seem to arise from outside the everyday realm of public action: hence, *al-agera*.

That said, allegory takes on specific forms at specific times. Certainly, allegories of hierarchy were essential toward backing up unequal power relations under a feudal system, but there participation in the allegorical system was not a pre-requisite for participating in a social structure most were simply born into. Allegorical interpretation was a specialized occupation of the learned, particularly those protected from having to negotiate hierarchical power structures on a day-to-day basis. Likewise, the republican concept of *imitatio* enjoined would-be virtuous actors to meditate upon the actions of certain exemplary individuals, in order to discern which elements of personality transcended the specific *kairos* of the exemplary individual’s encounter with *fortuna*, an encounter to which, again, only those who were potentially exemplary themselves would be called. What is unique about participation in a state, economy or public on the other hand is that such participation necessitates a leap of faith in what cannot be revealed by direct perception alone as part of its price of admission. Therefore, allegory must be truly “public” when in service of modern imaginaries, no longer simply a strategy of elite reading by

those who would either (A) know the hand of God in human affairs, as under feudalism or (B) unlock the secret behind the obscure actions and words of the great, as under republicanism. Rather than allegory simply leaving the agora and the public behind, the agora is asked to look beyond itself at the greater providential workings within which it is embedded.

The sense that modern allegory is common and accessible to all is predicated on the public having access to a third quality in addition to method and taste that is universal in principle but restricted in practice. This quality is *wit*, and its role is a constitutive one both in perception and, eventually, in social structure. For his definition of wit, Addison turns to John Locke, who ironically enough for what Addison does with the concept, is not exactly wit's friend:

Men who have a great deal of Wit and prompt Memories, have not always the clearest Judgment, or deepest Reason. For Wit lying most in the Assemblage of Ideas, and putting those together with Quickness and Variety, wherein can be found any Resemblance or Congruity thereby to make up pleasant Pictures and agreeable Visions in the Fancy; Judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other Side, in separating carefully one from another, Ideas wherein can be found the least Difference, thereby to avoid being misled by Similitude and Affinity to take one thing for Another.

Judgment, like Ramist "method," is a procedure that carefully separates and distinguishes. Its opponent in this task is wit, which tries promiscuously to put together that which has tenuous links. The distinction between wit and judgment is actually Hobbes' from

*Leviathan* (following on a similar distinction between “fancy” and “judgment” in his introduction to Davenant’s *Gondibert*), and like Locke, the idea is to exalt responsible judgment at the expense of irresponsible wit. Hobbes’ derivation of wit from fancy echoes Bacon, who sees judgment as a catchall category that contains memory, imagination and reason, and claims “the duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply *Reason to Imagination*.” In the same way, Hobbes imagines judgment as keeping wit in check. This is a dichotomy that Addison will reverse at the same time that he gives praise to Locke for originating this definition of wit.

Thomas Conley summarizes the main presuppositions behind Locke’s epistemology, and the linguistic *aporia* that results:

Almost everyone agreed with Locke that meanings depended not on any “natural” connection but on convention . . . In principle, every word stands for, or signifies, a single idea. But any set of sensory experiences will generate a multitude of ideas, not just one, and that multitude will in turn be increased by the composition of the simple ideas into complex ideas. Moreover, two successive experiences of the same sort of sensory object must in principle generate two separate ideas – that is, two different ideas. At this point, the power of “abstraction” comes into play, whereby what is common to these two ideas is drawn off, to become yet another idea. This idea, like the first two will presumably have its own proper name or sign. As a consequence, one would have to have a vocabulary commensurate with the multiplicity of sensations, ideas, and abstractions if one should wish to communicate clearly and avoid acting “the perfect cheat.” Unless experience were somehow suspended or terminated, however, one would have to

generate an interminable list of names. But the semantic resources of a given language, indeed of all languages taken together, are finite.<sup>309</sup>

This gap between experience and language is further worried by what Hobbes and Locke see as the “arbitrary” and “uncertain physiognomy of perception” underlying wit,<sup>310</sup> its status as “a passive or a vulgar faculty.”<sup>311</sup> Addison’s major contribution to the rehabilitation of wit is to see it not as passive but active. Wit must be *novel*:

Wit . . . generally, tho’ not always, consists in such a Resemblance and Congruity of Ideas as this Author [Locke] mentions. I shall only add to it, by way of Explanation, That every Resemblance of Ideas is not that which we call Wit, unless it be such a one that gives *Delight* and *Surprize* to the Reader: These two properties seem essential to Wit, more particularly the last of them. In order therefore that the Resemblance in the Ideas be Wit, it is necessary that the Ideas should not lie too near one another in the Nature of things; for where the Likeness is obvious, it gives no Surprize. To compare one Man’s Singing to that of another, or to represent the Whiteness of any Object to that of Milk and Snow, or the Variety of Colours by those of the Rainbow, cannot be called Wit, unless, besides this obvious Resemblance, there be some further Congruity discovered in the two Ideas that is capable of giving the Reader some Surprize. Thus when a Poet tells us, the Bosom of his Mistress is as white as Snow, there is no Wit in the Comparison; but when he adds, with a Sigh, that it is as cold too, it then grows into Wit.<sup>312</sup>

Addison's position, that the forms of true Wit, "Metaphors, Similitudes, Allegories, Ænigmas, Mottos, Parables, Fables, Dreams, Visions, dramattick Writings, Burlesque, and all the Methods of Allusion" must be novel leads directly to his distinction between True and False Wit, and to the mongrel form Mixed Wit that splits the difference between them. "As *true Wit* consists in the Resemblance of Ideas . . . *false Wit* [consists] in the Resemblance of Words"<sup>313</sup> (while Mixed Wit consists partly in one, partly in the other). The mechanical form of False Wit, troping that adds nothing to understanding, is for Addison located in the kind of wit that treats not ideas, but language alone. And since language is in modernism viewed as an accretion, a Wit that rattles along the similitudes of language proceeds in a hermetically sealed realm.

In emphasizing novelty in wit Addison hit on, probably independently (but possibly not, as English translations of the work were widely available) something quite similar to Bernard Lamy's proposal in his *Art de Parler* that tropes are "designed specifically to overcome the disparity between the quantity of experience and the available vocabulary for communicating that experience."<sup>314</sup> Conventionally assumed similitudes are not wit because they have already routinized the encounter of experience with language; true wit locates an element of experiential excess and locates a resemblance that hitherto was unnoticed. The recuperation of that experience, orphaned and unnamed, into the system of similitude is what causes the surprise, and resulting delight, in the witticism. Hence, allegory can operate in more than one direction; not only does it strive to find sensually apprehensible forms in which to cloak abstract systems, it also seeks to apotheosize experience by uploading it, if you will, into abstract systems.

Rather than exploring the positive impact of true Wit, Addison starts off his analysis by

devoting four issues of the *Spectator* (#58-61) to exhaustively cataloging all the forms of false Wit: acrostics, pattern poems, letter-dropping, rebuses, personification, anagrams, chronograms, *bouts rimez*, double rhymes and especially the pun. Someone turning to this part of Addison's writing would be justified in assuming that he, along with Hobbes and Locke, will view Wit as something to be hobbled and kept under lock. Addison's critical fascination with the forms of false wit is somewhat similar to his critical fascination with the forms of fashion, in that his eagerness to criticize it is matched by his obvious pleasure in investigating, almost luxuriating in all the different and amusingly false forms that these phenomena take. It is partly true, as Derek Attridge writes, that in Addisonian criticism "the pun remains an embarrassment to be marginalized or controlled by relegation to the realms of the infantile, the jocular, the literary. It survives, tenaciously, as freak or accident, hindering what is taken to be the function of language: the clean transmission of a pre-existing, self-sufficient, unequivocal meaning."<sup>315</sup> But it is also true that the loving detail Addison gives to the pun makes its survival more than a "freak accident." At the same time that Addison is attempting to regulate wit, as Elizabeth Craft notes, "he also reveals the power and appeal of the habits of mind and language he is attempting to discredit and displace."<sup>316</sup>

Craft likes Addison's ambivalence to the push and pull of sexual desire, focusing on the image Addison chooses to finish his discussion of the pun in no. 61. "One may represent true Wit by the Description which *Aristinetus* makes of a fine Woman, When she is *dress'd* she is Beautiful, when she is *undress'd* she is Beautiful." While true wit embraces the "naked truth", users of false wit are fetishists who attain erotic satisfaction from the clothing itself. But there is also desire in the very act of undressing false wit, in revealing the abyss beneath the clothing of

words, which gives Addison an equal source of desire. For Addison, the pleasure and surprise of wit is also to be found in the discovery of opposites, in the revelation of difference that the categorizing and separating entails. What Kraft's analysis itself "reveals" is that what true wit, indeed what modernist style is all about, is the delight and surprise of undressing; a delight and surprise that ironically would not exist without the clothing in the first place, and hence is a delight constantly troubled by the fear that what inspires it is clothing "all the way down."

It may still be argued that Addison's obsession with false wit leaves true wit neglected. In fact, the definition of true wit, as with judgment, is contained in its use, specifically in the form of the Allegory, from the simple allegory of clothed and naked truth at the end of no. 61, to the extended allegory that takes up all of #63. Allegories "are very proper for Instruction," says Addison in *Spectator* #391,<sup>317</sup> and it is fitting that he chooses an allegory to close his methodical discourse on wit. Addison's reliance on the allegory is of a match with the concerns of the fixed and immutable papers; stylistically, the goal is imagery that illuminates not sensory experience but abstract systems. This tendency is one of the marks against allegory according to its critics; although Angus Fletcher argues (and Elizabeth Craft's unpacking of the simple allegory above would concur) "allegories are far less often the dull systems that they are reputed to be than they are symbolic power struggles,"<sup>318</sup> allegory has more often been defined, and looked down upon, as simply a didactic genre by virtue of its rejection of experience, offering in the words of C.S. Lewis "frigid personifications of shadowy abstractions." In the allegory on wit, the strategy of abstraction is plain enough in the sense that no one has ever seen "a Regiment of *Anagrams*" as Addison claims himself to have seen in "my last Night's Dream or Vision, which formed in to one Continued Allegory the several Schemes of Wit."<sup>319</sup> Still the image has to be true to the self-

evident definition and identity of anagrams “who were continually in motion, turning the Right or Left, facing about, doubling their Ranks, shifting their Stations, and throwing themselves into all the Figures and Counter-Marches of the most changeable and perplexed Exercise.”<sup>320</sup> The same principle exists in slightly more complicated form with the “Party of *Punns*:”

Not far from these was another Set of Merry People engaged at a Diversion, in which the whole Jest was to mistake one Person for another. To give occasion for these ludicrous Mistakes, they were divided into pairs, every Pair being covered from Head to Foot with the same kind of Dress, though, perhaps, there was not the least Resemblance in their Faces. By this means an old Man was sometimes mistaken for a Boy, a Woman for a Man, and a Black-a-moor for an *European*, which very often produced great Peals of Laughter.

