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The Emblem of Print: Manifestations of An Aesthetic of Print in the The Spectator

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ferdinand Alexi Hilenski II entitled "The Emblem of Print: Manifestations of An Aesthetic of Print in the The Spectator." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

Percy Adams, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Bain T. Stewart, B.J. Feggett, John L Jellicorse

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Percy Adams, Major Professor

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THE EMBLEM OF PRINT: MANIFESTATIONS OF AN AESTHETIC
OF PRINT IN *THE SPECTATOR*

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee

Ferdinand Alexi Hilenski II

June 1974

Dedicated to
E.B. and L.M.H.

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I have had the benefit of being instructed by what I expect is an unusually high number of excellent teachers. I will not mention them all here, but I must note particularly five men of whom it can be said that without their concern and instruction I would not have arrived at this point in my academic career.

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Dr. Hoyt Bowen was my first teacher of Shakespeare, and the most inspirational teacher I have encountered. I never venture to cross the threshold of a classroom without his image in my mind.

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ABSTRACT

Marshall McLuhan has disclosed several characteristics of the medium of print pertaining to the ability of print to render reality, among these being linearity, uniformity and infinite repeatability, all indicative of the visual senses. In the *Spectator* by Addison and Steele this aesthetic of print is particularly visible, in content, form, persona and style. Indeed, the aesthetic of print so pervades the work that it might be said to compose an emblem of print. As such to work is particularly valuable to the twentieth century, when the particular values of a world rendered in terms of print are in danger of becoming obscured or lost with the emergence of other non-verbal media.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION--PRINT, ESSAYS AND MYTH

The periodic essay was a unique genre of the eighteenth century: there was nothing quite like it before, and there has been nothing exactly like it since, in length, in scope, and in point of view. In ancestry it looks back to the essays of Montaigne and Bacon, to the characters and table talk of the seventeenth century, and above all to the journalistic and pamphlet literature of the Restoration. In the nineteenth century its place was partly taken by the *feuilleton* and the literary essay of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Stevenson; to be succeeded in our own day by the work of the newspaper 'columnist' and the featured contribution to the weekly review.¹

This quotation from Bond's "Introduction" to his edition of the *Spectator* raises two important considerations that need to be closely examined. First, valuable as such notions of genre evolution are, we should realize that by simply cataloging the formalistic origins of the periodic essay generally, and of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* specifically, we have not in the same stroke necessarily brought to light their phenomenological origins. "Just as one cannot float colors in space . . .," remarks Susan Sontag, "one cannot have a work of art that does not impinge upon the human sensorium."² Obviously there are formalistic relationships between the *Spectator*, say, and the essays of Montaigne, and between the *Spectator* and the essays of Bacon; but more important is that the essay form of Montaigne and Bacon

¹ Donald F. Bond, ed., *The Spectator*, by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, "Introduction" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), xiii.

² Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965); reprinted in *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, ed. Gerald E. Stearn (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p. 261.

was--is--a concrete phenomenological representation of the new man and new world contained within the form--splinters from the wholistic renaissance cosmos--and that Addison and Steele, in utilizing the essay form, to some extent disclosed this splintered universe with their use of the form. "The artist elaborates images which are the images of reality," states Herbert Read, "they *are* reality, for we only discover reality in the degree that we crystalize these images out of the Unknown."³

The media probes of Marshall McLuhan offer one valuable way of approaching the phenomenological origins of these images. "Western history," he explains,

was shaped for some three thousand years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet, a medium that depends solely on the eye for comprehension. The alphabet is a construct of fragmented bits and parts which have no semantic meaning in themselves and which must be strung together in a line, bead-like, and in a prescribed order. Its use fostered and encouraged the habit of perceiving all environment in visual and spatial terms--particularly in terms of a space and of a time that are uniform,

c,o,n,t,i,n,u,o,u,s
and
c-o-n-n-e-c-t-e-d.

The line, the continuum

--this sentence is a prime example--
became the organizing principle of life 'Rationality' and logic came to depend on the presentation of connected and sequential facts or concepts.⁴

³Read, *Icon and Idea: The Function of Art in the Development of Human Consciousness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 134.

⁴With Quintin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 44-45. The spectrum of opinion about McLuhan is well represented in two collections of writings, *McLuhan: Pro and Con*, ed. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968) and *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, ed. Gerald E. Stearn (New York: Dial Press, 1967). Perhaps the best book-length study of McLuhan is *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* (Montreal/London: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1971), by Donald F. Theall, once a graduate student of McLuhan's but nonetheless a sometimes hostile critic.

John Culkin, a major disciple of McLuhan, adds: "Whether one uses the medium to say that *God is Dead* or *God is Love* (--- -- ----), the structure of the medium remains unchanged. Nine little black marks with no intrinsic meaning of their own are strung along a line with spaces left after the third and fifth marks. It is this stripping away of meaning that allows us to X-ray the form itself."⁵

And when the alphabet was cast into print, spreading its influence and creating the possibility of a mass audience, it became a funnel for the universe; in Culkin's words again:

All sense data must henceforth be squeezed into and through the narrow passage of print. The audible, the pictorial, the tactile, the olefactory--all get translated into the visual and abstract. The little black marks of the Phoenician alphabet had no semantic meaning beyond their neutral sound. Reality is squeezed through the funnel of the alphabet. Reality comes out one drop at a time; it is segmented; sequential; it is fragmented along a straight line; it is analytic; it is abridged; it is reduced to one sense; it becomes susceptible to perspective and point of view; it becomes uniform and repeatable. A simple five-second human reaction to a sunset has to be strung out in words for sentence after sentence before one human can tell another what it meant to him. Time and space are busted up into little bits.⁶

The splintered universe is nowhere more vividly portrayed than by the pamphlets and newspapers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries,⁷ resulting from a tendency on the part of British journalism "to exploit the mosaic form of the newspaper in order to present the

⁵Culkin, "A Schoolman's Guide to Marshall McLuhan," *Saturday Review* (March 18, 1967); reprinted in *McLuhan: Pro and Con*, ed. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), p. 249.

⁶Culkin, "A Handful of Postulates," in Stearn, pp. 42-43.

⁷Louis Dudek, *Literature and the Press: A History of Printing, Printed Media, and Their Relation to Literature* (Toronto: Ryerson and Contact Presses, n.d.), p. 20.

discontinuous variety and incongruity of ordinary life."⁸ By "mosaic form" McLuhan means the typical newspaper format of a number of unrelated news items juxtaposed together without regard for arranging or creating a thematic unity. He goes on to state that "the press is a daily action and fiction or thing made, and it is made out of just about everything in the community. By the mosaic means, it is made into a communal image or cross-section" (*Media*, p. 212). The arrangement and final configuration of the image, however, is largely left for the reader to construct, not the writer or editor. And by juxtaposing a number of usually unrelated items daily as it did, the *Spectator*, too, utilized this mosaic.

The notion that a "communal image" could or should be composed from the rough juxtapositioning of items of ordinary news is phenomenologically significant. After all, it was not as if everyday life became "discontinuous" or "incongruous" suddenly in the last third of the seventeenth century and so brought to being the newspaper.

Rather, McLuhan's scenario postulates that people because of the myriad of reasons that brought about the rise of the middle class, chief among them being the invention of movable type and the Gutenberg press, began to take more notice of their own lives, and consequently to find more significance in them. Thus commonplace, individual, universally insignificant happenings manifested in the linear, uniform terms of print and more or less haphazardly thrown together randomly onto a penny page of Foolscap came to comprise the essence of the world

⁸ McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 207.

scheme or pattern for man in the eighteenth century, while the grand renaissance vision of a balanced, ordered universe, which Shakespeare conveyed through the elevated rhetoric and cosmically significant actions of kings and princes, faded into history.

"Print technology created the public," states McLuhan. "The public consists of separated individuals walking around with separate, fixed points of view . . . the fragmentary outlook" (*Message*, pp. 69-69). And so in the late 1600's the public set about framing and preserving certain remnants from their old environment--oral speech or conversation especially; various social institutions, ways of life, manners and mores resulting from an oral culture--in the medium that increasingly was weaving it a new pattern of life, the medium of print.

For instance, the *Athenian Mercury*, the first question and answer periodical, begun on March 17, 1691, and published by John Dunton, had a format composed of general news and answers to questions (often spurious) from correspondents. The answers measured a few lines in length to long essays and covered a variety of subjects, ranging from politics and religion to love, natural history, superstition and folklore.⁹ These topics were the subject also of much daily conversation during this time and by nature are highly vulnerable to changes in cultural context; thus they were logical choices for content. But more importantly, the question and answer format in which they were rendered was itself an ontological manifestation of everyday oral speech, framed on the new wall of print. Dialogue sheets like

⁹George S. Marr, *The Periodical Essayists of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Appleton, 1924), pp. 14-15.

Heraclitus Ridens (1681) and Roger L'Estrange's *Observer* (1681),¹⁰ and particularly works such as Samuel Defoe's "Advice to the Scandal Club," preserved oral conversation even more accurately and artistically through exact imitation of speech patterns and introduction of the "Club" device which Addison and Steele would later carry to perfection (Marr, pp. 15-17).

