Joseph Addison
Joseph Addison

Tercentenary Essays

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Texts and Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, Addison’s texts are quoted from the following editions, using the following abbreviated forms.

Periodicals

*The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), abbreviated as *S* and cited by volume and page number (e.g. *S* iii. 76); original instalment numbers and dates are given in parenthesis as appropriate.

*The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), abbreviated as *T* and cited by volume and page number (e.g. *T* ii. 24); original instalment numbers and dates are given in parenthesis as appropriate.

*The Freeholder*, ed. James Leheny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), abbreviated as *F* and cited by page number alone (e.g. *F* 33); original instalment numbers and dates are given in parenthesis as appropriate.

*The Guardian*, ed. John Calhoun Stephens (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), abbreviated as *G* and cited by page number alone (e.g. *G* 383); original instalment numbers and dates are given in parenthesis as appropriate.

Non-periodical Works

*The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison*, ed. A. C. Guthkelch, 2 vols (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914), abbreviated as *MW* and cited by volume and page number (e.g. *MW* ii. 125)

Correspondence

*The Letters of Joseph Addison*, ed. Walter Graham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), abbreviated as *L* and cited by page number alone (e.g. *L* 24); dates and addressee are given in the body of the text as appropriate.
Musical Examples


Introduction

Paul Davis

Volumes of commemorative essays like this one, marking a significant anniversary of the birth or death of a great writer, provide an opportunity to revise the prevailing contemporary outlook on the writer they commemorate, and few major writers in English seem so badly in need of such a critical overhaul as Joseph Addison. He continues to be credited, of course, as the primary architect of *The Spectator*, perhaps the most influential prose work in English between its publication and the end of the nineteenth century—but even *The Spectator* is more often referred to than read now, a small selection of familiar extracts recycled again and again in historical surveys, literary handbooks, and university course materials. As for the rest of Addison’s works—his poems and classical translations which were so admired by Dryden; his miscellaneous prose, including the *Remarks on Italy*, the first modern travelogue, and the *Dialogues on Ancient Medals*, which drew high praise from Pope; and his dramas, most notably *Cato*, which some contemporary readers rated above Shakespeare—they have become the preserve of an ever narrowing cadre of specialists. The only modern biography of Addison remains Peter Smithers’s from 1954, and while there has been a smattering of recent books on *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, the latest book-length study of Addison to range beyond them—Edward and Lillian Bloom’s *Joseph Addison’s Sociable Animal*—dates back to 1971. Among shorter studies, in book chapters and journal articles, the story of Addison’s fall from his original ‘quasi-scriptural’¹ eminence to utter oblivion since the late Victorian period is a recurrent theme.²

The most celebrated account of Addison’s decline—Brian McCrea’s *Addison and Steele are Dead* (1990)—argued that it was not just another local fluctuation of literary taste but more fundamentally entailed by the conditions of the study of literature as it had developed over the twentieth century, in particular (to quote the book’s subtitle) the advent of the ‘English Department’ and ‘the Professionalization of Literary Criticism’. The need for university English departments to establish the

² See in particular Stephen Miller, ‘The Strange Career of Joseph Addison’, *Sewanee Review* 122 (2014), 650–60, which starts by quoting a number of other recent accounts of Addison’s decline.
‘autonomy’ of their discipline dislodged the traditional understanding of literature as ‘a public, moral, emotional phenomenon’, fostering instead the development of specialized critical idioms in which literariness was increasingly aligned with ‘subtlety, complexity, and ambiguity’.³ The result was a literary canon that could no longer accommodate Addison, a writer (on McCrea’s account) who cultivated the Lockean virtues of linguistic plainness and transparency in pursuit of his Whig ambition of public utility. In some respects, this thesis now looks dated. The professionalization of academic discourse has proved far from antipathetic to the survival of interest in Addison—as a periodical essayist at least: post-structuralist approaches to ‘text’ as encompassing both literary and social phenomena, for instance, have been central to the re-emergence of The Tatler and The Spectator on university syllabuses, in sociology and culture or gender studies as much as history and literature. But if McCrea’s report of the death of Addison has turned out to be somewhat exaggerated, questions remain about how he will survive for modern readers.

Suspecting Mr Spectator

Most recent scholarship on Addison—certainly on The Spectator—has worked to excavate ‘subtlety’ and ‘complexity’ beneath the ostensibly candid surfaces of Addison’s writing. Such criticism provides a useful corrective to McCrea’s limiting verdict on Addison’s works as ‘prescriptive, self-glossing texts’, while confirming his larger diagnosis about the primacy of sophistication among modern critical values.⁴ But the particular kinds of subtlety and complexity commentators have brought to light are not ones likely to do Addison much credit—not the nuanced tonalities of genial irony or ‘grave humour’ early generations of readers so appreciated in The Spectator, but rather variants of ideological subterfuge. Addison’s underlying purpose in The Spectator, according to a number of influential recent studies,⁵ was to inveigle his readers into regarding the political and socio-economic interests of the bourgeois commercial class destined for dominance in the Hanoverian age as culturally and morally normative. The famous pretensions to inclusivity in the opening programmatic instalments of the periodical—its declared aim of bringing ‘Philosophy out of Closets and

³ Brian McCrea, Addison and Steele Are Dead: The English Department, Its Canon, and the Professionalization of Literary Criticism (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 135, 215.
⁴ McCrea, Addison and Steele are Dead, 50.
⁵ See in particular, for the boldest statement of this view, Terry Eagleton, The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism (London: Verso, 1984), ch. 1; and for later more nuanced variants of it, Kathryn Shevelow, Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989), ch. 4, and Erin Mackie, Market à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses—were blinds for a project of social engineering that prepared the ground for Whig hegemony. Under the guise of Mr Spectator, that purported paragon of disinterest, Addison contrived to mystify market economics as ‘politeness’, perpetuate patriarchalism beneath a veneer of ‘civility’, and elide consumption into ‘taste’. Living ‘in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species’, all-seeing but inscrutable, Addison’s definitive literary creation ‘has suggested to more than one critic the surveillance of Foucault’s panopticon’, and even been called ‘terroristic’.

The application of this ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ to The Spectator has not gone unchallenged; how far readers should be suspicious of Addison’s periodical is a question that underlies much current thinking about it. The chapters on The Spectator in this volume enter fully into that debate. Most suspicious of the posture of critical suspicion, as it were, is Marcus Walsh, for whom ‘Addison has been one of the casualties of the drive toward the political and ideological in literary studies’, and who in his chapter on ‘Addison as Critic and Critical Theorist’ breaks with the tendency, formed ‘in the 1980s and 1990s’, to interpret Addison’s critical papers in The Spectator, in particular the ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ series, as ‘covert works of political ideology’. Committing himself, by contrast, to ‘take Addison at his literary-critical word’, Walsh recovers the epistemological or ‘noetic’ dimension of Addison’s criticism, the persistent concern with mimesis and truth that suggests it owes more to his theology than his politics (Walsh’s is one of two chapters here, along with Brian Young’s, that unsettle present assumptions about The Spectator as an urtext of secular modernity). Another contributor who (implicitly) rejects ideological analysis of The Spectator, in favour of a more literary-critical appreciation, is Fred Parker. In ‘Addison’s Modesty, or the Essayist as Spectator’, Parker returns to the topic of Mr Spectator’s famous reticence, the aspect of Addison’s periodical persona that has proved ripest for Foucauldian analysis. But instead of seeing it as a discipliary ‘technology’, an efficient instrument of proto-capitalist ‘hegemony’, Parker explores it in less functionalist terms, taking seriously its ‘mildly pathological’ or ‘idiosyncratic’ feel, crediting the stylistic and tonal complexities in Addison’s discussions of modesty as marks of his authentic (not merely rhetorical or strategic) engagement with the problematics of modesty in modern

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6 S i. 44. 7 S i. 4.
9 Scott Paul Gordon, ‘Voyeuristic Dreams: Mr Spectator and the Power of Spectacle’, The Eighteenth Century 56 (1995), 3–23 (at 4); the larger thesis of Gordon’s article is that ‘in the Spectator’s case, the superhuman technology devised to accomplish reform testifies less to the success of the spectatorial regime than to the intractability of the readers it hopes to control’ (4).
urban contexts, the paradox of a ‘sociably commendable withdrawal from self-advertisement’.