Experience, in this case, might well furnish specific cases to go with each example, be it an aging, rouged rake, to forms of sexual or racial masquerade. For the purposes of the allegory, however, it is enough that we recognize age, sex and race as occasions for a pure opposition between age and youth, woman and man, black and white. Lest we mistake the relationships, the nature of the similitude in the opposition, Addison models the surprise and delight of an audience upon the undressing and revealing of the substitution of the normative with the deviant binary. Such a revelation would be banal if this was a mere substitution of equals; the systematization of allegory is an intrinsically axiological operation. It is also a supremely effective way of sorting experience into categories that avoids the pedantic need to conserve every aspect of the

experiential or ideational manifold in one's own prose style.

In the allegory, the conflated movement of judgment and wit is consecrated in an apotheosis of experience into system. The anti-sensualist perspicacity of the allegory attempts to resolve the conceptual gap in centripetal rhetoric through an imagism that purports to illuminate physical reality without being exactly one with it; image as thought-content survives its encounter with the imperfect world of extension by dominating it, and by giving audiences a glimpse of a world to come where truth is revealed without the intervening distortions of sensual experience. Allegory is, as Fletcher emphasizes, essentially an apocalyptic mode of address: "a revealed transcendental language that which tries to preserve the remoteness of a properly veiled godhead," a stylistic "garment" to be torn aside by the initiated reader.<sup>321</sup> Hence it is an especially apt illustrative use of wit for Addison, given the dressing and undressing imagery of the simple allegory, and the ultimately axiological goal of judgment, anticipating as it does a more final judgment to come.

In Addison's work, allegories serve many functions, but in particular, we should be concerned with how the vividly rendered figures of allegory lead us, by hook or crook, toward the ghostly shadows of stranger sociality. We can see these allegories at work throughout Addison's texts, but particularly in a few places. First, despite the putatively non-political nature of the *Spectator*, Addison was primarily known as a Whig propagandist and encomiast of the power elite during his writing career. Addison's career coincides with the birth of mixed parliamentary democracy in England, and parliamentary figures that were prominent enough to "represent" the state would be lacking until Hugh Walpole would come to signify the Whig ascendancy in the 1730s and 40s; therefore, Addison's encomia focus on the early Hanoverian

rulers and the military exploits of the Duke of Marlborough. Yet these figures are not celebrated for their divinity, nor for their prudence, but for how they reflect the interests of the state, how they signify emblematically those interests. Second, the market is represented in Addison's decisive intervention into what was, above all, an allegorical struggle over the proper representation of that market in the emblem of Lady Credit. As Pocock notes, it is an unusual detail that the feminizing of Credit in this sense was a Whig, not a Tory project; in a sense the allegories met the Tory charge that credit feminized male virtue and turned it back on their opponents. Finally, for the public, we will return to the very first *Spectator* to see how Addison uses the anonymity of print to construct a portmanteau model of the British public, creating in his persona an allegorical figure of openness through which disparate elements are held together "incongruously, as if by artifice alone."<sup>322</sup>

#### *4d. Addison's Allegories of Nation, Market and Public*

Shortly after William and Mary assumed the throne, Addison won quick recognition at Oxford and election to Magdalen College with two political poems celebrating the change in power. *Tityrus et Mopsie*, Addison's earliest surviving work, depicts two shepherds drinking the new rulers' health:

Tityrus:        He [William] is first in government, second to none in virtue; thus the sun shines  
                      with a greater light than the stars.

Mopsus:        But, as the moon gleams amidst the lesser stars, such Mary seems when

surrounded by her company.

Tityrus: But now, Tityrus, what things should we pray for, worthy of them, who have granted the flock and the masters of the flock the freedom to play?

Mopsus: Let them find the enduring peace they have bestowed!

Tityrus: And let either star be late in adorning the firmament!

The poem's protagonists, who are themselves reacting to news of a glorious revolution with prayers and toasts, represent the stereotypical audience of political epideictic with an almost crass bluntness. They are uneducated and not particularly powerful, but their happiness under the new regime is important enough to that regime's success to be publicly remarked upon. The assent of the peasants is essential rather than a mere after thought, since William and Mary have been imported to *represent* English interests, rather than to represent *to* England a divine right of succession. Meanwhile, in the next poem Addison published, *Gratulatio*, celebrating William's Irish campaign, another who would be rightful ruler if patriarchic succession was still paramount is treated quite differently. The poem ends with an exhortation to the exiled James to admit defeat, and his *unfitness* to rule:

At length, James, abandon your insane effort, abandon further reliance on Louis's arms.

Now you vainly lament the honors torn from your brow, your sighs come too late, too late you are now questing, although, if your mind had not been foolish, and if you had not trusted in your consort's treacherous art, now, happy, you could have been administering laws to peaceful Britons, and been governing your ancestral flock with a better destiny.

But now the Fates forbid, and their irrevocable decree . . .

The poem reflects the precariousness of hereditary power in a world where it cannot simply be commanded by tradition, marginalizing it by opposing to it an overwhelming, “irrevocable” victory. James is on the side of his “consort’s treacherous art,” feminizing his reliance on changeable *fortuna*, while William occupies destiny and fate. James’ fall is a double one. By trying to fight his destiny, he not only finds himself cast out of the royal seat and its hierarchical perspective, but tries vainly to shape a fortune already tamed by progress. No longer at the top of the great chain of being, James finds it is too late to learn republican virtue after a lifetime of licentious vice and corruption. Of course, it is true that many did see James’ resistance as a promise of virtue in exile that would someday return, as the long Jacobite tradition in England attests. But James represents all the deficits of personality for Addison.

This of course created a problem for Addison, since his bias against personality meant that his encomia would have to find a way to celebrate those who lacked it. Although his skill as a writer would grow considerably, there is a quality to his early poems that continues throughout all of his more explicitly political writings; an often straining attempt to find sublimity in the mundane personages and policies of the Whig Junta and their crowned supporters, often through an attempt to juxtapose them with extravagant physical descriptions. His much vaunted lightness of touch and subtlety of manner is nowhere to be found in his political poetry and rhetoric. If Addison’s identity as a ‘Whig ideologue’ in the *Spectator* can still be contested, here there is no such contestation possible. Addison’s clear intent in these poems is to assign inevitability to what is an extremely contingent matter, and thus to neutralize and make into “spectators” his audience

in a purely negative political sense.

In a way, the banality of William and Mary was irrelevant to Addison's ultimate message. The monarchs did not achieve glory through their place in a great chain of being. Rather, they are serviceable garments cloaking the existence of a different type of greatness: that of the English people and their cultural birthright to enjoy "the freedom to play." This perspective no doubt filtered the benign view that Addison and his contemporaries had of Augustus, a ruler that Ronald Syme, writing in the shadow of fascist Europe, has proposed was no stranger to the practice of ruthless power politics himself.<sup>323</sup> The Augustus the late 17<sup>th</sup> century admired was more like the beekeeper of the *Georgics*, lovingly arranging the environment to protect and promote the labor of the hive.

In the English-language "To the King," William's victory at Namur is celebrated for its commercial importance:

Where-e'er the Waves in restless errors rowle,  
 The Sea lies open now to either Pole:  
 Now we may safely use the *Northern* gales,  
 And in the *Polar Circles* spread our sails;  
 Or deep in *Southern* climes, Secure from wars,  
 New lands explore, and sail by Other stars;  
 Fetch Uncontroll'd each labor of the Sun,  
 And make the product of the World our own. (11. 115-22)

Addison's careful underpinning of his admittedly extravagant praise of William with the interests of the state that William served must have appealed to his Whig patrons, for it harmonized well with the new parliament's immediate need for legitimation. Addison's immediate problem, which perhaps seems more egregious with historical hindsight, was the gap between imagination and "the bare facts" in his early political poems. "To the King" is, as Robert M. Otten points out, "the celebration as fact what was in 1695 only a hope, that England was a nation united under its king." William, in a nod to Virgil's fulsome praise of Octavian in the *Georgics*, is called 'god-like,' while . . . "A spectacular yet ineffective bombardment of the French coast rises above military mediocrity by an epic simile":

Thus Aetna, when in fierce eruptions broke  
 Fills heaven with ashes, and the earth with smoke;  
 Here crags of broken rocks are twirled on high,  
 Here molten stones and scattered cinders fly:  
 Its fury reaches the remotest coast,  
 And strows the Asiatic shore with dust.

In Addison's defense, the poems were written by a young and unseasoned college student, relatively cloistered, who aspired to be an English Virgil; it was more important to try to imitate the master than to acknowledge the meanness of Williams' military accomplishments. In fact, the English military triumph that Addison already celebrated in 1695 was still nine years away; in a way this was advantageous to Addison, for it gave him time to take the grand tour

sponsored by his Whig patrons and return to London, where his contacts won him a commission to write an official poem celebrating the Duke of Marlborough's military triumph over Louis XIV at Blenheim, Germany; "The Campaign."

The passing of nine years had both increased England's military might and tempered Addison's enthusiasm for extravagance enough for poet and subject to be a good match. Marlborough's status as a military genius of the first order was not in doubt; two centuries later his descendent Winston Churchill, in his massive biography on his famed ancestor, hoped

to show that he was not only the foremost of English soldiers, but in the first rank among the statesmen of our history; not only that he was a Titan . . . but that he was a virtuous and benevolent being, eminently serviceable to his age and country, capable of drawing harmony and design from chaos.<sup>324</sup>

Such hero-worship was the result of admittedly impressive military achievement:

Marlborough's campaign in Germany and the victories at Schellenberg and Blenheim were an epic event. Marlborough marched his large army across territory on a scale that awed his allies and foes alike. In these battles more than 100,000 men were engaged, half of whom became casualties. The battles shattered the myth of French military invulnerability. In the clichéd but occasionally accurate phrase, Blenheim was a decisive battle of history.<sup>325</sup>

What Marlborough's victory provided Addison was his first "brush with greatness," the first (that is) outside of the ancient world. His imagining of the battles of William made do with few compelling facts, and as a result imported classical imagery to fill the gap. Marlborough's achievement, despite his illustrious descendant's gloss, was something "modern" not "ancient." Rather than an expression of virtuous cunning, Marlborough's was a technical achievement: he managed to march 40,000 from Cologne to the Danube with little wear and tear due superior planning: strict scheduling making timely distribution of supplies possible so that every night "the soldiers had nothing to do but pitch their tents, boil their kettles and rest."<sup>326</sup> Consequently, Addison turned away from his earlier over reliance on the classics to instead use nature imagery drawn from contemporary English society, especially that of the hunt. The poem switches perspective from hunter to hunted in order to heighten the sense of Marlborough's superior force on the shared ground of battle:

So the staunch Hound the trembling Deer pursues,  
And smells his footsteps in the tainted dews,  
The tedious track unrav'ling by degrees:  
But when the scent comes warm in ev'ry breeze,  
Fir'd at the near approach, he shoots away  
On his full stretch, and bears upon his prey.