This situation holds true with all of the formalistic origins of the genre, each one manifesting a tendency, as Sontag puts it, "to upgrade the old environment into an art form" (p. 254). John Selden's *Table-Talk* (1689), for example, freezes speech in print and in so doing asserts that there is something of aesthetic appeal in ordinary colloquial conversation in and of itself, a fact later confirmed by the success of the novel; the *Microcosmographie* (1628) of John Earle not only carries over the character stereotype from drama to prose fiction but demonstrates how different and how full and rounded a character can be created in the medium of print alone, without the usual provision of an entire context of imitated life given with a play. Both Selden's and Earle's works also are splinterings from the renaissance concept of a unified experience and balanced cosmos, the one separating speech from its speaker and casting it alone into print (in a phenomenological sense all printed speech is "taken out of context"), the other "dismembering" figuratively the parts of a man with the disassociational, analytical powers of the press. All of

¹⁰Richmond P. Bond, "Growth and Change in the Early English Press," the 15th Annual Public Lecture on Books and Bibliography, presented at the Univ. of Kansas on 15 November, 1968 (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Libraries, 1969), p. 15.

these aesthetic inferences the periodic essay took in along with the "character" form.

In each of these instances, aspects of life thought to be the most commonplace and unnoticed, the clichés of life, took on a new significance when rendered into the linear, uniform terms of print and placed in the context of a corresponding world view. For, writes Naum Gabo,

Shapes, colors, and lines speak their own languages. They are events in themselves and in organized construction they become beings--their psychological force is immediate, irresistible, and universal to all species of mankind; not being the result of a convention, as words are, they are unambiguous, and it is for that reason that their impact can influence the human psyche; it can break or mold it; it exalts, it depresses, elates or makes desperate; it can bring order where there was confusion and it can disturb and exasperate where there was an order.¹¹

Thus the period essay as an event was rooted ontologically in a cultural phenomenon Marshall McLuhan has capsulated in the title of one of his books: *From Cliché to Archetype*.¹² Howard Gossage explains the significance of the title this way:

'Cliche' means any environmental element, omnipresent, unnoticed. It becomes noticed when the environment changes. At this point, as it becomes the 'content' of the new environment, it also becomes an art form. If you live in a room that has cabbage rose patterned wallpaper, you will notice it at first but after a while, it will become just wallpaper. What was once fresh and new turns into a cliché and assumes its role as part of the environment. Now let us suppose that when you repaper your room, you decide to save a square of the old stuff and have it framed. As a picture it is no longer wallpaper, but content for the new environment. Something else has happened too: it has become an art form. If it is successful as an art form and is admired

¹¹Katherine S. Dreier, James Johnson Sweeney and Naum Gabo, *Three Lectures on Modern Art* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), pp. 82-83; quoted in Read, p. 135.

¹²McLuhan (New York: Viking, 1970).

and copied--or at any rate persists so that eventually it becomes the one and only form which all others emanate--it constitutes an archetype. Today's archetype was yesterday's art form, day before yesterday's cliché, and the day before that it was the last word.¹³

This is precisely the ontological genesis of the *Spectator*. The *Tatler*, as its very name implies, utilized the environment of oral speech that had dominated western communication for centuries to the point of becoming a cliché--an omnipresent, unnoticed element of the environment. When the culture decided to "repaper," or more specifically, when Addison and Steele replaced the *Tatler* with the *Spectator*, the name change alone signaling a cultural switch from an oral medium to a visual medium of communication, "a square of the old stuff," i.e., speech, was saved and framed in the new medium of print, becoming the "content" of the new environment. The periodic essays of the *Spectator* did indeed become an art form, were highly successful as such (Melvin P. Watson says that the *Spectator* kept a "stranglehold" on the genre for over a century¹⁴), and did in fact come to represent something of an archetype of the Augustan Age. In its ontological being, then, in its manner and medium of expression more so than in its ideas and content, did the periodic essay contribute to the formation and manifestation of a new world view in the eighteenth century.

The second consideration Bond raises--the one that actually provoked this study--is that the periodic essay is a form unique to the eighteenth century. This seems an obvious assumption, and our purpose

¹³Gossage, "Understanding Marshall McLuhan," *Ramparts* (April, 1966); reprinted in Stearn, pp. 13-14.

¹⁴Watson, *Magazine Serials and the Essay Tradition, 1746-1820* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1956), p. 29.

here is not to question its essential correctness. But at the same time it is not an assumption one should let go by without some attempt to determine how and why it can be made and to ascertain what were the factors unique to the eighteenth century that in their combination would result in the periodic essay--would call it into being.

The term "periodic essay" itself gives us some clue as to the nature of these factors, for it is a term that expresses a paradox. The words "periodic" and "essay" actually invoke a concept of a journalistic literature, a concept which today is not paradoxical at all, but which to the eighteenth century certainly must have represented something of a contradiction in terms. The essays of Montaigne and Bacon were, of course, literature, but they were not periodic in any sense; nor were the characters of Selden and Earle. Neither had the increased volume of literary activity and high number of books printed at the end of the sixteenth century made a noticeable impact on the general availability of literature in England; in fact throughout the 1700's and up until about 1800, the prices of books increased at a rate proportionally higher than the general level of prices, thus making books less available to the general public despite wide usage of the printing press (Dudek, p. 19).

But even though there was no "popular" press in England during this period, printing was having an effect on the society; slowly the medium was gaining in use, influence and prestige, gradually supplanting the older oral medium as the central carrier of communication. "The history of printing from 1600 to 1800 is not a history of technical advance," observes Louis Dudek; "its history is one of gradual extension in the quality and character of printed matter, a specialization of its

uses--in books, periodicals, and newspaper--and the development of new literary conditions with the growth of a larger middle-class reading public" (p. 20). There was by the close of the seventeenth century, then, a hunger for print (indeed, one can almost literally equate food with print at this time, for until 1712 the price of a newspaper was the same as the price of a mutton dinner: a penny or a penny and a half [Dudek, p. 23]). This hunger, in turn, more or less resulted in the birth of the periodic press (Dudek, p. 36). And though the early journals were short-lived, there were a great many of them and they were growing in popularity: one estimate of the number of newspapers printed and sold in England annually in 1712 was 2,288,000; in 1760 the number would be estimated at 7,400,000 per year.¹⁵

Still, the pamphlets, journals and newspapers of the neophyte British press in the late 1600's, while indeed periodic, were not, in the main, literature, and there was little connection between journalism and literature *per se*. It was probably the startling increase in newspaper reading that was responsible for turning the attention of men of letters to journalism, for virtually no literary figures were allied to the periodic press in the 1600's, while after the turn of the century five of the great writers of the Augustan period--Defoe, Addison and Steele directly; Swift and Pope to a lesser extent--became the leading figures in the evolution and development of the periodical (Dudek, pp. 23-24; Bond, p. 8). The end result of this movement was a heightening of the quality and prestige of the newspaper, the

¹⁵ Kurt von Stutterheim, *The Press in England*, trans. W. H. Johnson (London, 1934), p. 37; cited in Dudek, p. 23.

development of realism and the expression of a general atmosphere of eclecticism in contemporary literature, as well as some exchange of characteristics between media (Bond, pp. 9, 16).

The man probably most responsible for demonstrating the connection between journalism and literature was Daniel Defoe. Scholars agree that Defoe wrote his fiction in the style of journalism;¹⁶ James Sutherland, for example, believes that "it is clear . . . that the author of *fifty-nine* who suddenly began giving the world a series of fictional narratives was still to a considerable extent upon the familiar ground of fact."¹⁷

But as a reporter prior to his excursion into novels, Defoe had also been engaged in the creation of fiction. "A principle function of the newspaper," McLuhan explains, "was to correct rumors and oral reports, as a dictionary might provide 'correct' spellings and meanings for words that had long existed without the benefit of dictionaries. Fairly soon the press began to sense that news was not only to be reported but also gathered, and, indeed, to be made" (*Media*, p. 212). It is this later, "making," stage of journalism that Defoe took to its logical conclusion in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Defoe once described his ability to make fiction as his "Mythological Manner," but his myth was one stirred by real contemporary events.¹⁸

¹⁶Bryant, "The Relationship Between Defoe the Journalist and Defoe the Novelist," Diss. Univ. of Tennessee, 1973, p. 93.

¹⁷Sutherland, "The Author of *Robinson Crusoe*," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Robinson Crusoe*, ed. Frank H. Ellis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 31; quoted in Bryant, p. 93.

¹⁸Maximillian E. Novak, "The Imaginative Genius of *Robinson Crusoe* and the Events of 1716-1719," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 19 (1974), [to be published].

Maximillian Novak has explored the effect on the novel of Defoe's deep involvement in writing and editing day-to-day events during the three years previous to the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719; he states that the conflicting poles of fact and fiction manifested in Defoe a tendency to merge single events into an archetypal narrative, and that this trait is particularly evident in the composition of *Robinson Crusoe* (see note 18). In addition the specific accounts of happenings dating from this period, the novel also utilizes many of the characteristics of journalistic writing--precise dates, places, numbers, lists of items, simple facts, dialogues in realistic idiom and patterns of speech (Bryant, pp. 100, 114)--to create if not the mosaic reality of the press, then the probability of reality in myth.¹⁹

Indeed, in spite of its journalistic format, *Robinson Crusoe* is a transcendent narrative, and as such F. M. Cornford's remarks on the nature of classical myth seem equally appropriate for it: "most of us will feel that the great myths of the world are more than historical anecdotes. They come, even to us [today], charged with congenial warmth, with the appeal of a mysterious significance lying behind their face value as legendary incident. We are, very dimly but intensely, aware of some universal meaning that is contained in a myth, and not contained in a plot of intrigue."²⁰ The problem with myth that Defoe encountered is the imprecision inherent in its metaphorical use of

¹⁹ John F. Ross, *Swift and Defoe* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1941), p. 99; cited in Bryant, p. 98. Cf. E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Epic Strain in the English Novel* (Fair Lawn, N.J.: Essential Books, 1958), pp. 25-50; cited in Novak [see note 18].