No aspect of The Spectator has aroused more scepticism in recent scholarship—indeed, more comment generally—than its putative role in the emergence of the so-called ‘public sphere’ in early eighteenth-century culture, a topic revisited here by Markman Ellis in his chapter ‘Sociability and Polite Improvement in Addison’s Periodicals’. Jürgen Habermas’s claim that The Tatler and The Spectator helped spur the creation of a new proto-democratic community where private individuals came together in conditions of openness and equality, untrammeled by religious or political division, to make ‘public use of their reason’ has been challenged from various angles.¹⁰ We have been taught to recognize the elements of sectarian exclusiveness that persist within Mr Spectator’s professions of inclusivity—in the words of Lawrence E. Klein’s classic chapter on Addison’s Whiggism, ‘the partisanship implicit in Addison’s longing to overcome partisan division’.¹¹ In one sense, Ellis corroborates such disillusioned views: focusing on The Spectator’s treatment of the coffee house, that definitive public-sphere institution, he demonstrates the survival of ‘regulation’ and other forms of hierarchical thinking in Addison’s evolving ideas of polite sociability, detailing the contrast with Richard Steele’s more liberal outlook. But in another respect, in what it suggests about Addison’s attitudes towards women through its analysis of his ‘innovative construction of tea-table sociability’, Ellis’s chapter belongs with recent studies reaffirming the liberalism, albeit ideal or theoretical, of The Spectator.¹²

Contemporary readers were struck by the prominence given to women as both consumers of and potential correspondents to The Spectator, what Swift called the periodical’s ‘fair-sexing it’ (he was not being complimentary).¹³ But modern commentators have come to regard this apparent female-friendliness as the medium of a repressive paternalism, more observable in Addison’s papers than Steele’s, and conspicuous by comparison with the more progressive views

¹⁰ I quote this famous phrase of Habermas’s from Terence Bowers, ‘Universalizing Sociability: The Spectator, Civic Enfranchisement, and the Rule(s) of the Public Sphere’, in The Spectator: Emerging Discourses, ed. Newman, 150–74 (at 151), one of two essays in that collection that revise Habermas’s thesis, the other being Erin Skye Mackie, ‘Being Too Positive About the Public Sphere’ (81–104).


¹² For this emphasis on the idealized or ‘transcendent’ quality of the ‘sphere of contemplation and debate which [Addison and Steele] erect and the mundane, often ludicrous, conversation they reveal taking place at coffee-houses, tea tables, and other places of public assembly’, see in particular Mackie, ‘Being Too Positive about the Public Sphere’, in The Spectator: Emerging Discourses, ed. Newman (I quote from 97).

¹³ Quoted by Iona Italia as the epigraph to her essay ‘Fair-sexing it: The Spectator on women’, Media History 14 (2008), 323–35 (at 323).
increasingly current at the time in other periodicals or tracts by writers such as Mary Astell and Daniel Defoe.¹⁴ In her widely influential study *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989), Kathryn Shevelow argued that women are sentimentalized in *The Spectator*, praised exclusively for private virtues, damned to domesticity.¹⁵ Addison—and again he gets more of the blame than Steele—played a key role in establishing ‘the opposition posed by the sentimental family between public social space that is masculine and private family space that is feminine’, a gender binarism that ultimately gave rise to the Victorian ‘angel in the house’.¹⁶ In contradistinction to that view, Ellis, while noting the masculinist bias inherent in Addison’s use of the coffee house as a trope for polite sociability (since, most scholars now agree, women did not attend coffee houses), shows that his hope that *The Spectator* would also be read at the tea table, that most distinctively female of environments, did not entail a simple equation of femininity and domesticity. Rather, the tea table, as Addison ideally constructs it, represents a hybrid site, half private, half public, ‘located in the feminized domestic sphere, but also connected and networked within the wider world of culture and politics’—at least in ‘well-regulated Families’ where *The Spectator* is ‘punctually served up . . . as a Part of the Tea Equipage’.

The other chapter in this volume substantially concerned with Addison’s gender politics—not in *The Spectator* but in the second of his most definitive works, *Cato*—arrives at similarly revisionist conclusions. *Cato* has traditionally been regarded as a paean to the Stoic virtue of ‘autarkeia’ or self-determination, a strongly masculine ethic; and contemporaries identified Addison himself with that ethic, particularly in connection with the fearful equanimity he displayed on his deathbed, in the interview with his stepson the Earl of Warwick that was given pride of place in the biographical tradition by Addison’s twin protégés Thomas Tickell and Edward Young.¹⁷ But in recent years some commentators on *Cato* have begun to argue that Addison was ambivalent about the famed self-sufficiency of its protagonist, calling attention to the rival ethic of affective engagement in the love scenes of the play, dismissed by previous generations of readers as a clumsy distraction from the main tragic plot. David Francis Taylor’s chapter, ‘*Cato* and the Crisis of Rhetoric’, extends this new line of argument. Pointing to the emphasis on Cato’s political impotence in the play, and more generally to Addison’s diagnosis of the failure of rhetoric to spur responsible action, Taylor

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¹⁶ Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 140.

suggests that in the scenes between Juba and Cato’s daughter Marcia ‘the affective discourse of heterosexual courtship becomes a template for efficacious speech within the determinedly homosocial sphere of national politics’. Again in Cato on this account, as in The Spectator according to Ellis, Addison, far from consolidating binaristic oppositions between male and female, public and private, imagines their dissolution; and in both cases, too, the mode of sentimentality serves not to entrench but, rather, to dislodge those schematic dichotomies.

The last of the four contributors writing on The Spectator directly (as opposed to its reception)—the late James Winn—also touches upon questions of gender, now in relation to Addison’s own masculine self-formation. Closely literary-critical in its methods, Winn’s chapter shares with Parker’s in particular a desire to bring out the elements of personal quiddity in The Spectator that coexist alongside its strategic public purposes. No area of Addison’s work has been more well trodden over by scholars than the ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ papers (their afterlife and influence also provide the topic for Frédéric Ogée’s chapter); but Winn plots a new route through this ‘classic ground’. Detailing the sharply disproportionate emphasis on visual as against aural modes in Addison’s aesthetic theory, he sets out to answer a (deceptively) simple question: why was Addison so ‘uncomfortable’ with—if not hostile to—music? Partly, Addison knew little about it, as is only too apparent from the ham-fisted libretto of his disastrously received opera Rosamond (1707), a rare misstep in his carefully choreographed literary career. Yet he was not unresponsive to music, and ‘there was something about the experience of being moved by an art he did not understand that made him uneasy’. In that he was not untypical of his age, when English audiences were widely held to have succumbed in irrational delight to Italian opera; Addison’s antipathy to music can be understood in terms of his Whig patriotism. But, Winn finally comes to believe, it was also an intimate personal matter. Tracing patterns of repetition between Addison’s images and diction when describing the effects of music and in passages concerned with masculinity, particularly when it is under threat, he is led to wonder if music’s ‘emotional and sensual influence on the body’ was somewhere connected for Addison ‘with secret pleasures that he did not wish to acknowledge or reveal’, his rumoured homosexuality. That can’t be proved, as Winn notes; but we should hardly expect definitive testimony on such matters from an eighteenth-century writer, and can we afford to forgo critical speculation in the case of one so famously averse to self-revelation as Addison?¹⁸

¹⁸ For Addison’s ‘avoidance of self-revelation’ as a reason for the neglect of his writings in recent times, see McCrea, Addison and Steele Are Dead, 132–3.
When Macaulay said ‘Addison is The Spectator’, he meant that Addison was the periodical’s presiding spirit; that he, rather than Steele or any of the other more occasional ‘coadjutors’ was responsible for all that was best in The Spectator.¹ But by 1843 Macaulay’s remark was also coming to apply in a second sense. Addison was The Spectator, and The Spectator was Addison. Even as he was credited with, in effect, sole authorship of the periodical, it was becoming his sole claim to literary fame, the only work of his that general readers could be expected to know. That is certainly the case today. The present upsurge of interest in The Spectator has done nothing to retrieve Addison’s other works from the neglect in which they have languished since the turn of the nineteenth century. Nor have larger recent developments affecting the study of the literature and culture of his age that might have been expected to benefit those works done so in practice. The scholarly rediscovery of Augustan translations from the classics, which has restored Dryden’s Virgil and Pope’s Homer to something of their former canonical glory,² has not extended to Addison’s renderings from the Georgics and the Metamorphoses; David Hopkins’s chapter here on ‘Addison as Translator’ has no real predecessors.²¹ And the rising tide of academic interest in politically engaged verse hasn’t much lifted the fortunes of The Campaign and Addison’s other partisan Whig poems.²² I said earlier that familiarity with Addison’s non-journalistic writings can now only be expected among academic specialists—but in fact it can’t always be assumed even there. The Blooms’ Joseph Addison’s Sociable Animal ranged beyond The Tatler and The Spectator, but only as far as The Freeholder and Addison’s other Whig journalism. The only modern edition of Addison’s non-periodical writings—his poetry, uncollected prose, and plays—remains A. C. Guthkelch’s two-volume The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison (1914), with minimal textual apparatus and no annotation at all (the notes were to have been added in a third volume, but Guthkelch died before he could produce it).