And later, the French perspective:

But soon as the victorious host he spies,  
 From hill to hill, from stream to stream he flies:  
 Such dire impressions in his heart remain  
 Of MARLBORO's sword, and *Hocstet's* fatal plain:

Even Addison's most extravagant biblical image is coupled with a natural manifestation of recent origin, with Marlborough holding down the middle ground between earth and heaven:

So when an Angel by divine command  
 With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,  
 Such as late o'er pale *Britannia* past,  
 Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;  
 And, pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,  
 Rides in the whirl-wind, and directs the storm.

The turn from the beauties of a classic education towards popular religion, mundane cultural practices, and meteorology as sources for imagery reflects a greening of Addison's neo-Augustan popular aesthetics, one that outstrips the need for an elite education in the reader. If the early poems were saturated with the cultural capital he had received at Oxford and presupposed a similar knowledge of obscure classical allusions, here he was beginning to direct his work toward a shared sensorium of public knowledge, not only about English weather but also about characteristic English practices like the deer-hunt. Modernity also has a place in the

contemporaneity of the poem, as the “The Campaign” is a hymn not to the military workings of divine intervention in the style of the *Iliad* but to the professional deployment of overwhelming force in secular time and space. Addison had, in a limited sense, succeeded in producing a modern work that achieved some of the accomplishments he had celebrated in his early criticism, using vivid physical description of action and environment to evoke a wider social totality: in this case England’s emergence as a modern imperial power that need not rely on imitating the past.

Addison’s achievement was perhaps too focused on the technical challenge of achieving ancient effects, as he defined them, in a modern setting to pay very much attention to making “The Campaign” sing as poetry: a typical contemporary criticism described it as “a gazette in rhyme.”<sup>327</sup> The comment was prophetic, for Addison soon moved from the writing of poetry to the journalistic sphere of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* in seeking popular appeal. But in the course of doing so he held on in his critical work to the ideal of a contemporary verse form that could bind together the culture of the British state, much as Augustan literature was seen to bind together the culture of first-century Rome. This ideal was reflected in his championing of two widely different English-language texts in the pages of the *Spectator*: Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the popular ballad *Chevy Chase*.

Addison’s early critical writings had not ignored homegrown poets, but his juvenile effort in this area, *Remarks on Several English Poets*, is acknowledged by most as derivative and trite. The work lacks the sustained argument regarding the socio-political importance of perspicacity that gives his early works on ancient style their focus. Both the critique of *Chevy-Chase* and the series on *Paradise Lost* are more mature pieces that are thoroughly integrated with the

perspectives of his work on Virgil and Theophrastus. Still, Addison's critiques of *Chevy-Chase* and *Paradise Lost* might seem overly pedantic to modern readers, particularly when one considers his consistent, even relentless focus on one critical question: can either *Chevy-Chase* or *Paradise Lost* be considered an "epic" under the most stringent of neo-classical principles? But lest we think these critical works tedious exercises in neoclassical navel gazing, a simple demonstration of how unwilling Addison was to escape the conceptual paradigm of his school years, we should recall the enormous socio-political importance he attached to the epic form, indeed how closely and consistently he had aligned the neoclassical critical project with the neo-Augustan political one since 1688.

*Chevy-Chase* is a case in point. No one looking to the epic genre for purely formal qualities would have taken a second glance at an old folk ballad that by its very nature was available in widely divergent versions. Addison makes it clear from the beginning of his reading that he is interested in the social function of the work, a social function which is itself the best guarantee of positive formal properties. "When I traveled," writes Addison in *Spectator* #70,

I took a particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son, and are most in vogue with the common people . . . for it is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man. Human nature is the same in all reasonable creatures; and whoever falls in with it will meet with admirers amongst readers of all qualities and conditions.

In England, *Chevy-Chase*, a bloody tale of England's conquest of Scotland, the death of the Shakespearian hero Hotspur, and the brutal revenge taken against his killers, was the most enduringly popular ballad of this type. Ben Johnson "used to say he would rather have been the author of it than all his works"; and Sidney is quoted that "I never heard the old song . . . that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet." Claims of authority notwithstanding, the main point is that the ballad's popular appeal "shows the inherent perfection of simplicity of thought."

*Homer, Virgil, or Milton*, so far as the language of their poems is understood, will please a reader of plain common sense, who would neither relish nor comprehend an epigram by *Martial* or a poem by *Cowley*: so, on the contrary, an ordinary song or ballad that is the delight of the common people, cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or ignorance; and the reason is plain, because the same paintings of nature which recommend it to the most ordinary reader, will appear beautiful to the most refined.

Popularity and simplicity of style would not be enough to qualify *Chevy-Chase* for comparison to Homer, Virgil or Milton without a uplifting message, for "the greatest modern critics have laid it down as a rule, that a heroic poem should be founded upon some important precept of morality." Addison finds such a moral in the political message of the ballad:

As Greece was a collection of many governments, who suffered very much among

themselves, and gave the Persian emperor, who was their common enemy, many advantages over them by their mutual jealousies and animosities . . . at the time of the poem we are now treating was written, the dissensions of the barons, who were then so many petty princes, ran very high, whether they quarreled among themselves or with their neighbors, and produced unspeakable calamities to the country: the poet, to deter men from such unnatural contentions, describes a bloody battle and dreadful scene of death, occasioned by the mutual feuds which reigned in the families of an English and Scottish nobleman . . . after the example of the modern tragedians, he draws from it a precept for the benefit of his readers:

God save the King and bless the land

In plenty, joy, and peace;

And grant henceforth that foul debate

‘Twixt noblemen may cease

The precept championed, characteristically enough for Addison, does not reflect on the great deeds of any one warrior, but ends for a plea for community and an end to “foul debate.” It does not encomize individuals but rather an ideal of imperial harmony. Furthermore, Addison’s main purpose in writing about *Chevy-Chase* was to claim for the epic form elements that did not require ancient genius, to separate those elements once and for all from the grip of die-hard Ancients like William Temple. What makes an epic an epic, argued Addison, is not an unrecoverable ancient spark of genius but popular appeal, perspicacity of style, and an explicit political message. Addison tried to reconcile these convictions with contemporary critical ideas

about the epic, but these were a tough fit, especially when he attempted without irony to judge *Chevy Chase* the equal of the *Aeniad*, a claim that exposed him to much ridicule at the time.<sup>328</sup>

He was more successful attributing such authority to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, since its greatness was already firmly established by the time he published his lengthy series on the poem in 1712. Certainly his critiques of *Lost*, published every Saturday during a period ranging from January to May, were essential in cementing their popularity, to the extent that Theophilus Cibber could claim that Addison had made it unfashionable *not* to read Milton.<sup>329</sup> To be sure, the wide audience he was able to command can explain somewhat the influence of his critique; harder is the question of what Addison was exactly trying to prove with his exceedingly literal minded reading of the poem, where he seems primarily interested in comparing Milton with Virgil and Homer. Again it helps to go to his early criticism, and the imitative verse it both reflected and inspired, and remember the socio-political function Addison assigned to ancient style in binding a society together through the power of perspicacity. What ancient societies had in the way of a unified visual culture is for Addison the thing that modern Britain needed, but Britain had two things that the ancients did not: Christianity and a scientific understanding of the complexity of the material universe. By proving that Milton wrote epics, Addison hopes to imply that the Kingdom of God, and by extension Augustan England, is itself a coherent society on the order of Augustan Rome: one whose founding is equally worthy of perspicacious description and political emulation.

Addison, to his credit, appears aware of the strain in applying this model, for the perspicacious description of character and place, the figure-ground relationship that drives an epic narrative, is made more difficult by the metaphysical scope of the poem. Addison

anticipates opposing arguments on several main points. While it is often possible to set one's watch by Homer's descriptions, Addison admits "as a great part of Milton's story was transacted in regions that lie out of the reach of the sun and the sphere of day, it is impossible to gratify the reader with such a calculation, which indeed would be more curious than instructive."<sup>330</sup>

Likewise, the characters of great epics drive the plot forward by being able to mold the environment around them through their actions: in *Paradise Lost*, that actor is Satan, and the action is uniformly negative. In fact, as Addison is at pains to point out, the "one great moral" that "reigns in Milton is . . . that obedience to the will of God makes men happy, and that disobedience makes them miserable."<sup>331</sup> Characters like Satan can move the plot forward only in destructive ways, for in this world-view agency is degradation, the pollution of creation.<sup>332</sup>

Finally, the depiction of behavior, what neo-Augustan critics called "sentiment", itself cannot base itself on careful observation of actual behavior, in the manner of Homer, Theophrastus or Virgil:

It was much easier for Homer to find proper sentiments for an assembly of Grecian generals, than for Milton to diversify his Infernal Council with proper characters, and inspire them with a variety of sentiments. The loves of Dido and Aeneas are only copies of what passed between other persons. Adam and Eve, before the Fall, are a different species from that of mankind, who are descended from them.<sup>333</sup>

If *Paradise Lost* departs in so many of its features from the epic models of antiquity, why then does Addison insist on calling it an epic? Addison's argument seems to be that the

expansiveness of the Christian concept of creation does not distort these features but rather magnifies them to the degree that they touch on the eternal. “Paganism could not furnish out a real action for a fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*, and therefore a heathen could not form a higher notion than one of that kind, which they call a heroic.”<sup>334</sup> The sublimity of the Christian creation myth necessitates going beyond the more purely descriptive realm of the epic.