²⁰ Cornford, *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), p. 4.

language; but he realized that oftentimes what was lost in precision was gained in suggestion, as Cornford implies. This possibility makes his myths potentially revealing and worth analyzing, especially since their "containers" or format--like those of Addison and Steele--are partly poetic or artistic.²¹

McLuhan believes that "Myth is the mode of simultaneous awareness of a complex group of causes and effects Myth means putting on the audience, putting on one's environment";²² and environments, he concludes, "are not passive wrappings, but are, rather, active processes which are invisible" (*Message*, p. 68). McLuhan points out here too that environments elude easy perception; but from our viewpoint in the twentieth century, we can see Defoe's "putting on" of environment in the eighteenth.

The mythic dimension of Defoe's work has been investigated in some depth by Paul Hunter. Essentially, Hunter argues, this dimension was the product of Defoe's Dissenter heritage, which accepted in toto the cosmology of the Middle Ages and the early renaissance. To the Dissenter the Doctrine of Correspondences "seemed not only valid as a general theory but as a detailed description of reality."²³ But in the early years of Defoe's life, this old world was crumbling.

²¹ Donald F. Theall, *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* (Montreal/London: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1971), p. 82.

²² *Message*, p. 114. McLuhan gives an example of "putting on" an environment from the twentieth century: "The Beatles do this. They are a group of people who suddenly were able to put on their audience and the English language with musical effects--putting on a whole vesture, a whole time; a *Zeit*" (*Message*, p. 114).

²³ Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 94.

Slowly the old view, which assumed that the symmetry of relationships seen in the created world extended to the spiritual world as well, was being undercut by the empirical observation of data introduced by the new science. Such a denial of correspondence posed a direct threat to the way of perceiving reality characteristic of the Puritan mind, since that mind was rather desperately committed to pictorialness (Hunter, p. 95).

Puritanism met the crisis by substituting for analogy the less precise but equally pictorial mode of metaphor as the primary epistemological tool. The book of nature, then, became an imperfect emblem of the spiritual world instead of a precise reproduction of it or an index of the attributes of God. This emblem, to be sure, needed careful interpretation; still, it led equally surely, if not equally easily, to truth (Hunter, p. 96). So in place of the splintered vision of object and event offered by the new science, Puritanism put in its place a world of space and time which was internally consistent and where object and event had purpose and, more important, discoverable meanings (Hunter, p. 99), thereby making or remaking myth or "putting on" an environment.

This made myth or environment saw events in a pattern, moving "teleologically towards an end of history beyond the limits of the myth but prophesized within it." "The Puritan Mind," Hunter continues,

was also comprised of meanings, of concepts imagined in events (atonement, for example): if contemporary events (such as 'holy'wars, plagues, and tempests) recalled biblical events, these events could also suggest *concepts* in the myth (the dual nature of man, punishment for sin, or providential intervention for man's salvation). Contemporary events thus became emblems of concepts, and the contemporary world itself became emblematic of the spiritual or conceptual world which was the ultimate referent of all creation, the ultimate reality. Contemporary events and

the contemporary world now operated only suggestively on man's perception, for the old precise system of analogies was gone, but even this small guide toward certitude gladdened the hearts of men bewildered by the rapidity of changes in their world (p. 102).

Robinson Crusoe, then, with its inspiration rooted in contemporary accounts of plagues, shipwrecks, tempests, did invoke the made myth of the Puritans and thus comprised an emblem of the eighteenth-century world.

Likewise, in his accounting of events as a journalist prior to his writing of *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe was also engaged, even if unconsciously (Hunter, p. 113), in the creation of a mosaic image of the contemporary world and thus, in the context of the Puritan world view, of an emblem of the spiritual or conceptual world.

In much the same way, Addison and Steele were engaged in creating such an emblem with their production of the *Spectator*, except that in their case the emblem was not the Puritan one of the spiritual or conceptual world (though their ethos owed much to Puritanism), but of a moral universe precipitated from the myth of the new science which had shattered the old world of the Dissenter. Addison particularly, as a strong Anglican, did not have a Puritan heritage to contend with; he saw himself as standing within an Anglican tradition that offered two separate but contiguous paths to religious truth: the first being revelation, the source of faith, and the second being reason, the source of spiritual knowledge.²⁴ Indeed, Addison was always more comfortable

²⁴Bloom, *Joseph Addison's Social Animal* (Providence, R.I.: Brown Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 175-176.

dealing with matters of reason than revelation, and, although he refrained from admitting the fact directly, his writings imply that he considered faith to occupy a lower plane of reliability than knowledge derived from "rational or empirical demonstration" (Bloom, pp. 176-177).

In reversing the priorities of Puritan theology, Addison was following the lead of Geoffrey Tillotson, and like Tillotson, Addison exercised the right to doubt and to use the methods of scientific inquiry to search for theological answers. He yearned for a perception of divinity that would translate speculation and hope into certainty and fact. Toward this end he became an ardent advocate of natural philosophy, defending vigorously the new science in both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. He considered the mathematical probing of the universe by those such as Newton and Boyle to be valuable spiritual exercises, insisting all of his life that the ultimate function of science was to consider "the several ends of Providence which are served by . . . and the wonders of divine wisdom which appear in" natural phenomena (*S* 393), and scorning individuals of "little genius" who would reduce scientific research to a preoccupation with "insects, reptiles, animalcules, and . . . trifling rarities."²⁵

²⁵Quoted from Addison without citation by Bloom, p. 177. William Powell Jones, *The Rhetoric of Science: A Study of Scientific Ideas and Imagery in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1966), notes that Addison was not the only writer to object to the practice of "observatory" science: "The only real hostility to science in literature appears in the ridicule of the virtuoso by the neo-classical wits. . . . The scientist depicted in literature as a comic type began soon after the founding of the Royal Society in 1662 and persisted well into the nineteenth century. Under the name "virtuoso" he became known chiefly as a collector of curiosities and a searcher for monstrosities in nature, and as such he became the object of literary ridicule in drama, prose, satire, and comic verses" (p. 65).

But while his myth differed in emphasis from that of the Puritan, in looking to the new science for its correspondences rather than to biblical texts, in insisting on the empirically justifiable primacy of sight rather than the Puritan tradition of pictorialness (Bloom, p. 174), in purpose Addison's myth was very much the same as that of the Puritans--to provide a new model for the world to replace the old cosmology of the renaissance (Hunter, p. 121). Thus it is only seemingly ironic that many of the details of the two myths were similar. In both the *Spectator* and *Robinson Crusoe* there is the use of specific documentation characteristic of journalism and a blending of fact and fiction to construct a probability of reality. And while the *Spectator* does not utilize overtly the three fundamental metaphors of the Puritan myth found in *Robinson Crusoe*--the metaphor of spiritual warfare, the metaphor of the journey, and the metaphor of the wilderness (Hunter, p. 103)--there are passages which contain concepts roughly equivalent to them. Alexandre Beljame, for one, believes that "no one else understood as [Addison] did, that it was the long divorce of wit from virtue which had produced in England that profound moral disturbance from which people were now just trying to escape" ²⁶ There is little doubt, in fact, that Addison, in his concern with manners and morals, and in his satirical parables and *exempla* directed toward correcting them, expressed a concept of the world as a spiritual battleground and considered himself engaged in spiritual warfare; moreover, there is in the Mr. Spectator persona a manifestation in one sense of the puritan guide

²⁶ Beljame, *Men of Letters and the English Public in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, trans. E. O. Larimer (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1948), p. 276.

leading the way to salvation.²⁷ And in the mosaic representation of the everyday life of London observed in his random wanderings around the city, Mr. Spectator invokes vividly an image of a spiritual wilderness not unlike that described by the puritan guides.²⁸

In practice, the same dilemma faced the writers of the *Spectator* that faced the Puritan journalist, i.e., how "to touch the lives of men who were less and less impressed by conventional exhortation and recitation of standard examples and who were, at the same time, becoming more

²⁷ Hunter notes that "Puritan guide writers regarded the conflict between good and evil as man's central problem, and in their writings they tried to bolster the defenses of men whose weakened wills made them prey to the powerful forces of Satan, forces which had an ally in the heart of every man because of original sin. Guide writers, spiritual biographers, and pilgrim allegorists regarded the whole world as the battleground on which the conflict was fought, and they sought to describe all of life in terms of this fundamental conflict" (p. 104). The Blooms state that "Addison himself clearly gave preeminence to morality but admitted that it could not be divorced from faith The pilgrim could not travel one road . . . without entering on the other; and both led him finally to eternal judgment" (p. 184). While Addison's version of the metaphor of the spiritual battleground and the journey was not so clearly manifested or so harshly doctrinaire as that of the Dissenter, the same Christian vision prompted both.