This collection seeks to redress the first of those deficiencies, while the forthcoming Oxford University Press edition of The Non-Periodical Works of Joseph Addison is intended to rectify the second. But how far can we hope to overturn the

² Both were reissued as ‘Penguin Classics’ in the late 1990s: Virgil’s Aeneid, Translated by John Dryden, ed. Frederick M. Keener (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997); The Iliad of Homer, Translated by Alexander Pope, ed. Steven Shankman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996).
²¹ Lillian Bloom’s similarly titled article, ‘Addison as Translator: A Problem in Neo-Classical Scholarship’, Studies in Philology 46 (1948), 31–53, in fact limits itself to the particular (if important) matter of Addison’s incorporation of details from contemporary editions of Virgil and Ovid into his translations.
verdict of history? In his chapter here exploring Samuel Johnson’s views of Addison, Robert DeMaria emphasizes Johnson’s concern to distinguish between those of Addison’s writings that enjoyed an ‘artificial and accidental fame’ during his lifetime and those that had stood ‘the test of time’, remaining broadly current generations after his death. That is salutary; but Johnson’s respect for the judgement of history was conditional on its embodying ‘the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices’, and the present consensus against Addison’s non-periodical works does not meet that standard. If, as Johnson suggests, Addison’s lesser productions were once prone to being overestimated by readers who idolized him as Mr Spectator, so now they are liable to be dismissed en masse by readers prejudiced (knowingly or unknowingly) by the widespread indifference to Addison within the modern academy. One function of the chapters devoted to Addison’s non-periodical writings here is to promote a more discriminating attention to them; to point out such hidden gems as, for example, among the English poems ‘The Play House’ and the first draft of ‘A Letter from Italy’, two lively manuscript pieces especially little known because they were not included in the canon of Addison’s verse as established by his literary executor, Thomas Tickell, or again, among the translations from Ovid, the stories of Phaeton, which David Hopkins (following Charles Tomlinson) finds reminiscent in its ‘narrative power’ of Dryden, and Actaeon, whose central scene of metamorphosis emerges as a tour de force in his sustained close reading over the final pages of his chapter.

But of course The Spectator will always remain Addison’s definitive literary achievement; none of the contributors here is so callow a revisionist as to dream of dislodging it from that position. Addison’s other works will never escape being considered in relation to his great periodical, and that process should prove mutually enlightening. Mr Spectator’s ambition of bringing ‘Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses’ is extremely well known; but it’s not often remembered how unlikely an ambition that was for Addison, himself a quintessential product of ‘Libraries’ and ‘Colleges’, an Oxford classical scholar whose formation as a writer came in the rarefied circles of the university neo-Latin scene. How it was that Joseph Addison, demy of Magdalen and the author of intricately allusive Virgilian poems, aimed at a niche audience, about the altarpiece in his College chapel, the barometer, and crown bowling, became Mr Spectator, arbiter of metropolitan mores and would-be architect of the ‘public sphere’, is a question well worth asking—but one that the present neglect of the pre-Spectatorial phase of Addison’s career has left us very poorly equipped to address. Both in published scholarship on it and on the syllabuses of undergraduate history and literature courses, The Spectator tends to be presented as a cultural starting point, an inaugurative text in the rise of Whig commercialism and middle-class politeness to dominance over the early decades of the eighteenth century. But Mr Spectator
was not (any more than Milton’s Satan) ‘self-begot’; the chapters here by Paul Davis, David Hopkins, Brian Cowan, and Henry Power that deal with Addison’s life and writing in his Oxford years (1689–99), and during the period of his travels in Europe (1699–1704), shed new light on his prehistory.

Take the question of where Addison stood in the ‘Battle of the Books’: was he an ancient or a modern? In recent commentary, debate on this question has mostly boiled down to an opposition between the Aristotelianism of Cato on the one hand (reiterated but also problematized here by David Francis Taylor), and the proto-romanticism of the ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ papers on the other (disputed by Marcus Walsh, affirmed by Frédéric Ogée). Brian Cowan’s and Henry Power’s chapters let fresh air into the debate. Cowan’s ‘Mr Spectator and the Doctor: Joseph Addison and Henry Sacheverell’ reconstructs the friendship between the future ‘patron saint’ of Whig sociability (Addison) and the later High Church zealot and Tory firebrand (Sacheverell) who was his fellow collegian (and possibly room-mate) at Magdalen. That Addison should once have been on friendly terms with a man whose name later became a byword for sectarianism and bigotry so embarrassed Addison’s nineteenth-century admirers that they sought to minimize the association or flatly denied it had ever existed. But, as Cowan shows, Addison and Sacheverell were not just friends but also literary collaborators; they started out as writers by contributing linked translations from Virgil’s Georgics to the Dryden–Tonson miscellany series in the mid-1690s, each of them equally at home in a culture of neoclassicism sometimes pigeonholed as reactionary but which was in fact simultaneously ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’. Henry Power’s ‘Coins and Circulation in Addison’s Prose’ finds in the treatment of coins and money in the Remarks on Several Parts of Italy (1705) and the Dialogues upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals (1726) another site of interior dialogue between Addison’s ancient and modern selves. For Power, the special ‘energy’ of the Dialogues arises from Addison’s mistrust of his own antiquarian impulses, assuaged by his ‘modern’ account of numismatics as a ‘catalyst for conversation and the exchange of knowledge’. That vision later culminated in Addison’s famous paper in The Tatler telling the life story of a shilling, and in the very conception of The Spectator, envisaged by Addison as circulable intellectual currency. And yet, Power is finally led to ask, isn’t the notoriously unforthcoming Mr Spectator also, in some sense, a ‘hoarder’ of himself?

In such cases, looking back at Addison’s early writings can help us to see how he became the author of The Spectator. But that process was not simply teleological; it entailed losses as well as gains. In particular, there are ways in which Addison’s lesser exposure to the ‘public sphere’ in his early years redounded to his creative advantage. He could be a less self-conscious, more self-willed, writer as an up-and-coming young poet and translator in the bustling marketplace of literary London in the late 1690s, or when making his way across Europe in the midst of a war and with intermittent money difficulties, than once he had become the author of The
Spectator, ever on show, publicly answerable. I have argued elsewhere that Addison’s strange poem ‘Milton’s Stile Imitated, in a Translation of a Story out of the Third Aeneid’ (1704), dismissed as a shallow gimmick when it is noticed at all, constitutes a critical response to Paradise Lost more intuitive and searching in some respects than his formal Spectator essays on Milton’s epic.²³ Here David Hopkins in his chapter, and I too in mine, find a similar spirit of creative audacity in others of Addison’s early poems, once again involving experimental mixtures of the ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’—in his ‘exhilarating’ translations from Ovid, for example, which engage to the full with ‘the fantastical world of the Metamorphoses’, and the neo-Latin imitations of Virgil that first made his literary name at Oxford, where through inventive and exuberant forms of allusion and parody the most hallowed of all classical texts are made to speak of such contemporary ephemera as bowling, the barometer and puppet shows.