Where it comes to the first point, Stanley Fish has argued that the supernatural scope of *Paradise Lost* does not lessen the rhetorical force of Milton’s use of description but heightens it to the extent that space and time in the poem are now absolute and “God-centered,” centered around the respective poles of rising and falling, light and dark, creation and predestination, perpetuity and event.<sup>335</sup> Perspicuity can still do its work if what is being described is not sensual detail but these basic visual and temporal elements. Where it comes to the characters themselves, Addison admits that it is true that the heroes appear to fail within the bounded time of the epic poem; yet this failure is only to be perceived as such by ignoring the inevitability of sacred time. Modern Christians, cognizant of the Messianic undoing of original sin, would understand that Jesus Christ is the hero of the epic, even though Adam only foresees his triumph in a vision towards the end of the poem.<sup>336</sup> Even in the midst of tragedy the tale is always already resolved in a positive light. Finally, the very fact that Milton has no real-life models for describing characters such as Adam and Eve before the Fall demonstrates that “none but a poet of the most unbounded invention, and the most exquisite judgment, could have filled their conversation and behaviour with so many apt circumstances during their state of innocence.”<sup>337</sup> Through his perspicacious description of manners in Eden, Milton successfully makes Paradise palpable for his readers, helps them to imagine an unimaginable state of unsullied grace.

Addison finally stretches the epic form to fit *Paradise Lost* because he wishes to emphasize, in the same way as he did with *Chevy-Chase*, the political dimension of the poem. He wants the self-knowledge of Augustan society, the self-knowledge gained through the perspicacious depiction of action in time and space, for Christianity itself. Such an expansion of course considerably distorts the epic form. No longer is the virtuous action of one individual shaping the fortune of a particular society at a particular time and place the main focus; now submission to providence, to the unfolding of God's will, is sufficient to carry the plot and humanity forward. Meanwhile, Satan for Addison becomes yet again another example of the deficits of personality compared with an ideal of grace, Christ, who has the good taste to not even appear in the narrative of which He is the "hero." *Paradise Lost* is above all a giver of pious precepts, but Addison also leads his readers to consider the practical political lessons (trust in the providential unfolding of the empire, while avoiding ambitious and prideful showoffs) cloaked beneath the supernatural.

If the sublime vision of the Christian state to which Addison and the Whigs, the defenders of the Anglican high church, were committed<sup>338</sup> offered a dauntingly unbounded model, it was met by an ambitious political vision of an expansive state which strove to extend "freedom to play" globally; consequently, the British idea's refusal to restrict itself to traditional geographic boundaries was enough to promote resistance from those for whom soil alone mattered. It is interesting to note that a major Tory platform around Addison's time was to restrict military operations to the sea campaign alone, suggesting that water as an element that was not as over determined as were "land" and "soil" in the ideological struggle of the time. That struggle, which not only comprised the conflict between Whigs and Tories but that between High

Church and Nonconformity, could even draw the new physics into its orbit. Acceptance of the inertness of matter, a central part of the Newtonian framework, often coalesced among party lines; the assertion of a relationship with a living, even sentient soil was as essential to the country interest as an abstract notion of space, one that could conceive of a “cut and paste” of Englishness to locales halfway across the globe, would be to the emerging British imperial project.<sup>339</sup> The abstraction of space also served as the conceptual underpinning of one of the major political debates of the day, one that put the imaginaries of nation and market into a symbiotic relationship; this was the charge that the Whig “War Party” was engaging in speculative military adventures driven by the despotism of “Lady Credit.” The charge, from the country perspective, was that an imaginary war was being driven by imaginary wealth.

The allegorical figure of credit as woman was already a commonplace by the time Addison took it up; before considering “Lady Credit” however, we should acknowledge the importance of the “man of credit” for John Locke:

*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* introduces one usage of the word credit as a way of making a distinction between "demonstrable" and "probable" truths. Knowledge that has been gained directly by means of the senses, or by the "constant, immutable, and visible connexion" between two or more "*Ideas*" in the mind produces truth by "demonstration," and human beings will invariably give their assent to such "certain Knowledge" freely, indeed intuitively, as if by a kind of mental reflex. But Locke admits that we also assent to many things only on the basis of their "probability," and for such knowledge we depend upon the good offices of another person who, by virtue of his

greater acquaintance with the subject, is a "Man of credit" able to present "Arguments or Proofs" that can make propositions "pass or be received for true." Locke's *Essay* never writes of "credit" or of the knowledge it produces without also mentioning the "Man of credit" who, because of his "wonted Veracity . . . in other cases, or his supposed Veracity in this," is able to create the effect of truth for an audience.<sup>340</sup>

The "Veracity" of Locke's man of credit is precisely what Lady Credit lacks for Daniel DeFoe:

Lady Credit embodies all the irrational, inconstant and effeminate aspects that had to be purged from financial discourse before it was able to gain respectability as a rational, disinterested and scientific sphere of action. Lady Credit is not unlike ancient goddess, Fortuna, who ruled capriciously over the affairs of men. The financial discourse under examination implies that it is in times of crisis that financial man loses self-control and is prevented from seeing economic reality by the delusions that Lady Credit generates in him. Through the virile mastering of Lady Credit, it is implied, the smooth and neutral workings of the financial sphere are guaranteed.<sup>341</sup>

Addison's treatment of Lady Credit is remarkably different than DeFoe's. Pocock connects Lady Credit with the republican concept of *fortuna*; if we consider Machiavelli's rapacious attitude toward fortune along with Montaigne's submissive pose toward the same, the extended allegory form creates an attitude toward Credit which avoids both extremes. While

Machiavelli and Montaigne both use the figure of fortune to support imperatives to either dominate or submit to it, Addison depicts Credit not as a figure to which one must prudentially commit to a tactic in relation to, but as a barometer of the actions of a vast collective. Rather than as an agent who must either master or submit to fortune, the audience is called upon to perform according to its financial duty, their performance of which is reflected as Credit (“a beautiful Virgin”, not the horrifically fecund mother of debt highlighted in Defoe) is shown reacting directly and predictably to specific market phenomena.

And the beginning of the allegory, Lady Credit’s position is stabilized and circumscribed within the Great Hall of the Bank of England. This zone of stability is traced by the four walls of the hall, which “instead of being adorned with Pictures and Maps, were hung instead with many Acts of Parliament written in Golden Letters.” Directly behind the Virgin hangs the “Magna Charta,” itself flanked by the Act of Uniformity on the right and the Act of Toleration on the left. This triptych shows a political document framed by religious decrees. As the Magna Charta is simultaneously a guarantor of liberty (for the commons) and of restraint (for the monarch who must submit to its law), one Act takes away (the 1662 Act of Uniformity, which along with the rest of the Clarendon Code disenfranchised and severely limited the movement and ability to assemble of nonconformists) and the other gives back (the 1689 Law of Tolerance, which returned the right to assemble but not the right to stand for Parliament).

The image represents Addison’s belief (echoed by other advocates of state power) that there ought to be limits to freedom. These documents are placed behind Lady Credit outside of her line of sight; they can be supposed to represent the assumed foundation of Credit’s realm. But another Act, the Act of Settlement that fixes the right of succession in Protestant hands, is

“placed full in the Eye of the Virgin that sat upon the Throne” on the opposite wall. Meanwhile “both the Sides of the Hall were covered with such Acts of Parliament as had been made for the Establishment of publick Funds.” The spatialization of the Acts of Parliament serves the purpose of removing the Acts from individual consideration under political judgment. The complexities of the issue of non-conformism, the distance traveled from 1662 to 1689, the long struggle over the succession, all these are subsumed by placing the acts in a complementary relationship which belies their often contradictory nature. At most, they represent in good Whig style a history that in retrospect seems inevitable. No longer are they the result of debate and controversy. Rather they are “several Pieces of Furniture” which Lady Credit seems “to set an unspeakable Value upon . . . but, at the same time, showered a very peculiar Uneasiness, if she saw anything approaching that might harm them.”

The transformation of DeFoe’s Dame Fortune, by turns rapacious and maternal, into the “infinitely timorous” Lady Credit is complete. She is, rather than an overwhelming force that must be either forcibly constrained or gratefully submitted to, the passive victim of public action. Public deliberation, controversy, and social action in general threatens the static foundation of the economic health of the nation, which is shown to reside at the very heart of the textual edifice of state power. No longer is the susceptibility of human endeavor to fortune the major concern; in fact, the utter malleability of credit by human action is assumed. There is some deliberation by the Spectator as to the source of Credit’s weakness. The “Vapours” is suggested by “one who I found was none of her Well-wishers” but discarded by him in favor of the definition of her as a “Valetudinarian.” While Vapours suggests a physiognomic source of her vacillation, valetudinarianism suggests rather the result of misapplied knowledge, the fruit of “genius” and

bad taste. The word suggests a hypochondriac who is in constant search of knowledge to justify his or her affliction; we can imagine the patient who appears at the doctors office with reams of internet printouts compiling dire warnings and miracle cures, one who furthermore is the prey of quacks and pseudo-healers. Indeed she “changed Colour, and startled at every thing she heard. . . . There sat at her Feet a Couple of Secretaries, who received every Hour Letters from all Parts of the World, which the one or the other was perpetually reading to her; and according to the News she heard, to which she was exceedingly attentive, she changed Colour, and discovered many Symptoms of Health and Sickness.”