²⁸ Hunter observes that "The internal form of the metaphor [of spiritual wilderness] . . . collapsed time and place into a single emblem of creation and emphasized the potential of man for achieving paradisaic contentment *within himself* (that is, without regard to earthly striving)" (p. 111). Addison likewise was not interested particularly in reforming external environments; he consistently emphasized achieving an internal state of paradise over an external one in the apparent belief that such a state was the only contentment man would find in this world. Hunter notes too that "Often the internal and external forms of the metaphor [of spiritual wilderness] merged almost imperceptibly into one: a man's 'wilderness wandering' and the 'wilderness state' of his soul became synonymous, as did man's ultimate arrival in Canaan and the 'garden state' of his soul; for the body's progress, ultimately, was emblematic of the soul's condition" (p. 112). Thus Mr. Spectator's habit of wandering about London observing the depravity of the streets, coffee-houses, drawing rooms, businesses and even churches and drawing morals and parables from them was such an emblematic activity, for as his body progressed through the city he drew the external immorality into his internal soul, and there arrived at "the garden state," i.e., true morality and, ultimately, salvation.

and more sophisticated in their tastes . . ."²⁹--the problem of "putting on" the audience that McLuhan spoke of. And to a large degree, their solutions were amazingly similar: the fictionalized story for the reluctant Puritan, and the only slightly less metaphorical periodic essay for the enlightened Anglican. In each case the solution represented an ontological emblem for the world.

It was only in the matter of a more sophisticated approach to appealing to the more sophisticated tastes of the audience that the *Spectator* might be said to have framed a better ontological representation of the eighteenth century than did Defoe. Yet this difference in approach was important, for in many ways the *Spectator* expressed life for the century in terms that it both required and wished itself to be expressed in. In either case, though, truth is demonstrable in popularity in works written for the "public"; the marked success of both the *Spectator* and *Robinson Crusoe* testifies to the truthfulness of their emblems and the effectiveness of their manner and medium of expression.

But the matter of approach does disclose an important facet of myth, and this facet of myth in the *Spectator* McLuhan has pointed up

²⁹Hunter, p. 115. The Blooms note that part of Addison's purpose in writing "was to pique the curiosity of freethinkers, whom in spectral days he had often wanted to conciliate and attract into the Church of England. *Spectator* 459, for example, so stressed the function of morality in divine worship that no deist could presumably take exception to prescribed forms. Addison even risked near heresy to emphasize that 'no article of faith can be true' if it undermines morality. Appealing to the ethical core of deistic belief, he declared 'that the greatest friend of morality, or natural religion, cannot possibly apprehend any danger from embracing Christianity, as it is preserved pure and uncorrupt in the doctrines of our national church.' With such statements he hoped to reassure the deists that revelation in Anglican belief was compatible with their rational morality" (pp. 184-185).

in his distinctive way. It concerns the ontological impact of the printed word itself and specifically of the environment that it established for the *Spectator*, an impact which he discussed in a work entitled *Counterblast* (Figure 1).

It is the medium of the *Spectator* that will concern us for the bulk of this study. Specifically, we will examine how experience comes to stand in the *Spectator*, what the terms of this experience are, and the effects that the experience causes. By following such a procedure, we hope to disclose the environment of print not only for the experience of the eighteenth century reader, but for our own reading of it in the present as well.

SPEECHASENCODEDVISUALLYINWRITINGISNOTSPEECH ANYLONGER. It is given a visual bias of great intensity by being reduced to writing. Moreover, as written, it's abstracted from all other senses. Speech on radio is similarly reduced to one sense: the auditory-aural. Radio is not speech though it seems, like writing, to "contain" speech. Our illusion of "content" derives from one medium being "within" or simultaneous with another. For this reason instrumental music has no "content" and non-objective art likewise is an abstract manipulation of the modalities of sight.

Multi-screen projection tends to end the story-line, as the symbolist poem ends narrative in verse. That is, multiple screen in creating a simultaneous syntax eliminates the literary medium from film.

WORDS

are

MULTI-SCREENED FACETED

but simultaneous myths.

They are complex processes. "Sea shell ebb music way-river she flows."

The Addison-Steele discovery of **equitone** prose, in addition to creating a fixed point of view, enabled the author to become a "man of letters". He could now approach the large, homogenized public of a market society in a consistent and complacent role.

That is, the maintaining of supercilious equitone and attitude to an audience equals Mandarin or Bloomsbury prose. This is the origin of the "man of letters." Till the discovery of equitone prose, the writer had to wear a corporate, tribal mask of some sort, as did Swift. The medieval clown dominates the role of writer until the Addison-Steele discovery of mass-production flow of equitone.

This all ended with the symbolist recovery of tribal, collective awareness: *Hypocrite lecteur.*

Figure 1. Word myth.[†]

[†]Marshall McLuhan, *Counterblast*, designed by Harley Parker (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), pp. 24-25.

CHAPTER II

SIGHT, NEWTON, AND PRINT

In *Spectator* 411 Addison leaves little doubt as to the position of sight in the hierarchy of senses:

Our Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our Senses. It fills the Mind with the largest Variety of Ideas, converses with its Objects at the greatest Distance, and continues the longest in Action without being tired or satiated with its proper Enjoyments Our Sight . . . may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of Touch, that spreads its self over an infinite Multitude of Bodies, comprehends the largest Figures, and brings into our reach some of the more remote Parts of the Universe.

Addison also makes clear that the pleasures of the imagination, both primary and secondary, proceed from sight: ". . . by the Pleasures of the Imagination or Fancy . . . I here mean such as arise from visible Objects" (III, 536-537). Sight is a key concept in Addisonian aesthetics, then, yet his attitude to it remains a major ambiguity. For one thing, he never devoted an entire essay to the concept; even his few explicit references to it are brief, often coming in sentences or passages which are primarily concerned with explaining something else. Often too, the context in which the word or concept appears is metaphorical or analogical, and though the association is never forced or entirely inaccurate, it is not always precise or particularly helpful to a reader looking for finite limitations to the use of the term. Addison's use of the word is, in short, illusive; it seems, in fact, to constitute the second "most palpable" type of abuse of words which Budgell, in a paraphrase

¹*The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), III, 535-536. All references hereafter are to the Bond edition.

of Locke, warned about in *Spectator* 373: i.e., the abuse which occurs "when we are so inconsistent and unsteady on the Application of [words], that we sometimes use them to signify one Idea, sometimes another" (III, 403).

To understand this apparent ambiguity, we should first examine the context within which Addison--and Steele--knew the term. Wimsatt and Brooks observe of the time in which they were writing: "It would appear that in this age both the feeling and the act of valuing were theoretically detached from a certain something--an Aristotelian structure of ideas, a substantive belief about God, man, and the universe--and were either left floating free of reference or were attached to another area of experience provided or newly emphasized in another vision of reality--the new vision of the empirical and sensational."² Probably no literary figure in the early eighteenth century manifested this "new vision of the empirical and sensational" more than did Addison, and his concept of sight was shaped more by the scientific discoveries and speculations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than by any other single influence. Locke and Newton, in particular, had opened new windows on the world, and the poets, Addison being among the first, were fascinated by the view they provided.³

²William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Vintage, 1957), p. 253.

³Lee Andrew Elioseff notes that "Addison's own debt to English Empiricism cannot be easily summarized. Addison made no contribution to the philosophy of his age, but he was an interested observer of developments in many of the most important philosophical issues of his time, and an intelligent commentator upon them. His limitations are manifest in the very purpose for which his essays were written. The *Spectator* was not meant to be studied, but to be read in a leisurely fashion in the coffee houses. He read Locke and Hobbes carefully, but if the *Spectator* had

Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, thanks largely to the promotion it received in the *Spectator*, was the most influential scientific work in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But as the century wore on, Newton began to supplant Locke in influence as knowledge of his *Opticks*, published in 1704, spread.⁴ The discoveries and speculations put forth in the *Opticks* were, however, already widely known and discussed among the scientific community and well-informed laymen ever since Newton first presented his theory of light and color in a paper sent to the Royal Society on February 6, 1672.⁵ The *Opticks*, in fact, might well have appeared about 1692 were it not for a fire in Newton's room which destroyed many papers, including a major work on optics, that contained the results of twenty-three years of research.⁶ In any case, Addison was certainly familiar with Newton's prismatic discoveries before 1704, at least second-hand, since Locke had used them in his *Essay* (1690);⁷ in his *Oration in Praise of the New Philosophy*, given in 1693, Addison pays his first tribute to Newton in print and defends the "new

been a learned journal Addison would not have written for it." *The Cultural Milieu of Addison's Literary Criticism* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1963), p. 195.

⁴Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's Opticks and the Eighteenth Century Poets* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 11, 16, 137. William Powell Jones in *The Rhetoric of Science: A Study of Scientific Ideas and Imagery in Eighteenth Century Poetry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1966), argues that while the influence of the *Opticks* on poets was great, it still did not have the impact that the *Principia* did (p. 97).

⁵Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 6-7.

⁶Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 7.