Addison would doubtless have lamented the progressive marginalization of those pieces since the eighteenth century, as translations (let alone neo-Latin verse) fell out of favour with readers. But in other respects he was himself responsible for obscuring in the historical record some of the most attractive features of his pre-Spectatorial writing self, abetted by those he authorized to mediate his post-mortem literary reputation. Samuel Johnson reported Pope as saying that Addison ‘would alter anything to please his friends, before publication; but would not retouch his pieces afterwards’;²⁴ and certainly Addison didn’t approach Pope’s own meticulous dedication as a reviser. But in the two major cases where he did rework early texts substantially some years after publication, his changes often involved imposing forms of Spectatorial hindsight. The Ovid translations, most if not all of them originally composed in the mid-1690s, were heavily revised for inclusion in Samuel Garth’s multi-author Metamorphoses (1717); and while some of the revisions improve style or content, as David Hopkins shows in a detailed discussion, others can be seen as poetically regressive, finicky and defensive gestures on Addison’s part, reflecting his increased concern for propriety as the author of The Spectator and Cato, bastion of the Whig cultural establishment. Likewise with the other major case—the Remarks upon Several Parts of Italy, published in 1705 but extensively revised for the second edition of 1718. Those revisions lie outside the scope of Henry Power’s chapter here, but elsewhere, reporting his initial findings for the volume of Addison’s uncollected prose in the OUP edition, Power has argued that they show Addison sanitizing the Remarks, regularizing its orthography, diction, and style, particularly in passages

²⁴ ‘Addison’, para. 113; in The Lives of the Poets, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), i. 21; as Lonsdale notes, Johnson was in fact splicing together two remarks Pope made to Spence, one from 1730 and one from 1735.
involving reference to Addison’s body, in accordance with Spectatorial standards of polite usage.\textsuperscript{25}

These local revisions evolved into a more systematic policy of retrospective ‘rebranding’ (as we might say now) in Thomas Tickell’s authorized edition of \textit{The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.} (4 vols, 1721), on which all subsequent editions to date depend.\textsuperscript{26} That Tickell was intent on promulgating an idealized vision of Addison as literary, moral, and spiritual paragon is evident throughout the edition’s paratexts, most notably his own funeral elegy in which Addison figures as ‘Th’ unblemish’d statesman’, ‘candid censor’, and ‘friend severe’ who ‘taught us how to live’ and also, by his pious final hours and last words to his stepson the Earl of Warwick (described at length in Tickell’s preface), ‘how to die’.\textsuperscript{27} Tickell’s desire to protect that image also conditioned his presentation of Addison’s canon. In his elegy, he referred to Addison’s verse under the general heading of ‘serious song’, but (as I’ve said) not all of it fits that description; a number of the poems that most clearly lack the sort of seriousness found in Addison’s Saturday ‘sermons’ in \textit{The Spectator} or in \textit{Cato} are not included in Tickell’s edition. While we cannot say for certain that all these exclusions were deliberate, at least one of them must have been, that of the substantial group of translations from Famiano Strada’s \textit{Prolusiones Academicae} (1617) that Addison made probably in the mid-1690s but that remained in manuscript at the time of his death. These notably lively renderings of passages mimicking a range of classical and Renaissance Latin poets—particularly several who were beyond the pale of polite Augustan taste such as Lucan, Statius, and Claudian—were definitely known to Tickell: he included a lightly adapted version of one of them (without, of course, mentioning Addison) as a specimen of false poetic taste in a paper he wrote for \textit{The Spectator}.\textsuperscript{28} The manuscript remains to this day in the possession of the Tickell family.\textsuperscript{29}

To attend to Addison’s early works in verse and prose, then, can be to resist the homogenizing effects his monolithic prestige as the author of \textit{The Spectator} (and \textit{Cato}) had on his cultural afterlife—or, to put it in less academic terms, to save him from himself. It can allow us to regain a feeling for the rather less established and exemplary figure glimpsed here and there in his early letters and biographical

\textsuperscript{25} Here I refer to Power’s unpublished paper on the \textit{Remarks} at a panel announcing the OUP edition, at the BSECS conference at St Hugh’s College, Oxford, in January 2018, and also to some observations he made at a Q & A about the edition, at the conference on ‘Addison and Europe’, at Université de Paris III (Sorbonne Nouvelle), in December 2018.

\textsuperscript{26} On the basis of the arguments outlined in this paragraph and the preceding one, the forthcoming OUP edition rejects the authority of Tickell’s edition, reverting (wherever possible) to the first printings of Addison’s ‘non-periodical’ writings as copy-texts.

\textsuperscript{27} Thomas Tickell, ‘To the Right Honourable the Earl of Warwick, & c.’, in \textit{The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison Esq.}, i. xx.

\textsuperscript{28} S v. 109–12.

\textsuperscript{29} Currently housed in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (MS Dep. c. 293/1), the manuscript is, however, on deposit.
anecdotes from his formative years as a writer in Oxford, London, and Europe—the Addison who when out drinking with the great Dryden caused the 60-something erstwhile Poet Laureate to imbibe beyond his usual limits;³⁰ the Addison who experienced ‘malaise’ and ‘wounded spirits’ during his travels on the Continent (for which the leisurely designation of ‘the grand tour’ is somewhat inappropriate);³¹ the Addison who struck up a close friendship with ‘the untractable, the fiery, the passionate Swift’.³² In short, as David Hopkins comes close to saying, the ‘un-Addisonian’ Addison. But to repeat: this is not a matter of ‘decentering’ The Spectator; on the contrary, it should refine our appreciation of that great periodical. For The Spectator itself is not (even in the papers Addison wrote) a merely ‘Addisonian’ work. The more attuned we become to the pre-Addisonian Addison, the better equipped we will be to recognize his continued presence in The Spectator. One key issue, raised by James Winn in his chapter, can stand for many. ‘The received notion of Addison as a model of polite manners’ is exposed as ‘fatally incomplete’ when set against the full range of his uses of ‘polite’ and its cognates in The Spectator; there the terms are regularly subject to irony, if not outright attack, such was the actual Addison’s awareness of ‘the limits and possible excesses of politeness’.

More generally, raising the profile of Addison’s early works should go some way towards filling a major gap in our present understanding of pre-modern literary history. The core of Addison’s pre-Spectatorial output—from his first substantial poem ‘To Mr Dryden’ (1693) and his debut as a critic in the importantly innovative ‘Essay on the Georgics’, which he supplied as a preface to Dryden’s translation (1697), to the twin products of his European travels, the Dialogues upon Ancient Medals and the Remarks upon Italy—falls in a period that ranks among the least discussed in the historiography of English literature. Addison is one of very few lastingly significant writers—one of only two, in fact, the other being Swift—who arrived at creative maturity in the interim, what one literary historian has recently referred to as the ‘rudderless time’, between the twilight of Dryden’s ascendancy and the dawn of Pope’s.³³ Few if any of the works Addison produced during these years can be considered a fully finished article: most come across as somehow provisional; several he couched in deniable form, disowned authorship of, or distanced himself from (manoeuvres explored in my chapter

³³ J. Paul Hunter, ‘Missing Years: On Casualties in English Literary History, Prior to Pope’, Common Knowledge 14 (2008), 434–44 (at 437); Hunter notes that Addison was the ‘potential leader’ of literary culture in this interim period (438).
Was Addison a Poet?). These marks of awkwardness, self-frustration, or incomplete commitment can be related to uncertainties in Addison’s personal life, as he struggled through the transition, so fluently modelled in that famous passage of *Spectator* 10, from Oxonian scholar to ‘public man’. But they should also be seen as more broadly symptomatic—of cultural and institutional instabilities at the seventeenth-century fin de siècle, particularly focused around Oxford, the Anglican Church, and literary London, which are described in Brian Cowan’s chapter. In a brilliant critical remark (discussed by David Hopkins in his chapter), Addison once praised Ovid for ‘well-timing his Description’ in scenes of metamorphosis—’before the first Shape is quite worn off, and the new one perfectly finish’d’.³⁴ His own early writings catch his nation and his culture at just such a metamorphic moment.

**Receiving Mr Spectator**

‘The temptation to read Pope on Addison, Macaulay on Addison, Johnson on Addison, rather than Addison himself is to be resisted.’ Virginia Woolf’s warning is quoted by Brian Young in his chapter ‘Addison and the Victorians’, one of six here that apparently ignore it, considering Addison’s reception in a variety of forms, including translations (Boulard-Jouslin) and editions (Wilkinson) as well as explicit criticism (DeMaria, Dart, Young), and across a range of historical periods (Young discusses ‘Macaulay on Addison’, while ‘Johnson on Addison’ is Robert DeMaria’s whole subject). ’Rather than Addison himself’—of course not. But then, as we’ve already seen, the task of telling ‘Addison himself’ apart from readers’ constructions of him, particularly distinguishing Addison from ‘Addison’, the fantasy-ideal he colluded in becoming in his later years, as Whig luminary and the author of *The Spectator* and *Cato*, is more than usually central to the business of commentary on his work. When Boswell, in a very well-known remark from his *London Journal* (quoted just once in this volume), expressed his desire to ‘be a Mr Addison’, he was invoking less a real person than an ideal of modern urbane deportment;³⁵ but in equating the historical Addison with that ideal Boswell was completing a process instigated within *The Spectator*. In short, where *The Spectator* is concerned (and all the chapters about Addison’s reception here are primarily concerned with *The Spectator*, the determinant of his cultural memory), reception study is more than usually continuous with direct criticism; both can

³⁴ S iii. 565.
serve to elucidate—shed further light on, and thereby enable us to see through—the periodical’s cultural work of idealization.