The biggest threat to Lady Credit, it turns out, is bad taste, not hers but the taste of others, thorough the interventions of those who, lacking common sense, spin heterodox opinions and nonconformist theories from their limited, unrefined, antisocial subject positions. There is a certain monstrous egotism that allows these figures to accost Lady Credit directly without allowing their opinions to be vetted through the community of taste, and Lady Credit, vexed by their attention, suffers. The danger that Lady Credit offers is not exactly the dark misogynist fear of Woman as complete other to social order that Linda Zerilli demonstrates is a consistent feature of the republican imaginary in Rousseau, Burke and Mill<sup>342</sup>; it is rather a picture of Woman as perhaps too patched into the network of stranger sociality for her own good. This is a picture of femininity as extreme captive to sensibility that became a straightjacket long before Mary Wollstonecraft or Sojourner Truth came to offer alternative paradigms of female publicity, but also points toward the assumption of sensitive emotion and social concern that would be used effectively in the suffrage movement in the form of “mother love.”<sup>343</sup> Such an articulation is far in the future at this time, although the eventual and relative flexibility of this notion of

womanhood for application in service of emancipation should be noted, particularly after three centuries where women in Europe had been subjected to persecution and genocide on a mass scale.<sup>344</sup>

To be sure, femininity is also a source of enormous anxiety for Addison, though in a way exactly opposite to the closed abstract thinking of tasteless men. Women's openness to social imaginaries threatens to take them over completely as living emblems of those imaginaries, rather than autonomous actors within them. In *Tatler* # 116, argues Erin Mackie, that anxiety is expressed in terms of fashion, and the risk of women's susceptibility to it:

The prominent place that women and all that is symbolically feminine, including fashion, take in the critical discourse of early-eighteenth-century British society is bound up with all that seems socially, politically, and ethically dubious about early modern capitalism. This cultural-symbolic role of the feminine as inherently unstable, as lacking self-identity and the ability to regulate itself, provides the logic that allows what seems irrational about capitalism at once to be rendered recognizable and laid open to rational regulation. If women cannot control their own consumption habits then all the more reason for masculine intervention and management. If Lady Credit falls into a swoon with every turn of the financial and political tide, then all the more call for men to administer her cure by putting the nation on an even keel, politically and financially. The feminine figures the potential excesses, instabilities, and irrationalities of the market that modern economic man sought to rationalize, contain, and manage.<sup>345</sup>

Hence Woman is in the Whig imaginary to be incorporated, in a subordinate role, within the social imaginary, rather than seen as the utter limit and opponent of masculine *virtu*, in a sentimental system of attachment in the “intimate sphere.” Women are not sirens luring the republic to its ruin on the shoals of fortune, but potential dupes of fashion, as in “The Trial of the Petticoat”:

I would not be understood, that while I discard this monstrous invention, I am an enemy to the proper ornaments of the fair sex. On the contrary, as the hand of nature has poured on them such a profusion of charms and graces, and sent them into the world more amiable and finished than the rest of her works; so I would have them bestow upon themselves all the additional beauties that art can supply them with, provided it does not interfere with, disguise, or pervert those of nature. I consider woman as a beautiful romantic animal, that may be adorned the furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds, ores and sils. The lynx shall cast its skin at her feet to make her a tippet; the peacock, parrot, and swan, shall pay contributions to her muff; the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems; and every part of nature furnish out of its share towards the embellishment if a creature that is the most consummate work of it. All this I shall indulge them in; but as for the petticoat I have been speaking of, I neither can nor will allow it.<sup>346</sup>

Woman’s association with nature clues us into the shift from understanding it as unmasterable fortune to a collection of material goods, which seem to attach themselves to

female bodies. In *Spectator* # 69 Woman becomes an emblem of international trade in a “Vision” inspired by a visit to the Stock Exchange:

This grand Scene of Business gives me an infinite Variety of solid and substantial Entertainments. As I am a great Lover of Mankind, my Heart naturally overflows with Pleasure at the sight of a prosperous and happy Multitude, insomuch that at many publick Solemnities I cannot forbear expressing my Joy with Tears that have stolen down my Cheeks. For this Reason I am wonderfully delighted to see such a Body of Men thriving in their own private Fortunes, and at the same time promoting the Publick Stock; or in other Words, raising Estates for their own Families, by bringing into their Country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous.

Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffick among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of Dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest. Almost every *Degree* produced something peculiar to it. The Food often grows in one Country, and the Sauce in another. The Fruits of *Portugal* are corrected by the Products of *Barbadoes*: The Infusion of a *China* Plant sweetened with the Pith of an *Indian Cane*. The *Philippick* Islands give a Flavour to our *European* Bowls. The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of a hundred Climates. The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the Torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines

of *Peru*, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of *Indostan*.

In contrast to timorous Lady Credit, who seems so open to influence and interpretation, the “woman of quality” is hidden beneath her garment of exotic goods. In this sense she might well represent the allegorical anxiety that woman may be clothing “all the way down.” But in an expansion that is highly significant, Addison makes clear that English culture itself can be said to be made up the accoutrements of trade:

If we consider our own Country in its natural Prospect, without any of the Benefits and Advantages of Commerce, what a barren uncomfortable Spot of Earth falls to our Share. Natural Historians tell us, that no Fruit grows Originally among us, besides Hips and Haws, Acorns and Pig-Nutts, with other Delicates of the like Nature; That our Climate of itself, and without the Assistances of Art, can make no further Advances towards a Plumb than to a Sloe, and carries an Apple to no greater a Perfection than a Crab: That our Melons, our Peaches, our Figs, our Apricots, and Cherries, are Strangers among us, imported in different Ages, and naturalized in our *English* Gardens; and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the Trash of our own Country, if they were wholly neglected by the Planter, and left to the Mercy of our Sun and Soil. Nor has Traffick more enriched our Vegetable World, than it has improved the whole Face of Nature among us. Our Ships are laden with the Harvest of every Climate: Our Tables are stored with Spices, and Oils, and Wines: Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of *China*, and adorned with the Workmanship of *Japan*: Our Morning's Draught comes to us from the

remotest Corners of the Earth: We repair our Bodies by the Drugs of *America*, and repose ourselves under *Indian* Canopies. My Friend Sir ANDREW calls the Vineyards of *France* our Gardens; the Spice-Islands our Hot-beds; the *Persians* our Silk-Weavers, and the *Chinese* our Potters. Nature indeed furnishes us with the bare Necessaries of Life, but Traffick gives us greater Variety of what is Useful, and at the same time supplies us with every thing that is Convenient and Ornamental. Nor is it the least Part of this our Happiness, that whilst we enjoy the remotest Products of the North and South, we are free from those Extremities of Weather which give them Birth; That our Eyes are refreshed with the green Fields of *Britain*, at the same time that our Palates are feasted with Fruits that rise between the Tropicks.

The nation of England is characterized above all by *absence*, although this absence gives it a particular power. “Barren, uncomfortable,” England nevertheless is “free from those extremities of weather” that caused the fruit to come forth. England and the “lady of quality” both represent that which is not representable by the mere products of material goods themselves, they “strangers among us” but point to the absence that organizes and brings them all together.

The state and the market, as social imaginaries, are a big part of Addison’s interests in writing the *Spectator*. His association with these institutions of modernity is what leads Walker to label him a “Whig” ideologue, while Fabricant defines him as “bourgeois.” To the extent that many commentators have seen the “public” as a mere offshoot of politics and economics, we should expect the same influences there. But Addison’s contributions to publicness are just as

slippery as his other achievements in imagination building. This shifting and subtle persona is best illustrated, I feel, though a careful reading of the very first *Spectator* issue, where Addison introduces his mask. The aim of this reading is to leave the impression that, while either an ideological reading or an agent centered reading in the style of traditional public address criticism would certainly mine some insights, what we are really seeing here is a kind of free-form play, a “speculative” sense of writing the public.

It is instructive that the very first paragraph of the first issue of the *Spectator* comments on what it will go on to exploit, frustrate, and transcend; the need for identification, for “placing” the voice of the author. It is the start of an elaborate striptease that will lead us through broad swaths of the public culture of England:

I have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure ‘till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right Understanding of an Author.

Any possibility that the Spectator might be revealed as a Whig politician is put off by from the first bit of information revealed, which seems to put Mr. Spectator in “the country interest”:

I was born to a small Hereditary Estate, which, according to the Tradition of the Village where it lies, was bounded by the same Hedges and Ditches in *William* the Conqueror’s Time that it is at present, and has been delivered down from Father to Son whole and

entire, without the Loss or Acquisition of a single Field or Meadow, during the Space of six hundred Years.

Again, according to the “country interest”, the perpetuity of landed property was one of the main casualties of the Whigs’ war policy, which weighed heavily on the gentry. It was the assumption of country ideologues that only real property, and not the “mobile” property of the stock holder, could provide the unified moral personality necessary for civic virtue. By associating himself with a parcel of land clearly delineated through hedge and ditch, Mr. Spectator counters possible speculation that he might be a hack; land assures the reader that he is leisured, and thus free to write as he pleases (the assumption that his right to that land represents in itself a distorting interest still being a fringe position). Of course, this can only help legitimize his eventual move to the city as an act of free will, and his criticism of the country life as not caused by simple jealousy.

Along with the connection with the soil is the possibility of an occult (and bawdy) prediction of his temperament:

There runs a Story in the Family, that when my Mother was gone with Child of me about three Months, she dreamt that she was brought to Bed of a Judge: Whether this might proceed from a Law-Suit which was then depending in the Family, or my Father’s being a Justice of the Peace, I cannot determine; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any Dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the Interpretation which the Neighborhood put on it.

The device of the “dream vision” was a common one of Addison’s, in many ways symptomatic of his approach, and the twilight zone between fact and fiction that the *Spectator* represents. Mr. Spectator duly reports his mother’s dream, and then quickly contrasts his own skepticism with the credulity of his country neighbors. But in his relating the dream, and even more so in the elaborate “night visions” that would follow (most famously in his very next contribution, two days later, of the vision of Public Credit as a beautiful virgin on a throne of gold), Addison succeeds in sending a signal to his readers on how to read the “visions” as allegory, not necessarily as a direct communication of divine truth, but as more mundane commentary wrapped in a figurative disguise. In a sense, the Addisonian vision is the soul of “wit”, the operation of the imagination that takes its basic elements from sense perception, then juxtaposes them in novel fashion to create new and instructive effects.

The “dignity” thus foretold turns out to be massive to a credulity-straining degree:

I had not been long at the University, before I distinguished myself by a most profound Silence: For, during the Space of eight Years, excepting in the publick Exercises of the College, I scarce uttered the Quantity of an hundred Words; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three Sentences together in my whole Life.

In a society where everyone has an opinion on everything, in a time often held up as the pinnacle of debate, spirited discussion on the public interest, and “the force of the better argument”, Mr. Spectator stands out as an anomaly, the exception that proves the rule. The amplification of Mr.

Spectator's taciturnity is justified, of course, by its wittiness, based as it is in the underlining of "real" social phenomena. The novelty of a silent man in the era of the verbal wit becomes a paradigm of descriptive wit, as Mr. Spectator will often be pictured sitting, in Keatonesque fashion, in the midst of verbal storm and stress.

Inability to converse, to enter into witty repartee, was often seen as evidence of the social sin of pedantry. Mr. Spectator next relates the story of a near escape from such a life, an escape made away from libraries and archeological sites into the flow and flux of city life:

While I was in this Learned Body I applied my self with so much Diligence to my Studies, that there are very few celebrated Books, either in the Learned or the Modern Tongues, which I am not acquainted with. . . .