⁷Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 4, 7, 116, 163.

philosophy" in general.⁸ Addison also encountered the philosophy in France during his Grand Tour; he wrote Dr. John Hough, Bishop of Lichfield, on November 29, 1700, of his visit with Pierre Malebranche, the French physicist: "His book [Malebranche's] is now Reprinting with Additions, among which he read to me a very pretty Hypothesis of Colours, which is very different from that of Cartesius or Dr. Newton, tho they may all be true."⁹ Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, published in 1705 but written from notes taken in Europe, indicate that the three categories he developed in the *Spectator* essays on the pleasures of the imagination--i.e., the beautiful, the great, and the uncommon--were already at least vaguely in his mind, and there is good reason to believe that he was working on a draft of these essays as early as 1704.¹⁰

Marjorie Nicolson reports that at its initial appearance the *Opticks* did not demonstrate a wide appeal to the lay imagination;¹¹ Addison, however, was one of the first writers to show interest in Newton's ideas, or in the aesthetic implications of his ideas.¹² Nicolson notes that Addison, in being acutely attuned to all of the intellectual currents of the time, was "more responsible than any other popular writer for reading Newton into Locke and Locke into Newton. . . ."¹³

⁸ Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1941), pp. 302-303.

⁹ *Letters of John Addison*, ed. Walter Graham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 25; quoted in Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Nicolson, *Mountain*, pp. 304-305, 307-308.

¹¹ Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 7, 8-9.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 148. Cf. *Mountain*, p. 309. ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

The two great natural philosophers take on a kind of joint identity for him.¹⁴

That such an identity could impress Addison to the point where he would found a system of aesthetics on it in what can only be viewed as a break with classical aesthetics is evidenced by the impact of this scientific icon on other poets and writers of the century.¹⁵ This impact is particularly evident with regard to the concept of sight. M. A. Goldberg, who has traced the development of sight as an important element in eighteenth-century aesthetics by following the various inner and outer visions related in the "hill" poems of the century, finds that "almost coincident with Addison's *The Pleasures of the Imagination* [1712] and with the resurgence of Longinus' *Peri Hupsous* . . . emerges an attempt . . . to examine external nature."¹⁶ In the hill poems of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, John Dyer, and Richard West, especially, he notes that the intellectual abstractions and didacticism apparent in seventeenth-century hill poetry like that of John Denham "are the final consequence of objects before the poet's eye," rather than themselves being the pervasive concern, as is the case with Denham (68). He views Montagu's "Verses Written in the Chiosk of the British-Palace, at Pera"

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 22. Jones notes that Newton became a symbol for science after his death in 1727. But praise of him exists in later *Spectator* numbers (543, 554, 635), where he is described as "the miracle of our present age," "The glory of our own Nation," the genius of such magnitude that he appears "like one of another Species" (p. 97). For other praise of Newton before 1727, see also Allan D. McKillop, ed., *James Thompson: The Castle of Indolence and Other Poems* (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1961), pp. 128ff.

¹⁶Goldberg, "The Language of Art and Reality: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Hill Poems," *Boston University Studies in English*, 3 (Summer, 1957), 66.

(1718) as "almost a visual exercise for Lady Mary, as she strains the eye at seeing . . ." (68). Goldberg also observes that in "Gronger Hill" (1726) by Dyer "the ocular and visual are consistently dominant" (68), and notes that West's "The View from Thatch House" (1738) makes a direct appeal to the ocular:

Let us view the fair Scene round.
See! how wide the prospect lie,
Open all beneath the Eye! (70)

All of these poems contain the results of direct ocular assessment: cataloging, lush description, overt eye movements placed in rapid metrics befitting such motion, reinforcing the concept of "an infinite and varied nature" (69). With this emphasis on the ocular and descriptive, the personal and subjective necessarily intrude with frequency, though with a sentimentalism that borders on the dramatic, "as if," Goldberg says, "the eye were performing for the first time before an audience" (70). There was, in short, a delight in the visual senses that seemed newly discovered by each of these eighteenth-century poets, a delight which Addison seemed also to have discovered when he described sight in *Spectator* 411 as "the most perfect and most delightful of all our Senses" (Goldberg, 70). Later on, the popularity of optics and Newtonianism *per se* approached out-and-out worship with the publication in 1744 of Young's *Night Thoughts*, Thompson's *Seasons*, and Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination*--the last a work which borrowed more than just a title from Addison.¹⁷

But in all of these works Addison's influence, too, is seminal, not just in the interpretation of ideas and concepts, but in tenor

¹⁷ Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 5, 156.

as well. His essays are, in fact, a reflection of his age, and thus his philosophy is eclectic, for it matched the philosophical tenor of his milieu. Addison himself was not a philosopher, however; he and his contemporaries were attempting merely to consolidate intelligently the important achievements which had been made during the age of Hobbes and Newton. At his best his contribution is that of an intelligent layman trying to piece together the foundations of his criticism (Eliosett, pp. 195-196), and it is in this light that we must understand his, and Steele's, context for the notion of sight. The notion came out of his search for roots in the earthly garden of science, and thus we can begin to realize why his concept of it is so illusive, for, at the beginning of the century, the scientific concept of sight was not without illusiveness itself. In one sense Addison simply reflects the confusion and debate over sight going on in scientific circles. Addison's letter to Dr. Hough hints of this debate, and of its scope; and the fact that Newton himself chose not to publish the *Opticks* until after the death in 1703 of Robert Hooke, Newton's severest critic in England, suggests its intensity.¹⁸ It is not surprising, then, to discover how much the terms of this debate and its extent affected the *Spectator*.

In the *Opticks*, Newton speculates that sight was a process in which light, initially from the sun (the sun being the original source of all light), acts upon other bodies, which by absorbing the light are caused to vibrate. This vibration is heat, and all bodies when heated sufficiently emit heat as light by vibration of their parts. Light can thus be transmitted to other bodies, which also, when heated sufficiently,

¹⁸ Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 7.

emit light and affect still other bodies in turn. These light vibrations or "waves," he speculates also "excite" the retina of the eye and are thus conducted along the optic nerve to the brain, thereby resulting in what is called vision.¹⁹

The actual physics of vision had finally been established early in the seventeenth century. In the exhibition of his experiments in Rome in 1625, Christopher Scheiner cut away the coats on the back part of eyes of sheep, oxen, and men and, holding various objects before them, showed the images of the objects clearly and distinctly inverted on the naked retina.²⁰ This same experiment was repeated by Polinière in his classes at the University of Paris in 1700,²¹ the same year that Addison was taking his Grand Tour; and though there is no evidence to support such an event, it is tempting to imagine Addison hearing of or possibly even seeing the experiment during his short stay in Paris. In any case, these experiments merely confirmed speculation as to the function of the eye, for ever since the first observation of and experimentation with the camera obscura phenomenon scientists had theorized at various times that the eye worked like a kind of camera.²²

The camera obscura, first noted by Leonardo da Vinci and brought into prominence again by Scheiner, Polinière, Newton and many others,

¹⁹ Newton, *Opticks: Or, a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*, reprinted from the fourth edition . . . by E. T. Whittaker. New York: Dover, 1931), pp. 340-345.

²⁰ Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 79, 81, 93, 103.

²¹ Blake T. Hanna, "Polinière and the Teaching of Physics at Paris 1700-1738," *Eighteenth Century Studies Presented to Arthur M. Watson*, ed. Peter Gay (Hanover, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England, 1972), pp. 16, 34.

²² Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 78.

provided visible evidence of the process by which the outer world is imprinted on the eye. For the first time the layman could appreciate the miracle of sight. He could comprehend the daily event of seeing, of perceiving the external world internally through eyes which could not pick and choose what they would perceive but which nonetheless must act as the chief intermediary between mind and matter. Sight displayed in this context could not help but appear to be at once the most natural and the most mysterious of all the connections between man and nature, and the thoughtful man, once he began to ponder this phenomenon, found himself involved in metaphysics and epistemology.²³ Addison, always the "thoughtful man," conveys (in *S* 414) something of the wonder of sight in his description of the camera obscura:

The prettiest Landskip I ever saw, was one drawn on the Walls of a dark Room, which stood opposite on one side to a navigable River, and on the other to a Park. The Experiment is very common in Opticks. Here you might discover the Waves and Fluctuations of the Water in strong and proper Colours, with the Picture of a Ship entering at one end, and sailing by degrees through the whole Piece. On another there appeared the green Shadows of Trees, waving to and fro with the Wind, and Herds of Deer among them in Miniature, leaping about upon the Wall. I must confess, the Novelty of such a Sight may be one occasion of its Pleasantness to the Imagination, but certainly its chief Reason is its near Resemblance to Nature, as it does not only, like other Pictures, give the Colour and Figure, but the Motion of the Things it represents. (III, 550-551)

Addison also indicates elsewhere in the *Spectator* that he was familiar with contemporary scientific descriptions of the workings of the eye.²⁴ Disagreement centered not so much around the eye, or the

²³Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 81.