The first thing modern readers have to learn from earlier assessments of Addison is that assumptions about his monolithic prestige in former ages are as exaggerated as are accounts of the universal antipathy to him now. It’s true that eighteenth-century readers habitually compared *The Spectator* to the Bible—in fact, as Hazel Wilkinson and Robert DeMaria show in their chapters, some went so far as to liken it to Shakespeare! The use of an image of Shakespeare’s head on the title pages of Jacob Tonson’s editions of *The Spectator* was unremarkable (it was his house logo); but its reappearance in later printings of the periodical by other publishers ‘spoke to the literary credentials of the publication, and the canonical status it quickly achieved’. Phrasal echoes from the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare in Samuel Johnson’s famous eulogy on Addison’s prose in *The Spectator*, teased out by DeMaria, imply Johnson’s recognition of a Shakespearean quality of timelessness in its style. Yet Addison was never the object of such indiscriminating adulation as, in the generation after his death, would begin to be foisted upon Shakespeare. As DeMaria shows, Johnson himself was finally ambivalent about Addison and *The Spectator*, finding the periodical to have succumbed in noticeable measure to the condition of modern ephemerality it professed to cure. Johnson, of course, was an inveterate demoter of writers from pedestals; but he was not alone in challenging Addison’s claims to fame during the period of his ascendancy. And repeatedly the question that lay at the root of these challenges—as the chapters here by Claire Boulard-Jouslin and Hazel Wilkinson particularly bring out—was one still implicit in Addison’s contested reception today. Is *The Spectator* (and hence Addison himself) for all time or only of its own age?

Boulard-Jouslin, analysing Addison’s reception in Enlightenment France, describes how in French translations and digests of *The Spectator* he was often presented as a cosmopolitan figure, not so much an Englishman of his time and milieu as a spokesman for universal values of liberty and rationality. The creation of this image was dependent on selective interpretation, extending at times to outright suppression, on the part of the translators and abbreviators; well aware of the more nationalistic elements in the periodical, particularly of course its intermittent bouts of Francophobia, they chose to palliate or deflect them, or omitted the relevant papers altogether. From one point of view, that looks generous, a high-minded overlooking of Addison’s worst, most narrowly sectarian, self; and, of course, there were a number of genuine points of contact between Addison and the *philosophes*. In fact, as Boulard-Jouslin shows, they freely plagiarized each other, forming an undeclared alliance in spite of the actual hostility between their nations. But still, we should beware sentimentality. The absorption of Addison into a supranational consensus of the enlightened, so affably effected by Voltaire, Montesquieu, and the other more anonymous translators and imitators of *The
Spectator in France, may also have represented ‘an act of revenge on the part of the French’, Boulard-Jouslin ultimately suspects, ‘over someone who was silently resented as a false friend to the French nation’.

Similar complications over parochialism and universality inform the branch of The Spectator’s afterlife documented in Wilkinson’s chapter—the publication history of Addison’s periodical ‘during the first hundred years of its life’, up to 1812. A comprehensive account of all the editions of the periodical published in that time, including selections, digests, and recensions, would need a whole book; Wilkinson concentrates on the complete editions published in London, Dublin, Glasgow, and Edinburgh (which still amounts to seventy-nine editions, totalling ‘over 600 volumes’—each given a full bibliographical description in the catalogue presented here as an appendix). Such editions, ‘transforming the ephemeral daily papers into volumes to be kept and reread’, promised to realize in material form Addison’s ambition to raise the formerly throwaway mode of the periodical to the status of enduring art, to make fashion and other social minutiae the stuff of moral philosophy. But as it turned out, that transformation proved as difficult to finalize in physical terms as it did on the literary plane. The uniform division of the work into eight volumes, observed by publishers throughout the period, doubtless lent it a classic monumentality (like the retention of Shakespeare’s head on title pages). But other bibliographical developments betrayed the lingering tint of transience—most notably, the progressive encrustation of the text from around the mid-century with layers of paratext: indexes, translations of the classical mottoes, prefaces, introductions, and notes. If in one sense the addition of such editorial apparatus conferred on The Spectator something of the prestige of a classic text, it equally betokened a recognition that Addison’s periodical was already, within a generation of its first appearance, becoming outdated, its thick texture of social detail impenetrable to the children and grandchildren of its first readers (much as Swift told Pope would happen to the ultra-topical Dunciad).³⁶ By the time of its centenary, The Spectator stood revealed in its material form as what it had always been in its literary essence—a hybrid text, an unstable compound of ‘ancient’ permanence and ephemeral modernity.

No part of The Spectator exemplifies that hybridity more than the ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ papers, and whereas Marcus Walsh in his chapter draws out their ‘ancient’ properties, the last of the three chapters here on Addison’s eighteenth-century reception—Frédéric Ogée’s ‘Nature and Imagination: the Posterity of Joseph Addison’s “Pleasures” in British Enlightenment culture’—extrapolates their ‘modern’ features. With their subjectivist slant, pioneering emphasis on the

receiver’s perception of natural phenomena or works of art, the papers articulate a ‘dynamic understanding of pleasure’, Ogée contends, that Addison not only theorizes but also solicits in practice through the sequential (but teasingly interrupted) form of the series. Aligned with cultural tendencies in favour of secularism, commerce, and experimental science, this model of pleasure ‘opened up the new province of British creativity for the century to come’, in particular ‘three remarkable new forms of expression’—the novel, the Hogarthian ‘progress’, and the landscape garden. These are expansive claims; reception study conducted on such a grand scale, looking beyond immediately verifiable forms of influence to larger, latent affiliations, inevitably courts scepticism. For students of the reception of *The Spectator*, though, this may be an occupational hazard. The periodical’s most defining element, its retiring manner of address, makes for a broad but at times necessarily unobtrusive influence. Mr Spectator’s reticence, mostly taken by recent commentators as an underhand means of enforcing readerly consent, appears to have had a more beneficent effect on some of the periodical’s readers in ages before our own. The unassuming demeanour of Addison’s avatar, his polite eschewal of dogmatic singularity, allowed him to be (or seem) all things to all men (less so women). It made him, as we might say, historically clubbable. To borrow a favourite formula of Addison’s, Mr Spectator’s way of talking ‘leaves something to the imagination’, and that bequest was fully exploited by some of his most brilliant descendants and imitators.

A case in point are the Romantic essayists whose responses to the Addisonian periodical form the subject of Greg Dart’s chapter. Amongst Addison’s most searchingly critical admirers, one thing they especially faulted his *Spectator* papers for was their amenability, lack of self-insistence. Taking us back to a time before Addison’s triumph over the other contributors to *The Spectator* in the eyes of readers was complete, Dart documents how William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt all preferred Steele’s essays to Addison’s for their superior ‘spontaneity and freshness’, their ‘humour’ in the old sense of pungent or whimsical characterfulness—for, in a word (that most potent of Romantic watchwords), their ‘egotism’. In a period of counter-revolution, to thwarted liberals like Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt aghast at Whiggism’s loss of its radical edge, Addisonian reticence looked like ‘thoughtless moral conformity’, if not simple cowardice. But they were also capable (negatively capable) of seeing it in another light—as an instance of the essayist’s instinct for ‘withdrawal’, pursuit of ‘consolation in transcendence’. In emphasizing this fanciful or privately melancholic strain in Mr Spectator as against his more familiar vein of public-spirited moralism, Charles Lamb and Thomas De Quincey could be accused of ‘imposing a Romantic vision’, Dart concedes. But that very reserve, ‘quiescent’ selfhood, which in one respect so irritated and disappointed Romantic readers of Addison’s *Spectator* papers may also have been what allowed them to ‘see anticipated’ there ‘future impulses’ they had brought to fruition in their own periodical essays.
The later period of history famously supposed to have found itself most closely anticipated in Addison’s writings is the Victorian age. It was Bonamy Dobrée, in the title of his 1925 biographical sketch of Addison, who dubbed him ‘The First Victorian’, a tag that remains fatally quotable long after the assumptions about a like-mindedness in complacency between Addison and the Victorians which underpinned it have been exploded. In his chapter ‘Addison and the Victorians’, Brian Young shows instead how far Addison divided opinion among his Victorian readers—not least on the subject of division or unity of opinion (they agreed he was ‘the chief architect of Public Opinion in the eighteenth century’, but differed over the value of his representativeness). What Addison mirrored back to the Victorians were not so much their convictions or certainties as their discomforts and doubts—particularly in the two interrelated areas of ‘manliness’ and religious belief. And indeed, most of Addison’s Victorian interlocutors were very much men of letters—Leslie Stephen, Matthew Arnold, Macaulay—although Young ends by championing the cause of a less eminent Victorian Addisonian, the dissenter Lucy Aikin, whose biography, now largely forgotten, provided the occasion for Macaulay’s rather more famous essay (as well as, Young suggests, a fair proportion of its ideas). Victorian ambivalence about Addison was swept away in the early decades of the twentieth century by the monolithic hostility of modernists such as T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf, for whom Addison came to personify (ever the representative) all that was wrong with the eighteenth century, with Christian orthodoxy, with politeness and urbanity, with the bourgeoisie (not to say democracy itself). We are still trying to shake off the after-effects of their ‘dogmatic certainty’; may this volume aid our recovery.