Upon the Death of my Father I was resolved to travel into Foreign Countries, and therefore left the University, with the Character of an odd, unaccountable Fellow, that had a great deal of Learning, if I would but show it. An insatiable Thirst after Knowledge carried me into all the Countries of *Europe*, in which there was anything new or strange to be seen; nay, to such a Degree was my Curiosity raised, that having read the Controversies of some great Men concerning the Antiquities of *Egypt*, I made a Voyage to *Grand Cairo*, on purpose to take the Measure of a Pyramid; and as soon as I had set myself right in that Particular, returned to my native Country with great Satisfaction.

The story makes reference to the controversy raised by the astronomer John Greaves's claim that ancient Egypt and modern England shared the same system of measurement. Rather than take a position on the debate, Mr. Spectator goes and measures the pyramids himself, and satisfied, leaves off his experiment without telling us the answer. Of course, his silence only proves him not a pendant, pendants being not silent but verbose on matters of great obscurity.

The Spectator's biography has a mimetic association to certain facts of Addison's life, aspects that allow many commentators to conflate the two. The school, the tour, the return to the city to make a name for one's self . . . the narrative was established enough to be known but had a freshness that still made it seem new, the *bildungsroman* having yet to become a literary cliché. Education through books and travel was not only a way of betterment for middle-class Englishmen like Addison, but conceivably a way for the narrowness of the country gentry to be tempered with an encounter with a wider world. This connotation is heightened through Addison's juxtaposing his education with the fictional country estate, motion contrasted with permanence. One would assume that it made more sense for the Spectator to be an escapee from the gentry than the church.

The "escape" envisioned by Addison, which has become a cliché long since, still had the stamp of newness, as was the idea of the city as a place where one could lose oneself. Richard Sennett has explored this contrast between the modern and ancient city.<sup>347</sup> In Athens, the polis was a place of clearly demarcated public and private spaces; public life was a life of exposure, of naked striving in the eyes of the community. The "private" world, exemplified by the cold-blooded bodies of the woman and the slave that needed clothing and shelter to survive, lay hidden from sight. In contrast, the modern city by Addison's time exemplified the model of

Harvey's theory of the circulation of the blood; it was a place where all strata of society mingled in circular motion. The city was marked by mobility of bodies, mobility of station, and most of all mobility of property: the symbolic trade in futures and commodities made possible by the London Stock Exchange (starting in 1695, the same date as the end of the Licensing Act) becoming another source of the "flood of paper" that drenched London after that date. The mobility of property, above all, made the new urban ethos threatening to the strain of republicanism that associated virtue with landed property.

For the landed interest, as stated above, mobility of property in the form of credit "was seen as leading not merely to corruption, but to the despotism of speculative fantasy . . . all this was seen as placing politics at the mercy of a self-generated hysteria (in the full sexist sense)."<sup>348</sup>

This "hysteria" of course was, for Addison and others, simply the surface of a deeper order that was the emergence of modern liberal society. Such a society exhibited the three preconditions listed by Habermas as prerequisites for the rise of the public sphere: diversity of opinion, commodification of culture, and bracketing of self-interest.<sup>349</sup> The flux of novel ideas and the avaricious possession of beauty in the form of commodities alone, true, seem a recipe for chaos, but it was mixed with a sense of a higher providence at work, a providence that could be pointed toward but never fully articulated; in a word, a sublime providence. Such a providence allowed the denigration of self-interest and blind egotism that the landed interest charged was the inevitable result of rootless cosmopolitanism; rather, the encounter with novelty and difference, with specialized and thus partial moral subjects, that could only be found in city life had the additive effect of gesturing towards a barely understood social totality whose greatness made the self-regard of the landed estate (whose "detachment" simply was an excuse, from the city

standpoint, of narrowness and bigotry) seem petty and mean.

It is this synthesizing quality, this seeing novelty in a conjunction that gestures towards a greater totality, that appears to differentiate the *Spectator* from the *Tatler*. Whereas the *Tatler* shifts from stage to stage in order to present argument on an oral model, the Spectator takes a panoramic view, presenting us not with theatrical set-pieces but a cinematic montage:

There is no Place of general Resort, wherein I do not often make my Appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my Head into a Round of Politicians at *Will's*, and listening with great Attention to the Narratives that are made in those little Circular Audiences. Sometimes I smook a Pipe at *Child's*; and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the *Post-Man*, overhear the Conversation of every table in the Room. I appear on *Sunday* Nights at St. *James's* Coffee-House, and sometimes join the little Committee of Politicks in the Inner-Room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the *Grecian*, the *Cocoa-Tree*, and in the Theaters both of *Drury-Lane*, and the *Hay-Market*. I have been taken for a Merchant upon the *Exchange* for above these ten years, and sometimes pass for a *Jew* in the Assembly of Stock-Jobbers at *Jonathan's*. In short, where-ever I see a Cluster of People I always mix with them, tho' I never open my own Lips but in my own Club.

Addison then moves on to his celebrated declaration and defense of detachment, a detachment secured not just by his distant country estate but in his talent for *speculation*:

Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of mankind, than as one of the Species; by which means I have made myself a Speculative Statesmen, Soldier, Merchant and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life. I am very well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a father, and can discern the Errors in the Oeconomy, Business, and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as Standers-by discover Blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the Game.

Although the Spectator's estate (if it is to be believed that he actually possesses such a thing) doubtless supplies him with the leisure to observe (unlike Addison, who seemed to owe his very existence to the Junto), he chooses not to sit in harsh judgment but rather strives to edify through an indirect perspective that will bring wholeness to the urban subject's partiality. This perspective also supposes to lift the Spectator above the collective egoism of party:

I never espoused any Party with Violence, and am resolved to observe an exact Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare my self by the Hostilities of either side. In short, I have acted in all the parts of my Life as a Looker-on, which is the Character I intend to preserve in this Paper.

For a Whig party functionary recently elected to Parliament, as Addison was, this is a provocative statement. For those who insist on seeing a unity in the Spectator's ideology, this creates a problem, inasmuch as the Spectator's neutrality must be mere dissimulation, a mystification of bourgeois ideology operating under cover of disinterest. One way of avoiding this problem is to ignore the specific biographical data about Addison and discuss the Spectator

as a purely textual creation. Here, however, the *Spectator*'s unity is still asserted not as ideological but generic, a tendency that has resulted in widely different readings. Michael Warner, noting the *Spectator*'s detachment, claims that it reproduces a "Country posture" of disinterested examination made possible by the periodical print form. Stewart Sherman sees the *Spectator* as a diarist who presents a monologic process of "self-rendering", which he links generically with the Puritan diary. Lawrence Klein reads Addison in context of his contemporary Shaftsbury's ethos of politeness, which rests on a specifically dialogic sense of address. As Scott Black argues, this "leads to a paradoxical composite picture of the *Spectator* as proffering a Puritan model of the self within a republican politics." But Black adds his own generic reading by placing Addison within the early modern essay, linking him closely with Montaigne's moral and epistemological skepticism, thereby complicating the "paradoxical composite" even further. Finally, William Walker's assertion that the *Spectator* is not a vehicle for bourgeois but rather for "Whig" ideology brings the readings full circle by seeing the writings as reflecting (although not reductively so, to Walker's credit) his specific political position.

The point is not that Warner, Sherman, Klein, Black and Walker are all wrong in their readings of the *Spectator*; the point is that they are all right. That is, each of the individual subject positions they derive from their generic and/or ideological analyses are correct for some issues of the *Spectator* and not for others. If the *Spectator* exhibits Country disinterest, it is a speculative Country disinterest; if it presents a monologic Puritan ethos or a dialogic aristocratic one, it presents them speculatively as well. With the different subject positions come different genres, for Addison does not rely on essay, diary or didactic form throughout his writings but switches between them depending on the speculative designs of the moment.

Such diversity in tone and style was also a hallmark of the *Tatler* as well, and its presence in the *Spectator* is also an expression of its collaborative nature, as well as the diversity of Addison's writings alone. But the *Tatler* still presented a sense of varied discourses located in specific topographical places, symbolized by the various coffee houses from which Issac Bickerstaff Esq. fetched his news. What is new about the Spectator's writings is that he makes it clear that, as a Spectator, he is free to take on one persona after another without ever having to be fixed in one location. Through his use of the backgammon metaphor, Addison repeatedly tells people that whatever positions he will take in the *Spectator* are not the result of interest or involvement but non-involvement. Even if the Spectator should miscue and present a biased opinion, he had a ready-made exit; for he does not actually inhabit a Whig or Tory, a landed or a moneyed interest, but the speculative idea of such an interest.

The need to have the ability to roam to be not fixed in place, to escape the very sort of reading he is currently subjected to is fiercely defended in the remainder of *Spectator* #1:

There are three very material points which I have not spoken to in this Paper, and which, for several important Reasons, I must keep to my self, at least for some Time: I mean, an Account of my Name, my Age, and my Lodgings. . . . I cannot yet come to a Resolution of communicating them to the Publick. They would indeed draw me out of that Obscurity which I have enjoy'd for many Years, and expose me in publick Places to several salutes and Civilities, which have always been disagreeable to me; for the greatest Pain I can suffer, is the being talked to, and being stared at.

Those looking to expose the Spectator's contradictions have something here much more damning; is it not the apex of hypocrisy the Spectator's own avoidance of the very thing he himself perpetuates, the intrusive gaze of publicness? But those who congratulate themselves on exposing the Spectator's hypocrisy only discover what Addison has already told them repeatedly. The Spectator is not only a speculator, but is himself speculative; Addison's expose of the Spectator's own conflicted nature is a down-payment on the ruthless critical honesty that his speculative detachment promises to provide. It is an honesty that can only be truly appreciated by a reader that that is in an analogous position; a reader who is not obsessed with party but is, likewise, a "spectator." Such a reader should not make the mistake of identifying the Spectator with Addison himself (which would have been impossible anyway, because Addison's connection with the paper was not fully revealed until its run was over) or with a viewpoint interchangeable with the reader's own. The Spectator is, after all, not an individual, but an allegorical vehicle that expresses the contradictions of publicness in graspable form.

The early modern period is notable for the rise of institutions, the nation, the market and the public sphere, that stand upon the political, legal and commercial structures of parliament, bank and press: what John Brewer calls "the sinews of power."<sup>350</sup> Yet such institutions cannot function via the raw application of such power upon society; they all require the adoption of an attitude of imaginary participation to function. In Addison's writing, we can see what are in effect a series of prototypes for thinking through and participating in these imaginaries. To the degree that these institutions and the imaginaries that animate them are still in play, Addison's strategy of allegorical depiction should still be considered paradigmatic of the rhetorical resources of such imaginaries. That such resources are uniquely modern and often at odds with

what remains a robust republican tradition of *virtu*’ and *fortuna* should also serve to expand our idea of the scope of rhetorical action, particularly in understanding what forms of rhetoric modern imaginaries tend to promote. With Addison, we see how the depiction of personality as the expression of the logic of modern imaginaries, Warner’s “strangerhoods,” can serve as the marker of rhetoric in a modernist vein, one that reflects the advent of the “public sphere.” What disciplinary importance we might assign to such a rhetoric is a question which will be considered, among others, in the concluding chapter.