²⁴Cf. *Spectator* 275, II, 572-573; Bond suggests as Addison's source for the description of the Beau's eye Thomas Gibson, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies Epitomized*, book V, chpt. iv, 'Of the Muscles of the Eyes' (sixth edition, 1703, pp. 403-404), in II, 6fn., 572-573;

function of the eye, however, but rather on what came into the eye-- i.e., light--and how it was perceived. Scientists were not the only ones interested in these matters; one epistemological problem which occupied the interest of both scientist and layman was the problem of three-dimensional perception: i.e., why was it that we "see" only two-dimensional pictures with our eyes but "perceive" more than two-dimensional qualities in them?²⁵ As Mr. Spectator observed in number 250: "Now as to the peculiar Qualities of the Eye, that fine Park of our Constitution seems as much the Receptacle and Seat of our Passions, Appetites, and Inclinations, as the Mind itself; at least 'tis the outward Portal to introduce them to the House within, or rather the common Thorough-fare to let our Affections pass in and out; Love, Anger, Pride, and Avarice all visibly move in those little Orbs" (II, 471). Theories were devised to divide the powers of perception between the brain and the eye, or to locate "sight" in one or the other organ, but none were entirely satisfactory or generally agreed upon. The poet Blackmore summed up the situation nicely in a couplet:

All Perception in the Brain is made,
Tho' where and how was never yet Display'd.²⁶

Newton hazarded the notion in Query 23 that images impressed upon the retina, "propagated by Motion along the Fibres of the Optick Nerves into the Brain . . .," are the cause of vision.²⁷ But while

Nicolson notes of the passage: "Stripped of its satire, we have here the outline of a report to the Royal Society," *Science and Imagination* (Chicago: Great Seal Books, 1956), p. 181.

²⁵ Nicolson, *Newton*, pp. 103-104.

²⁶ Quoted without citation in Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 104.

²⁷ Newton, p. 345; quoted in Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 94.

physiologically accurate, his description only shifted the image reception from one organ to another, and Newton himself realized that he still had not solved the problem of three-dimensional perception.²⁸ He never did solve it, in fact, but he did speculate on a solution that Addison apparently found plausible and utilized to an extent. Instead of trying to define the relationship between the brain and the eye, Newton simply labeled it the "Sensory" and rather cautiously explained what he meant by that in Query 28 of the *Opticks*: "It not the Sensory of Animals that place to which the sensitive Substance is present, and into which the sensible Species of Things are carried through the Nerves and Brain, that there they may be perceived by their immediate presence to that Substance?"²⁹ From the "Sensory" of animals he went on to discuss the "Sensorium" of God,³⁰ and Addison was particularly impressed with this latter speculation of Newton's, referring to it directly in *Spectator* 565 on the "Omniscience and Omnipresence of God."³¹

But he seems to have been impressed with the idea of the sensory or sensorium on a less exalted level as well, especially in his concept of sight. Like Newton, he never attempts to define the connection between brain and eye but instead implies a vague sensory partnership of the two organs. In *Spectator* 411, for instance, he declares that "delightful Scenes," which of course make their entrance through

²⁸ Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 104.

²⁹ Newton, p. 370; quoted in Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 105. Cf. *Spectator* 411, III, 538, where Addison speaks of the immediacy of sight to the imagination.

³⁰ Newton, p. 370; quoted in Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 105.

³¹ *Spectator* 565, IV, 532; Cf. Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 105.

the eye, "have a kindly Influence on the Body, as well as the Mind . . ." (III, 539).

Addison also implies a division between things that come into the eye: i.e., between things that delight the Mind and things that do not. This division is not based simply on aesthetic grounds: Addison goes to some lengths to point out that a delightful sense has a healthy physical as well as aesthetic effect on the brain and eye, and a less than delightful one just the opposite effect. He cites here Bacon's essay *On Health*, noting in particular that Bacon "has not thought it improper to prescribe to his Reader a Poem or a Prospect . . ." to clear and brighten the imagination, disperse grief and melancholy, and set the "Animal Spirits in pleasing and agreeable Motions" (III, 539). Obviously, a poem and a prospect are different things, as Addison himself will point out later in *Spectator* 416 (III, 559); at this point, however, he offers no distinction between them but instead goes on to explain further his idea of a delightful prospect, almost as if he saw no difference and was, in fact, by talking about the one, talking about the other. Addison was in this passage thinking of a poem and a prospect simply as images that meet the eye and not as distinct objects in themselves, an impression enhanced by the knowledge that the eighteenth century tended to evaluate poetic imagery in terms of a poetry-painting parallel.³²

A delightful prospect, he says in *Spectator* 412, is one "where the Eye has Room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on the Immensity of its Views, and to lose itself amidst the Variety of Objects, that

³²Chester E. Chapin, *Personification in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1955), p. 32.

offer themselves to its Observation"; he specifically suggests that "the Prospects of an open Champaign Country, a vast uncultivated Desart, of huge Heaps of a Mountains, high Rocks and Precipices, or a wide expanse of Waters" would afford such delight (III, 540). Further on in his discussion of "Greatness," Addison notes that the mind of man hates restraints of any kind and "is apt to fancy it self under a sort of Confinement, when the Sight is pent up in a narrow Compass, and shortened on every side by the Neighbourhood of Walls or Mountains" (540-541). And, remembering the terms of his praise of the camera obscura "Landskip," Addison also asserts that sight tires with looking at prospects "where every thing continues fixt and settled in the same Place and Posture . . ."; we are "relieved at the Sight of such Objects as are ever in Motion, and sliding away from beneath the Eye of the Beholder" (542).

That Addison felt the image of a poem could provide delightful, healthy sight equal to that of a landscape is demonstrated in his description of the delight "which proceeds from Ideas raised by *Words*":

Words, when well chosen, have so great a Force in them, that a Description often gives us more lively Ideas than the Sight of Things themselves. The Reader finds a Scene drawn in stronger colours, and painted more to the Life in his Imagination, by the help of Words, than by an actual Survey of the Scene which they describe. In this Case the Poet seems to get the better of Nature; he takes, indeed, the Landskip after her, but gives it more vigorous Touches, heightens its Beauty, and so enlivens the whole Piece, that the Images which flow from the Objects themselves appear weak and faint, in Comparison to those that come from the Expressions. (S 416, III, 560-561)

A prospect composed of words could produce better sight than could a prospect composed of land or water because it could sharpen and complete the image of the object whereas a land-water prospect could not; and as

Newton has said, "Accordingly as . . . Pictures are perfect or imperfect, the Object is seen perfectly or imperfectly" (p. 14).

The reason why a word prospect could sharpen and complete an image is that

in the Survey of any Object, we have only so much of it painted on the Imagination, as comes in at the Eye; but in its Description, the Poet gives us as free a View of it as he pleases, and discovers to us several Parts, that either we did not attend to, or that lay out of our Sight when we first beheld it. As we look on any Object, our Idea of it is, perhaps, made up of two or three simple Ideas; but when the Poet represents it, he may either give us a more complex Idea of it, or only raise in such such Ideas as are most apt to affect the Imagination. (*S* 416, III, 561)

Thus a poet can improve upon nature by putting a landscape or other object into "well-chosen" words. Still, a word is two-dimensional, as is the image of a directly perceived prospect. Addison was therefore faced with the same problem on a metaphysical level that scientists like Newton were faced with on a physical level, that is, how does a two-dimensional image impressed on the retina impart more than two-dimensional data? Addison's answer was that words yield such data because words, besides containing the ideas of the object they represent, also contain and suggest ideas in and of themselves and thus can compose a more complex idea.

But while his concept of idea comes directly from Locke, Addison also states that it is the sense of sight that furnishes the imagination with its ideas. Therefore, an idea is also a function of sight and as such can be associated with Newtonian optics. Sight, Newton had shown, is caused by light "exciting" the retina of the eye. Thus, as light is the medium by which images are carried to the eye, so thought is the medium by which images are carried to the sensory or sensorium, or, as Addison termed it, the fancy or imagination: "We cannot indeed

have a single Image in the Fancy that did not make its first Entrance through the Sight . . ." (S 411, III, 537). Since sight and thought are so closely associated, it was to him no great extension of that association to conceive of thought as "mentalized" light: light transformed into whatever it was that was conveyed through the optic nerve and brain to the sensory, or imagination.

The basic unit of light is a ray, which Newton defined thus: "By rays of light I understand its least Parts, and those as well Successive in the same Lines, as Contemporary in several Lines," and he queries of them, ". . . do not the Rays of Light in falling upon the Bottom of the Eye excite Vibrations in the *Tronica Retina*? Which Vibrations, being propagated along the solid fibres of the optick Nerves into the Brain, cause the sense of seeing" (pp. 1, 345). Addison was probably familiar with the terms of this passage: in *Spectator* 415, speaking of concave and convex figures, he refers to sight as being "the Center that collects and gathers into it the Lines of the whole Circumference . . .," and habitually he describes sight as a process by which an image "comes into the Eye" or "falls into the Eye."³³

Addison thought of an idea as being somewhat analogous to a ray of light. In *Spectator* 387, in a discussion of the comforting effect of the color green on the eye, he makes his most explicit statement on the relation of rays of light to ideas of thought: ". . . the Rays that produce in us the Idea of Green fall upon the Eye in such due Proportion, that they give the Animal Spirits their proper Play"³⁴

³³*Spectator* 415, III, 557; Cf. Nicolson, *Newton*, p. 9.