Readers coming to Addison’s translations with conventional assumptions about ‘the Addisonian’ are likely to be surprised by what they find. These exhilarating and imaginatively engaging works, in which Addison encounters the fantastical world of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the mock-heroic wisdom of Virgil’s *Georgics*, and the sublimity of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, were, at least for the most part,¹ the product of the earliest phase of his writing career, before he was to embark on the journalism which established his reputation, in his own time and beyond, as the leading advocate and embodiment of Augustan ‘politeness’.² The Addison of the translations is Addison the Oxonian prodigy, the author of several highly accomplished and greatly admired poems in Latin, and an aspiring member of the circle of the leading poet of the older generation, John Dryden, to whose work Addison’s manifests a profound indebtedness but from which, as we shall see, it also displays a significant independence.

Addison’s first two translations, renderings of the episode of ‘The Story of Salmacis’ from Book IV of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and of ‘All Virgil’s 4th Georgick, Except the Story of Aristeus’, appeared in *The Annual Miscellany for the Year 1694*, the fourth of the six volumes of *Miscellany Poems* published by Jacob Tonson the Elder between 1684 and 1709. A second group of translations, comprising versions of ‘The Story of Phaeton’ and of ‘Europa’s Rape’ from Book II of the *Metamorphoses*, together with a complete rendering of Book III of Ovid’s poem and ‘Milton’s Stile Imitated, in a Translation of a Story out of the Third Aeneid’, was included in Tonson fifth Miscellany (1704). Addison’s translations from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* were revised and supplemented—at an uncertain date—for the complete translation of Ovid’s poem published in 1717 and edited by Sir Samuel Garth.³ His version of Horace, *Odes* III. iii, appeared in

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¹ The qualification is necessary because of the uncertain date of the 1717 additions and revisions (see below).
³ No line numberings are given in either the Miscellany or 1717 texts of Addison’s translations, and there are no modern editions in which either the original or revised texts are reproduced exactly as they originally stood. In the present chapter, the following referencing procedure has been adopted. All quotations are taken from the Miscellany or 1717 texts. The former are referenced by date and page. Line references to the 1717 texts of the Ovid translations, and to the translation of Book IV of Virgil’s
Tonson’s sixth Miscellany (1709). More fragmentary exercises in translation appeared in Remarks on Several Parts of Italy &c. in the Years 1701, 1702, and 1703 (1705) and in Dialogues upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals, Especially in Relation to the Latin and Greek Poets (written in the early 1700s; published in 1721).

Addison’s full-length translations, and particularly those from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, are closely associated with his desire to gain access to Dryden’s social and literary circle. On 2 June 1693, at the age of 21, Addison, still resident at Magdalen College, Oxford, addressed to Dryden his first published English poem, and soon became his regular drinking companion.4 Addison’s poem lavishes particular praise on Dryden’s versions from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, which were shortly to appear, along with Addison’s own poem, in Tonson’s Third Miscellany, Examen Poeticum (1693). Addison exhorts Dryden to ‘prolong’ Ovid’s ‘Noble Tale’, uninterrupted by ‘Age’ or ‘Sickness’, so that the Roman poet will, in his new English guise, ‘reveal / A Nobler Change than he himself can tell’ (p. 249). Addison’s praise was directly connected with plans which Dryden and Tonson were entertaining around this date for English translations of Ovid’s Ars Amatoria and Metamorphoses,5 but which were never to be realized in Dryden’s lifetime. Tonson’s Ars Amatoria finally appeared in 1709, and his Metamorphoses in Garth’s collection of 1717. In this volume all Dryden’s previously published translations from Ovid’s poem were supplemented by renderings by other poets to form a complete version of Ovid’s masterpiece ‘by the most Eminent Hands’. The non-Drydenian sections of the volume were culled from versions published in the Tonson Miscellanies and from manuscript material in Tonson’s possession, together with newly translated episodes and Books specially commissioned by Garth.

Garth’s Preface culminates in an eloquent celebration of his friend Dryden, the instigator of the project of which the 1717 Metamorphoses was, in effect, a belated implementation.6 As Garth, Dryden’s and Addison’s friend and Addison’s physician, would have been well aware, Addison’s contributions had constituted a key part of the original enterprise. It seems more than accidental that Addison’s versions carried Ovid’s poem forward from the point (the end of Book I) where

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6 See Ovid’s Metamorphoses, In Fifteen Books. Translated by the Most Eminent Hands (London, 1717), xx.
Dryden had stopped, and it is tempting to speculate that Dryden may have handed over the continuation of his own Book I to his protégé, perhaps even assisting him in polishing some passages in draft.⁷

A brief coda needs to be added to an account of the early publication of Addison’s translations. In October 1716 a complete English *Metamorphoses* appeared under the imprint of a consortium of booksellers including Edmund Curll, the notorious publisher of pirated and pornographic material. The volume, a shoddily produced duodecimo which sold for 6 shillings, was clearly designed as a cheap rival to the forthcoming 2-guinea Garth/Tonson translation. Much of the rendering of Ovid’s Books II, III, and IV in Curll’s collection, though it is attributed to other writers,⁸ is lifted verbatim from Addison’s Miscellany translations.⁹ Addison, it appears, did not respond in any way to this wholesale piracy of his work. Perhaps, with his reputation as the eirenic and urbane ‘Mr Spectator’ by then well established, he felt it would have been *infra dig* to demean himself by engaging in squalid controversy over intellectual property.

**Critic and Translator**

In his ‘Life of Addison’, Samuel Johnson described Addison’s translations thus:

> His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are however, for the most part, smooth and easy; and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure by those who do not know the originals. (Johnson, *Lives*, iii. 36)

Johnson’s remarks are easily misconstrued, and should be read in the context of the discussion of translation which had occurred during the century and a half before he wrote, and which had involved the general abandonment of the ‘verbal’ (word for word) methods of translation associated with the verse translators of the

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⁸ In the first edition of the Curll *Metamorphoses* the translation of Books II and III is attributed to ‘several hands’ and that of Book IV to ‘Mr. J. Philips, &c’. In the second (1724, 1726) and third (1733) editions, Book II is attributed to ‘Mr Sewell, &c’, and Books III and IV to ‘Mr J. Philips, &c’.

⁹ The Curll *Metamorphoses* also contains substantial plagiarism from the version edited by Nahum Tate, of which the first (and only) volume had appeared as *Ovid’s Metamorphosis, Translated by Several Hands, Vol. 1. Containing the First Five Books* (London, 1697).
Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline periods in favour of the more ‘paraphrastic’ method advocated by Dryden and others.¹

Addison’s Drydenian allegiances were to be clearly signalled in his most extensive discussion of translation, in issue 39 of the periodical The Lover (1714), where he praises Eustace Budgell for having followed, in his translation of Theophrastus, the Horatian principle of ‘preserving every where the Life and spirit of his Author, without servilely copying after him word for word’.¹¹ But Addison, as Johnson suggests, while broadly translating within the Drydenian tradition, generally allows himself greater freedoms than his mentor. When Johnson describes Addison’s translations as ‘too licentiously paraphrastical’, he seems to be evoking a notion of ‘paraphrase’ that is closer to the modern definition of the term¹² than to that offered by Dryden (for whom ‘paraphrase’ indicated close fidelity to the ‘sense’ if not to the ‘words’ of one’s original), and to be using the term to encompass features which Dryden would have classified as ‘imitation’—translation so free that it seems more properly thought of as original composition.