## CONCLUSION

“There is something acutely unsatisfying,” wrote Edwin Black in 1970, “about criticism that stops short of appraisal.” He goes on to consider the importance of “the moral evaluation of rhetorical discourse” to studies in the history of rhetoric, an importance that persists despite “scruples of liberal scholarship” that strive to repress such judgment:

It is not so much that we crave magistracy as that we require order, and the judicial phase of criticism is a way of bringing order to our history. History is a long, long time. Its raw material is an awesome garbage heap of facts, and even the man who aspires to be nothing more than a simple chronicler must still make decisions about perspective. It is through moral judgments that we sort out our past, that we coax the networks and continuities out of what has come before, that we disclose the precursive patterns that may in turn present themselves to us as potentialities, and thus extend our very freedom. Even so limited a quest as conceiving a history of public address requires the sort of ordering and apportioning that must inevitably be infected with moral values. The hand that would shape a “usable past” can grasp only fragments of the world, and the principles by which it makes its selections are bound to have moral significance.<sup>351</sup>

Black's observations deserve consideration, although not all critics would go so far as to call such judgments “moral.” Since Black claims that we are “not equipped to render moral judgments of objects,” such judgments must by definition “explicate the saliently human

dimensions of a discourse – if we could, in a sense, discover for a complex linguistic formulation a corresponding form of character – we should then be able to subsume that discourse under a moral order and thus satisfy our obligation to history.”<sup>352</sup> There are two objections that have immediate relevance to current criticism. First, one might insist that such judgments fall under the scope of the contingent, and therefore are technically “ethical” judgments that evaluate prudence, not “moral” judgments that measure behavior against transcendental norms.<sup>353</sup> Deciding this issue involves either rejecting or embracing Kant, and since Kant's critique of prudence is of a piece with his dismissal of the rhetorical tradition, for many rhetoricians the term “moral” judgment should be rejected forthright. Secondly, from a post-humanist perspective, we could reject the idea that we must reserve such evaluation for humans, when all the action, technically speaking, is operating on the level of discourse itself, on the level of “objects.” It is the presence or absence of forms of discourse, not the points of articulation that we call persons, that are decisive (that is, rather than morally decry the racist individual as “not one of us”, we may morally decry the circulation of racist discourses that insinuate their way into almost every dominant vocabulary). Finally, it is possible to accept the full implications of the idea of a “moral” judgment of rhetorical discourse by reaching beyond the mere evaluation of prudence toward some kind of intrinsic moral standard. Such a proposal, which attempts to meet Kant halfway, can be found in the late Thomas B. Farrell's engagement with the universal pragmatics of Kant's intellectual heir, Jurgen Habermas, in his *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*.

While the specifics of Black's program can be interpreted and challenged in these and other ways, his overarching claim that the history of rhetoric involves axiological claims is compelling, even if such evaluations are implicit or unconscious. Recent examples in rhetorical

historiography abound. Brian Vickers' *In Defense of Rhetoric* spends more than 500 pages in its titular task, evoking a gallery of villains from which rhetoric needs to be defended.<sup>354</sup> Neo-sophistic rhetorical theory, which Bruce McComisky traces mainly to Robert Scott's 1967 article on epistemic rhetoric, is a program that over the last forty years has attempted to “combat traditional Platonic and analytical conceptions of knowledge that have stifled rhetorical theory in the early twentieth century.”<sup>355</sup> Of course, such a narrative does not constrain itself to the twentieth century in its search for those who would stifle rhetoric. Dilip Gaonkar has examined how such a narrative is extended through all of western thought by rhetoric's champions, for example by Nelson and Megill in their “animating myth” of the rhetoric of inquiry.<sup>356</sup> According to the myth, the modern age (with the sole exception of Giambattista Vico) conspires to repress rhetoric in the same way that Plato did in ancient Greece, until the resurrection of sophistic rhetoric in the postmodern era restores it to its proper place as the queen of the sciences. This parade of heroes and villains is also a feature of those who criticize the neosophists. James W. Hixson<sup>357</sup>, Edward Schiappa<sup>358</sup> and Victor Vitanza<sup>359</sup> have condemned the appropriation of sophistic defenders Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Werner Jaeger by the neosophistic project, effectively linking neosophistry, via guilt through association, with Nazism (ironically enough, Schiappa has himself suffered the indignity of this charge now through the attacks of Rainer Friedrich<sup>360</sup>).

Of course, all this is not new. The entire history of rhetoric has involved struggles to attain status and to escape marginality, both with regard to the practice and its practitioners.<sup>361</sup> Nor is this a feature of rhetoric alone, as this process applies to much of the humanities. Black's observation about canon building and historical consciousness is applicable across most of these

disciplines. Our review in Chapter One of Addison's reception history shows how readily his writing has been evaluated as a moral or ethical act by Matthew Arnold, C.S. Lewis, and others. We are confronted once again with Ronald Beiner's definition of spectatorial judgment as it is made manifest in historical inquiry. If Black is correct that moral judgments in rhetoric ultimately involve discerning the human action behind the discursive objects of rhetorical inquiry, then humanistic historical inquiry also finds itself within Aristotle's epideictic category of praise and blame, and Hauser's identification of epideictic with encomium (and implicitly vituperation).

So, rhetorical critics are spectators, particularly when doing historical work. Far removed from the exigencies of the times that produced the rhetorical discourse in question, we direct the gaze of other spectators toward the texts that still matter, and simply by doing so we bestow value upon them as exemplars of positive and negative practice rather than consigning them to the “garbage heap” of discursive history. Perhaps more important than any assessment of the value of rhetorical texts as exemplars is the simple assignment of importance to them; these texts are worth our time to study. And by doing so, perhaps our judgments do cycle indirectly into affecting the deliberative and judicial exigencies of the present day. This process applies to individual texts, but also to eras and movements. So what does it mean to study Addison and the rhetoric of the 18<sup>th</sup> century?

Much as Herbert Wilhelms strove to focus attention on the rhetorical dimensions of Edmund Burke's writings<sup>362</sup>, on their intervention in the ongoing social and political struggles of the modern era, so does this work aim to do the same for Joseph Addison. It would be accurate to suggest that this work hopes to rise Addison to the level of a foil or dialectical opposite to Burke

in our understanding of 18<sup>th</sup> century British public address, and by extension, in our understanding of the rhetorical possibilities and institutional restraints of the modern era. But despite the fact that Wilhelms felt he had to rescue Burke from literary critics who decontextualized his work, it is nevertheless clear that Burke is more easily assimilated into the rhetorical tradition than is Addison. Addison, like Burke, was a parliamentarian, but he made no great or memorable speeches to that empowered body on pressing issues of policy. While Burke confronted and created controversy in his role as a public figure, Addison indirectly and anonymously critiqued the controversial ideal. To the extent that the Ciceronian image of rhetor as culture hero still drives public address, Burke's classical republican mobilization of embodied practice against the abstract systems of Enlightenment reason seems to make him in practice, alongside Giambattista Vico in theory, rhetoric's champion of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Conversely, Addison's lack of rhetorical terminology and own insistence on blurring and frustrating his own construction as Quintilian's "good man speaking well" places him under suspicion as belonging perhaps to the devil's camp in all our "animating myths" of the modernist hostility to eloquence.

Yet Addison, as the ultimate exemplar of the British belles lettres movement, does not require the reclamation of a secret modernist history of rhetoric in which to take his place; his writing is fully inscribed into the explicit disciplinary history by Blair, Campbell and others who take him as a stylistic exemplar. The problem is that we as a discipline in recent years have been more concerned with uncovering the rhetoric hidden in modernity than with examining modernist movements like the "new rhetoric" that are explicitly part of the living rhetorical tradition. Once having identified Addison as a primary inspiration for the "new rhetoric" of the Scottish enlightenment, we next need to rehabilitate that rhetorical "system" from its

classification by Douglas Ehninger as a “psychological” rhetoric that, in focusing on the task of adapting empiricist theories of mind to the technical study of persuasion, “gave insufficient attention to . . . the role that practical discourse plays in society – the function it performs and should perform in promoting social cohesion and exercising social control.”<sup>363</sup> Calling it “a product of the study rather of the forum,” Ehninger does the new rhetoric the favor of not judging it by the same standards as the civically inflected rhetoric of the ancients. But eventually he evaluates “new rhetoric” poorly according to those same ancient principles. He imagines the possibility of a rhetoric that can be conceived apart from civic intervention, and locates it in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain, but imagines it also as myopically lacking the wholeness of a complete rhetorical tradition.

Studied in isolation, the major works of Kames, Campbell and Blair may seem to be the armchair exercises that Ehninger describes, but an appreciation of the wider context shows that they were salvos in the larger struggle in eighteenth-century England that Adam Potkay defines as a “tension between a nostalgia for ancient eloquence and an emerging ideology of polite style.”<sup>364</sup> The party affiliations of the struggle, between the persistence of Ehninger's ancient “system” of civic oratory on the one side, and the evolution of the polite rhetoric of the parlor and study on the other, were clearly divided between the Tory opposition, on the side of ancient eloquence, and the remarkable consolidation of Whig power in parliament during the age of Walpole, on the side of civility and polite style. The Tories, “long obliged to talk in the republican style,”<sup>365</sup> were forced to do so in the context that all oppositions must face, as a “shadow” government maintaining a political imaginary while regulated to the sidelines of productive governmental control of blood and treasure. The opposition “espoused its antique

ideal of eloquence as a recipe for the orator of the future, the bold citizen who would arise in Parliament, in Thompson's phrase, "on some glorious day."<sup>366</sup> While the Tories were waiting for such a glorious day to arise, the construction of a political system of unprecedented scope, the British Empire, was commencing among the "polite" Whigs. Their disembodied rhetoric of politeness was the proper idiom for the expansion of modernist social imaginaries, suitable for citizens who saw themselves as the local iterations of overarching providential systems and not as the embodiments of virtue at war with the deracinating forces of abstraction.<sup>367</sup> We may elevate politeness and new rhetoric to equality with the vehement republican style, not on the authority of an expansive definition of rhetoric that identifies it with thought itself, but as a legitimate example of a more restricted (and therefore, more robust) definition of rhetoric as the discursive front (if not ground) of societal struggle or consensus.