³⁴*Spectator* 387, III, 452. Henry Guerlac notes that David Hartley, in his *Observation on Man* (1749), in which he draws considerably upon the

Rays of light, then, enter the eye, hit the retina, and convert into ideas which are conveyed along the optic nerve to the imagination, or fancy.³⁵ Addison says of the fancy in *Spectator* 416 that it "must be warm, to retain the Print of those Images it hath received from outward Objects . . ." (III, 561). The idea that the fancy must be "warm" to function suggests a metaphysical chemistry at work that parallels closely the physical chemistry Newton suggests in his description of sight; that is, since light is produced from heat, an object which is to give light must first be heated, must first retain the light from other objects; heat composes light, and light is the stuff of sight. So as to leave no doubt as to the association he was making in this passage, Addison ends it with a specific analogy between the function of the fancy and the function of sight: "A Man who is deficient [of fancy], tho' he may receive the general Notion of a Description, can never see distinctly all its particular Beauties: As a Person with weak Sight may have a confused Prospect of a Place that lyes before him, without entering into its several Parts, or discerning the variety of its Colours in their full Glory and Perfection" (III, 561).

"Wit" is the term Addison uses to describe the functional process of the imagination. True wit, he says, "consists in [the] Resemblance

Opticks, also considered the color green "the most agreeable to the eye." "An Augustan Moment: The Optics of Isaac Newton," *The Varied Pattern: Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Peter Hughes and David Williams (Toronto: A. M. Hakkart, 1971), pp. 145-146. In so doing, Hartley might well have been picking up on the *Spectator* speculation of Steele's, or following the same trail of inferences that lead Steele to his point.

³⁵Nicolson, *Mountain*, p. 309; Nicolson, *Mountain*, p. 314, also notes that "Imagination" and "Fancy" are interchangeable terms with Addison.

and Congruity of Ideas . . ."; false wit "chiefly consists in the Resemblance and Congruity sometimes of single letters" and words (*S*, 62, I, 263-264); mixed wit is a mixture of true wit and false wit. But Wimsatt and Brooks note: "The contrast, though it is not overtly developed, between the two kinds of resemblance, the metaphoric, intellectual, difficult metaphysical, and the literal, pictorial, easy imaginative, invites us to look on the latter as the wit of the new epistemology--nature's wit in shaping a cloud like a camel, the artist's wit in making a portrait remind us of a lovely girl" (pp. 256-257)--and we might add, the scientist's wit in constructing a camera obscura landscape to retain the motion and dimensions of nature. Elioseff notes that in Addison's conception of it, "Wit may go astray when it becomes the instrument for punning or other forms of the false wit of words, but true wit, which is always tempered by judgment, discovers real connections between ideas of sense and ideas of reflection" (p. 198). And regardless of whether it was true, false, or mixed, wit to Addison involved visual perception, or more accurately, the perception of mentalized sight, i.e., ideas.

Just as Addison depended on Newton for his concept of the imagination, so he utilized Locke's concept of wit, which he quotes in *Spectator* 62: "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" (I, 263-264). Delight was the property of sight; thus the essence of wit, physically and mentally, was light. The various gradations of wit corresponded to the totality of

the perception of light. Steele gives us the most concrete illustration of the spectrum of wit and its roots in sight:

Just so it is a Picture that is smartly touch'd but not well stud'd, one may call it a witty Picture, tho' the Painter in the mean time be in Danger of being called a Fool. On the other Hand a Picture that is thoroughly understood on the Whole, and well performed in the Particulars, that is begun on a Foundation of Geometry, carr'd on by the Rules of Perspective, Architecture, and Anatomy, and perfected by good Harmony, a just and natural Colouring, and such Passions and Expressions of the Mind as are almost peculiar to *Raphael*, this is what you may justly stile a wise Picture, and which seldom fails to strike us dumb, till we can assemble all our Faculties to make but a tolerable Judgement upon it. Other Pictures are made for the Eyes only, as Rattles are made for the Children's Ears; and certainly that Picture that only pleases the Eye, without representing what fine Colours are to be sold at some well-chosen Part of Nature or other, does but shew what fine Colours are to be sold at the Colour-Shop, and mocks the Work of the Creator. (*S* 244, II, 447)

This passage also demonstrates the inherent visual nature of wit and thus imagination: the imagination might enlarge, compound or vary in some other way an idea at its pleasure (*S* 416, III, 561), but as its primary function is the perception of ideas it is fundamentally a function of sight.

But as Addison noted in *Spectator* 413, "Light and Colours, as apprehended by the Imagination, are only Ideas in the Mind, and not Qualities that have any Existence in Matter" (III, 548). Light, therefore, in itself could not convey the physical and mental effect of a prospect to the eye and brain which Addison described in *Spectator* 411, for in order to do so light had to have an "Existence in Matter."³⁶

³⁶ While Addison might have been certain that rays of light had no existence in matter, Newton was not. In Query 21 of the 1706 edition of the *Opticks* (not one of the original sixteen queries in the first edition; renumbered Query 29 in the 1717-1718 edition) he asks: "Are not the Rays of Light very small Bodies emitted from shining Substances?" (p. 370) and goes on to give his reasons for believing it was so. Guerlac states that this Query and the one that follows are "the nearest

Light to Addison did not exist in matter; yet since it undoubtedly did affect the eye and brain, obviously something else existed in matter to affect them. For Addison, that something else was writing, or printing: "Aristotle tells us, that the World is a copy or Transcript of these Ideas which are in the Mind of the first Being; and that those Ideas which are in the Mind of Man, are a Transcript of the World: To this we may add, that Words are the Transcript of these Ideas which are in the Mind of Man, and that Writing or Printing are the Transcript of Words."³⁷

Note in this passage that Addison distinguishes writing and printing from words: just as to him and to Newton a ray was a particle of light, and an idea was a particle of thought, so a word was a particle of writing or printing.³⁸ Light, thought, writing and printing were

thing to an advocacy of a corpuscular theory of light" (154). It seems that Addison's aesthetic rationale might have been greatly simplified if he had chosen to go along with Newton's speculation, and indeed, one wonders why he did not; perhaps here is a point where we see Addison overriding his Newtonianism with his more fundamental allegiance to Lockean psychology, or perhaps a point where Addison genuinely disagreed with Newton who, after all, made it quite clear that he was only guessing at the answer--or perhaps still, and which is most likely the case, Addison simply had not read the new 1706 Latin edition where the Query first appeared, and thus was unaware of this possibly useful argument.

³⁷ S 166, II, . Here again the speculation provided by Newton in Query 21(29) proves helpful to understanding Addison's point, whether or not he availed himself of it: "For such Bodies [rays of light] will pass through uniform Mediums in right Lines without bending into the Shadow, which is the Nature of the Rays of Light" (p. 370). If we read "ideas" for "Bodies" or "Rays of Light" and "print" for "Mediums," we will get the same association of light to ideas and idea to print that Addison made; moreover, we then also get an assertion that Addison would have had little trouble in agreeing with, i.e., ideas rendered into print pass through the medium "without bending into the Shadow."

³⁸ Herbert M. Schueller, "Correspondences Between Music and the Sister Arts, According to 18th Century Aesthetic Theory," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 (June, 1953), 355-356.

all media of communication, or rather, various facets of the same medium of communication and as such shared certain characteristics inherent in light and its physical representation, script or print. When the eye moved to the center of the sensorium, the qualities of sight came to dominate the sensory. Hence the "sensible Species of Things" Newton speaks of were, to Addison, ideas, functions of light manifested in print.

Because of the importance he attached to sight, Addison stated that "we must enquire after a new Principle of Pleasure, which is nothing else but the Action of the Mind, which *compares* the Ideas that arise from Words, with the Ideas that arise from the Objects themselves" (*S* 418, III, 566-567). Wit, existing, according to Addison, to effect just such comparisons, employed the aesthetics of sight manifested in writing and printing as the arbiter of pleasure, or rather, of the Great, the Uncommon, and the Beautiful which produced it. He gives an example in *Spectator* 421 of how the aesthetics of sight is manifested in writing to derive this pleasure:

Allegories, when well chosen, are like so many Tracks of Light in a Discourse, that make everything about them clear and beautiful. A noble Metaphor, when it is placed to an Advantage, casts a kind of Glory round it, and darts a Lustre through a whole Sentence; These different kinds of Allusion are but so many different Manners of Similitude, and, that they may please the Imagination, the Likeness ought to be very exact, or very agreeable, as we love to see a Picture where the Resemblance is just, or the Posture and Air graceful. (III, 578)

Printed allegories, then, are the physical tracks of light carrying the thought of the author. A sentence, which is a manifestation of light, can glow, have "Lustre," and illuminate, making everything about it "clear and beautiful," producing a "just" picture of things (the most just picture of things, the camera obscura landscape, was entirely composed of light) or, as Steele termed it, a "wise" picture.

"It is extremely natural," says Budgell in *Spectator* 379, "for us to desire to see . . . our Thoughts put into the Dress or Words, without which indeed we can scarce have a clear and distinct Idea of them ourselves . . ." (III, 423). But for Addison, even clothing thought in words was not enough; in *Spectator* 46 he says of his notes on overhead coffeehouse conversations that they "look a Rhapsody of Nonsense to any Body but my self: There is nothing in them but Obscurity and Confusion, Roving and Inconsistency. In short, they are my Speculations in first Principles, that (like the World in Chaos) are void of all Light, Distinction and Order" (I, 196). To produce a wise picture, Addison believes one must attend to its foundations in geometry and to the "Rules of Perspective, Architecture and Anatomy." In short, one must arrange his words into a methodical discourse:

When I read a methodical discourse, I am in a regular Plantation, and can place myself in its several Centers, so as to have a View of all the Lines and walks that are struck from them. . . . your Eye commands the whole Prospect, and gives you such an Idea of it as is not easily worn out of Memory 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 a Picture. The Advantages of a Reader from a methodical Discourse, are correspondent with those of a Writer. He comprehends every Thing easily, takes it with Pleasure, and retains it long. (§ 476, IV, 186)

Thus a prospect and a picture to him became one in a methodical discourse because each contains the properties of the medium of sight.