Addison’s translations are certainly less likely than Dryden’s to serve as any kind of ‘crib’ to their originals. But when one compares them closely with their sources it seems a nice question whether his additions—which are often designed to flesh out the psychological implications of his original, to provide greater visual detail, or to shape his originals’ narratives more pointedly for his English readers—should be considered pure inventions, or whether he might have pleaded—as Dryden did about the additions in his translation of Virgil—that they should be thought ‘not stuck into’ their originals but ‘growing out of’ them.¹³ Addison spoke of Virgil ‘fetch[ing] his Hints from Homer’,¹⁴ and he often seems himself, as a translator, to be developing ‘hints’ that are implicit in, or at least in accord with, the imaginative drift of his original. Johnson was perhaps too accomplished and exacting a classicist to be entirely happy with Addison’s expansive approach. But Addison’s versions, as we shall see, are often more scrupulously attentive to the local implications of his originals than Johnson’s account might suggest.

If Addison follows, albeit more freely, Dryden’s ‘paraphrastic’ method of translation, his practice resembles that of Dryden in another significant respect. In the case of both poets, there is sometimes a congruence and sometimes an interesting discrepancy between their descriptions of their originals in critical prose and their treatment of them as translators. In the case of Virgil’s Georgics, there is a significant harmony between Addison’s critical theory and his

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¹ See David Hopkins, Conversing with Antiquity: English Poets and the Classics, from Shakespeare to Pope (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ch. 4.
¹¹ The Lover no. 39 (25 May 1714), 1.
¹² See OED, ‘paraphrase’, 1a: ‘A rewording of something written or spoken by someone else, esp. with the aim of making the sense clearer; a free rendering of a passage.’
¹⁴ Si. ii. 587.
translatory practice. Addison writes at length on Virgil’s poem in the ‘Essay on Virgil’s Georgics’ which he contributed (anonymously) to Dryden’s Works of Virgil (1697). Near the beginning of that essay, he offers a thumbnail definition of georgic as ‘some part of the Science of Husbandry put into a pleasing Dress, and set off with all the Beauties and Embellishments of Poetry’, and this has been taken by some to suggest that he regards the poetic component of georgic as merely a decorative sweetening of an otherwise unpalatably rustic pill.¹ But Addison’s essay in fact shows that he is fully aware of Virgil’s sophisticated strategies of linking ‘poetry’ and ‘instruction’ so that the two seem organically, rather than merely mechanically, related. Virgil, Addison says, ‘raises in our Minds a pleasing variety of Scenes and Landskips, whilst [he] teaches us: and makes the dryest of [his] Precepts look like a Description’.¹⁶ And in his translation of Book IV of Virgil’s poem, Addison, like Dryden after him, positively revels in the numerous instances in which Virgil’s mock-heroic handling of his subject matter brings the conduct of human beings and bees into subtly revealing and instructive juxtaposition. This can be seen, for example, in his portrayal of conflict between rival leaders of the hive, where the disconcerting similarities between the faction-fighting and emotional disturbances of human courts and apian hives are teasingly foregrounded:

If e’re two Rival Kings their Right debate,
And Factions and Cabals embroil the State,
The People’s Actions will their Thoughts declare;
All their Hearts tremble, and beat thick with War;
Hoarse broken sounds, like Trumpets harsh Alarms,
Run through the Hive, and call ’em to their Arms.

(ll. 79–84)

In the light of such passages, it is perhaps not surprising that Dryden was to remark that ‘After [Addison’s] Bees, my latter Swarm is scarcely worth the hiving’.¹⁷

But in the case of Ovid, the relation between critical theory and translatory practice is for Addison, as for Dryden, more complex. Addison can on occasion make perceptive and positive critical remarks about Ovid, as in Spectator 417, where he notes the Roman poet’s capacity to ‘strike the imagination wonderfully’ with ‘what is strange’:

He describes a Miracle in every Story, and always gives us the Sight of some new Creature at the end of it. His Art consists chiefly in well-timing his Description,

¹⁶ Dryden, Works, v. 146.
¹⁷ ‘Postscript to the Reader’, appended to his translation of Virgil (Dryden, Works, vi. 810).
before the first Shape is quite worn off, and the new one perfectly finish’d; so that he every where entertains us with something we never saw before, and shews Monster after Monster, to the end of the *Metamorphosis*.¹

But, like Dryden, Addison had imbibed from a critical tradition stretching back to antiquity an adverse view of some features of Ovid’s art. Ovid, it had been frequently alleged, was prolix to a fault, never knowing when to stop a particular description or speech. He indulged in displays of ingenious verbal wit which were particularly inappropriate in situations demanding empathy or pathos.¹⁹ The episode of Narcissus, chosen by Dryden in his Preface to *Fables Ancient and Modern*²⁰ as a particularly egregious example of such ‘Wit out of Season’, was one of those translated by Addison. In the Notes to the episode published with the first version of his translation in 1704, Addison repeats Dryden’s charges, using vocabulary and illustrations strikingly similar to those of his master. ‘Ovid’, he writes, displays in the episode his habitual fault ‘of not knowing when he has said enough’. He has ‘turn’d and twisted’ to excess ‘that one Thought of Narcissus’s being the Person belov’d, and the Lover too’, ‘for we can’t at the same time be delighted with the Wit of the Poet, and concern’d for the Person that speaks it’. No one in ‘Narcissus’s Condition’, Addison insists, ‘would . . . have have cry’d out – *Inopem me Copia fecit*’ (‘plenty makes me lacking’). Ovid, Addison concludes, ‘speaks all the Ingenious things that can be said on the Subject, rather than those which are particularly proper to the Person and Circumstances of the Speaker’ (p. 590).

On a number of occasions, to be sure, Addison translates Ovid in a way that accords with his reservations as a critic. In his rendering of the destruction caused by Phaeton’s disastrous attempt to control the chariot of the sun, for example, he omits many of the numerous names listed by Ovid (II. 242–59) of the rivers burned in the process, presumably thinking them a prime instance of Ovidian prolixity. He also makes substantial cuts in the story of Actaeon, the huntsman who accidentally sees the naked goddess Diana bathing and is punished by being transformed into a stag and hunted by his own hounds. He omits Ovid’s list of Diana’s attendant maidens (III. 171–2), merely referring to all apart from Crocale as ‘Five of the more ignoble sort’ (1704, p. 523). Later in the same episode, Ovid spends twenty lines (*Metamorphoses* III. 206–25) naming thirty-six of the hounds in Actaeon’s pack. Addison omits the list of hounds altogether, claiming (1704, pp. 587–8) that in this case his decision was prompted not so much by Ovid’s

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¹ iii. 565. ¹⁹ See David Hopkins, *Conversing with Antiquity*, ch. 8.
proximity but by the difficulties of finding plausible and euphonious English equivalents for Ovid’s Greek names.²¹

Another substantial cut in Addison’s Ovid occurs in the story of Echo and Narcissus, where Ovid depicts at length in his verse the way in which Echo, condemned by Juno to part-repeat the words she hears from others, disturbs Narcissus, with whom she has fallen in love, by her responses to his cries to his hunting companions. In the version by ‘Mr Pittis and Mr Bridgwater’, included in Nahum Tate’s Metamorphoses (1697), the passage is translated thus:

By chance the Youth from his Companions stray’d,
Cry’d out, Who’s here? who’s here the Answer’s made.
Amaz’d he casts his wandring Eyes around,
Come here, says he, Come hear the Woods resound:
He looks about again, and finding none
Approach, Why do ye thus my person shun,
Says he? And straight so many words again
He does receive for those he spoke in vain.
Though oft deceiv’d, yet still he cries, Let’s meet;
The willing Nymph does straight the words repeat.

(pp. 133–4)

For Addison, this passage displays what must ultimately be judged an inferior kind of wit: ‘If playing on Words’, Addison concedes in his note, ‘be excusable in any Poem it is in this, where Eccho is a Speaker.’ ‘But,’ he continues, ‘it is so mean a kind of Wit, that if it deserves Excuse it can claim no more’ (p. 588). He consequently cuts the passage altogether.