Rather than seeing Burke and Addison as exemplars of rhetoric and anti-rhetoric, we should see them as different sides of the same coin, exemplifying competing but viable strategies for utilizing modernist rhetorical institutions, specifically the public sphere. The relevance of these strategies of course go hand in hand with the relevance of the concept of the public sphere of their era, the so-called "bourgeois public sphere" that has come under so much critique. Addison's characterization by the majority critics, in the words of Scott Black, as either "prophet or ideologue of the bourgeoisie" places Addison squarely within a paradigm that is precluded from relevance or appreciation in a postmodern world where such stable class distinctions seem more elusive than ever. But the critiques of Pocock and Walker point to how lazy characterizations of these early 18<sup>th</sup> ideological conflicts can give way to a finer appreciation of how financial and aristocratic elements actively collaborated in the building of an empire. Rather

than the “bourgeois public sphere,” perhaps we should now consider the “imperial public sphere” of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one incorporating both the imperial project and active resistance to the same, as worthy of our attention as an institution of continued relevance, along with the rhetorical practices which it gave rise to. This imperial project of course incorporates the bourgeoisie project of monopoly capitalism but continues to evolve into the new forms of empire outlined in Hardt and Negri's recent theoretical touchstones, *Empire* and *Multitude*.<sup>368</sup> Much like Habermas insisted on the dialectical process that made the restricted universalism of the bourgeoisie ultimately viable as unrestricted universal values, Hardt and Negri understand in the tradition of Gramsci (and of Laclau and Mouffe) that hegemony is not a vampire sucking the life force from oppositional movements but is rather the very ground upon which they must compete with the dominant culture.<sup>369</sup>

If refocusing our idea of the public sphere as imperial-hegemonic rather than bourgeois-ideological helps rescue the concept from the economic determinism of orthodox Marxist historiographies, it still leaves us with the fact that the public sphere paradigm and the rhetorical tradition remain strange bedfellows. This fact also speaks to the appropriateness of that tradition for addressing the concerns of modern institutions such as the nation, the state and the public sphere per se. As Melissa Deem cogently points out, the public is “a particularly modern form of power”<sup>370</sup> and as such is implicated in “the binary of critical-rational and poetic-expressive” that is one of the legacies of the Enlightenment; conversely the “pre-Enlightenment commitments” of rhetoric allow it to be “configured broadly to cut across these categories,”<sup>371</sup> causing a dissonance between the rhetorical and public sphere paradigm. But perhaps even more at odds are the respective *atmospheres* of the rhetorical public and the modern public. The Aristotelian

institutional model of rhetoric posits empowered audiences who render direct judgment on issues placed before them for adjudication. Their judgments have the force of law. Publics, on the other hand, are often abject creatures that must have faith, like Blanche DuBois, in the kindness of strangers. That faith can be intoxicating in the way that it sweeps us up into the sublime spectacle of the zeitgeist; losing that faith, writes Michael Warner, “can be a kind of political depressiveness, a blockage in activity and optimism, a disintegration of politics toward isolation, frustration, anomie, forgetfulness.”<sup>372</sup> This oscillation between apotheosis and blockage positions this public subject as eternally abject before an uncontrollable force, for “the rhetorical strategy of personal abstraction is both the utopian moment of the public sphere and a major source of domination.”<sup>373</sup>

How do we respond to the abjectness of the subject within the modern imaginaries? One way is to reject the idea of publicness and to exalt the individuality of lone men and women who can bend the world to their will, a philosophy given its most popular expression in the works of Ayn Rand.<sup>374</sup> Of course, the “popularity” of Rands’ work, as well as the success of this strategy in the world of politics, exposes the public, imaginary nature of this contemporary holdover from the republican critiques of the early modern public. But these dramas of personal virtue and vice in public figures, these conspiracy theories that secretly delight in the ability of individuals to command the public to their own ends, reject the abjectness of the public subject with a simple willingness to be manipulated by the savvy and the powerful. From the other end of the political spectrum, there is the counterpublic, which uses “minor rhetorics” of “corporality, excess, and the inappropriate” to “offer avenues of escape and transformation”<sup>375</sup> from such abjection. Deem argues that, in order to be effective, counterpublics must transcend the dichotomy between the

corporality of poetic-expressive world-making and the “rhetoric of disincorporation” that underlies the critical-rational underpinnings of state discourse, the institutional level that could be argued, to bring Taylor’s social imaginaries into the discussion, to determine them in the final analysis. They do this by challenging transparency in discourse:

Transparency is the sign of dominant public discourse. The most skillfully crafted texts create an illusion of transparency and, thus, do not call attention to themselves. Such transparency must be questioned when it is in the service of a general persuasion that shields the body through a rhetoric of disincorporation. Rather than being transparent, indecorous rhetorics strive to render the body visible in discourse. In these rhetorics, the prosthetic body, which takes the place of the individuated body in normative politics, is rendered inoperative by a focus on the particular. Transparency, a general audience, and persuasion are not the goals. Transparency can be a mechanism that excises the body from the text, deflecting attention from it, rendering it invisible.<sup>376</sup>

Such rhetorics challenge not only transparency, but decorum:

A code of speech and bodily performance is enforced through norms of decorum, which are intimately connected to the dominant norms of stranger sociability and disincorporation. Decorum shields the majoritarian body from its own physicality. Decorum is a mark of distinction that not only reiterates cultural norms, but also restricts access to dominant public space, which depends on abstract notions of citizenship in

order to function.<sup>377</sup>

Between transparency, decorum and the bourgeois subject, it is clear what these minor rhetorics aim to disrupt: it is a complex of rhetorical protocols to which we might as well grant the name “Addison.” In every instance, we can see Addison’s work as concerned with accepting, celebrating, and seducing us into ourselves accepting and celebrating the abjectness of the modern subject. Corporality exists in Addison’s writing only as an allegorical shell hiding our participation in providential systems. More often, corporeality is seen as the very blockage that can prevent us from participating in public. And from this point of view, both the potentiality and fact of domination is made clear. Hence, it is not my aim to defend Addison and the rhetorical strategies of modernity against the claims of counterpublics, any more than it is to defend them against the conservative Tory critiques of Addison’s own time. What I would like to do, however, is to remind the reader along with Warner that the rhetoric of abstraction that Addison epitomizes provides not only a “source of domination” but also a “utopian moment.”

Can this utopian moment serve to ameliorate the violence done to particularism and difference by abstraction? Is utopia such a benign concept? The idea of utopia, Fredric Jameson argues, it is a “collective therapy to be performed on the victims of depoliticization themselves, a rigorous look at everything we fanaticize as mutilating, as privative, as oppressive, as mournful and depressing, about all the available visions of a radical transformation in the social order.”<sup>378</sup> Jameson’s definition may seem overly aggressive, even if his notion of “collective therapy” echoes Addison’s own project aptly. Recall Addison’s appeal to his audience in *Spectator* #10, where he promised to “refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of

that desperate state of vice and folly into which this age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture.” Of course, the therapeutic aims of Addison and Jameson are quite different: Addison hopes to cure his audience of the poor taste and social isolation that were the cultural legacies of early modernity, while Jameson hopes to cure the popular disenchantment with Marxist revolution caused by the ruins of the revolutionary project, of revolts against capitalism that came “too soon.” Both are totalizing projects, and such utopian, totalizing projects have a very poor track record, especially after the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet it would be remiss not to recognize the strong utopian impulse behind some of the most progressive and inspiring events of that same century: the growth of universal suffrage, the fall of the Soviet Union and of right-wing regimes in Spain and the Southern Cone of the Americas, and democracy movements both successful and compelling in their bravery even in failure, as the continued power of the iconic image of a lone pro-democracy protestor, facing down a row of tanks near Tiananmen Square, attests.

That image is utopian, but it is also abstract, allegorical. Its power is amplified by how little we know of about the individual, allowing us to extrapolate the physical conflict represented into a conflict between political philosophies and ideals. The place of allegory, which if nothing else is one the primary forms through which representational abstraction operates, whether it is transforming elements of experience into abstract forms, or whether it is filling our figural landscape with objects derived from concepts, not experience, is key here. Addison, by demonstrating the essential place of allegory in understanding modern social imaginaries, passes one axiological text in determining a rhetorical canon; he is relevant. To the extent that liberal forms of representation are still operating in 21<sup>st</sup> culture, Addison, along with

others who have drawn on his legacy, should be given the central place in the rhetorical tradition that he deserves.

The other question, of whether we should consider him a laudable and exemplary *model* of rhetoric, requires us to separate the question of whether allegory is a laudable rhetorical move from the question of whether Addison's use of allegory is itself laudable. It is perhaps unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, that allegory itself runs into the same dilemma that rhetoric has had to face since the sophistic movement: it appears to be a neutral tool that can be used for either good or for evil. Hariman notes this dilemma when he claims that "democracy has to rely on communicative practices that can destroy it" – in this case, allegory. Addison certainly is not one who set out to destroy democracy, but we can certainly quarrel with the ways he appears to circumscribe it in his work. He does little to assuage the concerns of those who see spectatorship as debilitating to the body politic.

The best defense of Addison, I feel, is a tricky one. It is the same argument that Habermas uses to defend the ideals of the bourgeois public sphere. Yes, in the short run those ideals served to restrict the same universal values they espoused. But in time, the internal logic of those selfsame ideals ended out outstripping and eventually reforming the repressive institutions they initially supported.<sup>379</sup> Addison's celebration of spectatorship initially served a repressive purpose; it hoped to defuse political opposition to the rise of the Whig supremacy, and with it the British Empire in its formative stages. Without Addison, one might argue, the European imperial adventure might never have gotten off the ground. Or it might not, we don't really know for sure. But what is certain is that Addison's work in the long run expanded the scope of rhetorical action into areas where it did not originally go, into areas of cultural and social formation that would

become battlegrounds for emancipation and recognition. In this sense, Addison undoubtedly expanded the resources for rhetorical action for people everywhere, and furthermore led the way for those resources to be available to more people than ever before. And for this, Addison deserves to be celebrated, or at least acknowledged, in a positive light.

## Notes

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MIT Press, 1989), 109-142; Kendell R. Phillips, "The Spaces of Public Dissension: Reconsidering the Public Sphere," *Communication Monographs*, 63, (1996) 231-248.

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