But these, it should be stressed, are relatively rare instances. Elsewhere throughout his Ovid, Addison as translator, like Dryden before him,²² actually takes pains to imitate the stylistic mannerisms of Ovid’s Latin (antithesis, chiasmus, polyptoton, anadiplosis, zeugma),²³ even, on occasion, when expressing disapproval of the very same features in his notes. When, for example, Phaeton persists in pursuing his ambition to ride Apollo’s chariot, Ovid has his Apollo say, deploying the zeugma for which he was notorious:

\[
\text{corripe lora manu, vel, si mutabile pectus est tibi, consiliis, non curribus utere nostris.} \\
\text{(II. 145–6)}
\]

²¹ Earlier English translators had replaced Ovid’s names with folksy English equivalents: George Sandys, for example, begins his list with ‘Black-foot’, ‘Tracer’, ‘Spie’, ‘Ravener’, ‘Clime-cliffe’, and ‘Fawn-bane’.
²³ Many of these imitations of Ovidian style are noted by Susan Gippert in Joseph Addison’s Ovid (Sankt Augustin: Gardez! Verlag, 2003).
('Here, grasp the reins, or, if thy purpose still may be amended, take my
council, not my chariot.')

In his note on the passage, Addison comments:

Ovid's Verse is Consiliis non Curribus utere nostris. This way of joining two such
different Ideas as Chariot and Council to the same Verb is mightily used by Ovid,
but is a very low kind of Wit, and has always in it a mixture of Pun, because the
Verb must be taken in a different Sense when 'tis join'd with one of the things
from what it has in Conjunction with the other. (p. 73)

But in both versions of his translation, Addison, though polishing the first line of
the couplet in 1717, preserves Ovid's zeugma intact:

1704: Snatch up the Reins; or yet the Task forsake,
And not my Chariot, but my Council take.
(p. 55)

1717: Snatch up the Reins; or still th'Attempt forsake,
And not my Chariot, but my Counsel take.
(ll. 67–8)

Similarly, when later in the same episode Ovid says that Phaeton's eyes were
overcome by 'tenebrae per tantum lumen' ('darkness through excess of light'),
Addison the critic comments that 'It is impossible for a Man to be drawn in a
greater Confusion than Phaeton is; but the Antithesis of Light and Darkness a little
flattens the Description' (1704, p. 74). But Addison the poet renders the antithesis
exactly as it stands in the original:

And his Eyes darken'd by too great a Light.
(p. 57, unchanged in 1717, l. 207)

And in the speech of Narcissus, which, as we have seen, represented for Addison and
Dryden as critics a locus classicus both of Ovidian prolixity and of his weakness for
'wit out of season', Addison does not scruple to render the very lines which both
writers singled out as an instance of Ovid's vices at their most extreme in a manner
which follows, and even extends, Ovid's paradoxes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Whom should I Court? how utter my Complaint?} \\
\text{Enjoyment but produces my Restraint,} \\
\text{And too much Plenty makes me die for Want.}
\text{How gladly would I from my self remove!} \\
\text{And at a distance set the thing I love.}
\end{align*}
\]
(p. 544, unchanged in 1717, ll. 570–4)

In such a passage, as in two lines from slightly later in the same translation ('His
Tears defac'd the Surface of the Well, / With Circle after Circle, as they fell'), one
sees the force of two modern commentators’ claim that Addison seems on occasion to be aspiring to make his translations of Ovid ‘more Ovidian’ than Ovid himself.²⁴

Commentaries and Predecessors

Addison’s translations were made from texts of his originals which differed from those current today, and modern readers may be puzzled by the way that his interpretations of particular words and phrases, and the sequencing of his lines, differ from those with which they are familiar.²⁵ In his rendering of Book IV of the _Georgics_, for example, Virgil’s lines on the anger of the bees when disturbed (236–8), which in modern texts are attached directly to the poet’s advice that smoke should be released into the hive before any attempt to collect honey (Loeb: IV. 230) is translated at the point at which it appears in the seventeenth-century texts, before the description of the effect of winter on the hive (Loeb: IV. 239 ff.).

But Addison’s departures from expected readings are sometimes not merely the effect of changes in textual scholarship but more interestingly related to his attempts to render his originals in the fullest and most richly meaningful way for his modern readers. Like Dryden before him, Addison made regular use of the best available editions of the authors whom he was translating, sometimes incorporating material from the commentary and _interpretatio_ (Latin prose paraphrase) which they contained.

In the story of Phaeton from Book II of the _Metamorphoses_, for example, Ovid’s reference to ‘Titan’ (118) summoning the Hours to yoke his steeds, becomes ‘the Father’, which both translates ‘pater’ in the text of Daniel Crispinus, in Addison’s view the best of Ovid’s editors,²⁶ and simultaneously reinforces the stress throughout Addison’s version on the close, albeit doomed, bond between Phaeton and Apollo, son and father. Later in the same episode, when vividly describing the ‘smoaking’ (1704, p. 66) or ‘Blasted’ (1717, l. 379) corpse of Phaeton, ‘hurl’d on the River Po, Addison translates Ovid’s ‘fumantia’, a reading actually preserved in the modern texts, but drawn by Addison not from Crispinus (who prints ‘spumantia’) but from one of Ovid’s other seventeenth-century editors. (‘Fumantia’ is the reading given in Cornelius Schrevelius’s text, and is also offered by Borchard Cnipping as an alternative to ‘spumantia’.)

²⁶ Crispinus’s line begins ‘At pater’, whereas modern texts read ‘Quem petere’. In his notes on the Phaeton story from Book II of the _Metamorphoses_, Addison refers to Crispinus as ‘the best of Ovid’s Expositors’. A list of the editions and translations of classical authors owned by Addison is given in A _Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Celebrated Right Hon. Joseph Addison_ (London, 1799). It suggests Addison owned the editions of Ovid by Crispinus (two copies, 1702 and 1708 editions) and Borchard Cnipping (1683 edition), and the 1640 edition of Sandys’s translation.
In the story of Calisto, Addison’s rendering of Juno’s indignant wrath at the transformation of Calisto and Arcas into stars which ‘proudly roul / In their new Orbs, and brighten all the Pole’ clearly draws on Crispinus’s or Cnipping’s gloss (‘polum’) on Ovid’s ‘axem extremum’ (‘furthest axis’), making Ovid’s meaning clearer for an eighteenth-century reader. And in the story of Coronis, when the crow, drawing on her own experience of dismissal by Athene, warns the raven not to be a ‘Tell tale’, Addison expands on Ovid’s text significantly. Ovid’s crow tells the raven:

> at, puto, no ultro nequiquam tale rogantem
> me petit!—ipsa licet hoc a Pallade queras:

(II. 566–7)

(‘But perhaps (I suppose you might say) she did not seek me out of her own accord, when I asked no such thing? Well, you may ask Pallas herself.’)

Addison renders the crow’s words as follows:

> But you, perhaps, may think I was remov’d
> As never by the heav’ly Maid beloved:
> But I was lov’d; ask Pallas if I lye;
> Tho’ Pallas hate me now, she won’t deny.

(II. 712–15)

Addison, presumably thinking that Ovid’s ‘petit’ was somewhat obscure and needed clarification for his readers, incorporated an explanation from Crispinus’s note:

> Tacitae occurrit objectioni. Diceret enim corvus, non ob indicium repulsa fuisti, o Cornix, sed quia nunquam Minervae grata.²⁷

(‘She is responding to an implicit objection. For the raven might have said, ‘You weren’t driven away because of your blabbing, but because Minerva never liked you.’)

Like Dryden, Addison conceived of translation, at least in part, as an inherited and collaborative activity. He is thus willing to draw regularly on his translator predecessors for rhymes, end words (to which he supplies his own rhymes), and incidental phrasing, and one can see regular traces in his own versions of the renderings of Ovid by George Sandys and Nahum Tate, and of Virgil’s Georgics by Thomas May, John Ogilby, and Sir Charles Sedley.

Some of Addison’s borrowings seem designed merely to give extra ‘polish’ to his predecessors’ work. When, for example, echoing Sir Charles Sedley’s description of the bees’ activity in Book IV of the Georgics,

²⁷ Ovid, Opera, ed. Daniel Crispinus, 4 vols (Lyon, 1689), ii. 73 (translation my own).