Pleasure, Addison notes, came not simply from the similarity of the ideas of words with the ideas of objects but also "from the Agreeableness of the objects to the Eye . . ." (§ 414, III, 549-550).

C. DeWitt Thorpe has observed that "Addison felt that God had so made man's mind that it would act so and so in response to such and such

physical stimuli."³⁹ Certain characteristics of an object, then, would have a healthy effect on the eye and some would not, and the pleasure that a given object would afford a viewer would be commensurate with the proportion of its characteristics in agreement with the eye.

The characteristic or quality most in agreement with the eye was uniformity. "The occasion of pleasure," Walter Jackson states, speaking of Addison, "rests upon an empirically derived principle: namely, that the mind of man is inherently disposed to respond uniquely to uniformity. . . ."⁴⁰ In fact, in Addisonian aesthetics pleasure and uniformity are almost synonymous terms. The first cause of uniformity was God;⁴¹ but as Addison notes in *Spectator* 166, even God was ontologically grounded in handwriting and printing. Print even more than handwriting was a manifestation of uniformity, since while handwriting varied with the writer, print did not and could provide uniform words and thus uniform thoughts and ideas time after time, *ad infinitum*. Indeed, the quality of infinity itself inherent in print ontologically disclosed the Infinite God.⁴² Addison suggests that certain formal values immediately awaken the mind to macrocosmic order (Jackson, "Values," 91). Print and its formal values of linearity, uniformity, and infinite

³⁹C. DeWitt Thorpe, "Addison and Hutchinson on the Imagination," *English Literary History*, 2 (1935), 224, quoted in Walter Jackson, "Affective Values in Early Eighteenth Century Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 27 (Fall, 1968), 92.

⁴⁰Walter Jackson, "Addison: Empiricist of Moral Consciousness," *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (April, 1966), 457.

⁴¹Jackson, "Empiricist," 455; Cf. Jackson, "Values," 91.

⁴²Nicolson, *Mountain*, p. 321.

repeatability suggests the Newtonian or new philosophical universal ordering, and the *Spectator*, which was prescribed from these values, composed an emblem of this order. Thus it is not accidental that the qualities that characterize print should also characterize the *Spectator*.

CHAPTER III

PRINT AND TASTE

Although printing presses had been operating in England for over two centuries by 1700, their impact on literature had not been immediately recognized. To the contrary, there was a tradition of sorts among writers to disdain their sister craft, to regard it as merely a convenient extension of handwriting and the manuscript. This viewpoint was long shared by members of the printing trade itself, who were in the main intent only upon reproducing quickly and inexpensively a printed book which resembled a manuscript as closely as possible; indeed, many printed works, up until 1475 especially, cannot be distinguished from manuscript at first sight, and D. B. Updike notes: "We can understand little about the design of our present printing types, if we are not familiar with the characters in the black-letter and Humanistic manuscripts which just preceded, or were contemporary with, the invention of printing."¹

In addition to its step-child image, printing for a while suffered a somewhat clandestine reputation. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and even on into the early seventeenth century, an author's appearance in print often had an air of desperation about it, as being, as it were, a regrettable but necessary measure resorted to only because of the unscrupulous publication of pirated and, what was worse, "incorrect" editions of his work. Initially, of course,

¹Updike, *Printing Types: Their History, Forms and Uses*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1937), I, 5-6.

there was some truth to such claims, as in the case of Sidney; but by the time of the First Folio, certainly, authorian claims of righteous indignation had degenerated into a device whereby an author could reap the pecuniary rewards of a mass audience circulation while maintaining a public image of being purely and singularly devoted to art and truth and entirely disassociated from the lowly and disreputable trade of the printer.

Vestiges of this device could still be found in the eighteenth century. Phillip Luckombe, when speaking of the relationship between author and printer, discloses an attitude which implied that, in Bertrand Bronson's words, "Gentlemen being gentlemen, he thinks it better if they keep their fingers out of the printer's pie. . . ." And though an author might wish to involve himself with printing details, he need not have regarded it as his duty.²

Yet there was in the more astute literary minds of the century a growing awareness of the importance of printing. In 1712 Addison could report in *Spectator* 367³ that "the politest Nations of *Europe* have endeavored to vie with one another for the Reputation of the finest Printing: Absolute Governments, as well as Republicks, have encouraged an Art which seems to be the noblest and most beneficial that was ever invested among the Sons of Men The several Presses which have now in *England*, and the great Encouragement which has been given to learning for some Years last past, has made our own Nation as glorious

²Bronson, "Printing as an Index of Taste in Eighteenth Century England: Part I," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 62 (August, 1958), 383.

³All *Spectator* references are to the Bond edition.

upon this Account, as for its late Triumphs and Conquests" (III, 381). He then falls into chauvinistic raptures over a recent edition of Caesar's *Commentaries*; after praising the scholarship, the paper, the type, the illustrations, he concludes that the book "is a true Instance of the *English* Genius, which, though it does not come the first into any Art, generally carries it to greater Heights than any other Country in the World" (III, 382).

Indeed, England was not the first to come into the art of printing: as Updike observes, "Type-cutting and type-designing did not, apparently, at first come easily or instinctively to the English."⁴ For all of Addison's claims for English superiority in the field, England in 1712 was just then on the verge of entering her first great period of printing. This era would be announced by the publication of William Caslon's first Broadside Specimen, issued in 1734, and continued later in the century and beyond by Baskerville and others. But prior to 1734 there had been few high points in English printing. Caxton's types were poor in design and his volumes primitive and rough in comparison with those being printed on the continent. By the sixteenth century the Roman types made in England were respectable, and the London printer John Day's edition of Parker's *Aefredi Regis Res Geste* in 1574 had established that the English press could produce printing on a par with the best of Europe, but these achievements were high water marks, not indications of the general swell (Updike, II, 88, 91-92).

English typography and printing, in fact, suffered a decline in the middle of the sixteenth century. Part of the decline was the result

⁴Updike, *Printing Types*, II, 88.

of the passing of the manuscript tradition of printed volumes, which caused a general falling off in printing standards everywhere. In England the passing of this tradition was perhaps more detrimental than in other countries, for English printers had never been very skillful or tasteful, and consequently English books on a whole had never equalled those published by the good presses on the continent, either in workmanship, beauty or correctness; thus with the general slack in quality, the quality of English books, never very high, fell ever lower (Updike, II, 92-93).

R. B. McKerow has noted that the decline in typography from 1550 to 1650 was also due to the fact that printing fell into the hands of a particularly crass commercial class of printers. This factor, coupled with the fact that most of the books published in England were printed in the vernacular and therefore did not have to compete directly with the better printed scholarly books brought in from abroad, gave the English press little impetus to excel. But the major reason for the decline, McKerow believes, was the burdensome censorship which plagued the era.⁵ So, far from "encouraging" printing, as Addison insists, the English government had an express policy to harrass printers and generally impede the progress of the art.

And though the quality of English printing began to improve in the later half of the seventeenth century, London at the turn of the century still had only three type foundaries--and none of them very

⁵ McKerow, "Booksellers', Printers', and Stationers' Trade," *Shakespeare's England*, ed. Charles Talbut Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), II, chapter iii; cited in Updike, II, 93.

good. As a further indication of the state of the English printing trade, the great James foundry, perhaps the most outstanding in England at the time, was procuring its type from Holland; Rowe Mores, a business associate of James, notes in his letters that "there was probably more Dutch Type in England between 1700 and 1720 than there was English" (Updike, II, 99-100). None of these circumstances are indicative of a full-blown, indigenous printing art, which Addison implies was in existence in England in the early 1800's.

Addison's claims for English printing might have been a bit exaggerated or uninformed, but they do indicate nonetheless that the long twilight of print was beginning to end and that printing, at the turn of the eighteenth century was, beginning to dawn on the consciousness of Englishmen as an art form in its own right. Perhaps the first streaks of light began to appear in 1683-1684, when Joseph Moxon published in London his *Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing*; Moxon's *Exercises* appeared some forty years before any other manual of printing in any language. At the same time, Swift's *A Tale of A Tub* and *The Battle of the Books* initiated, howbeit satirically, the public discussion of the aesthetics of print.⁶

The discussion culminated in 1728 with the publication of *The Dunciad* by Pope, which McLuhan has termed "the epic of the printed word and its benefits to mankind" (p. 169). McLuhan has paid considerable

⁶McLuhan, "On Pope's *Dunciad*," in *The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962*, ed. Eugene McNamara (New York/Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 169; reprinted from McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962).

attention to *The Dunciad*, and his conclusions, though controversial,⁷ shed some light perhaps on the way in which the medium of print was regarded by one of the major literary technicians of the language.

McLuhan bases his analysis on the premise that the book and the newspaper, while seeming similar in character, are actually quite dissimilar in that the book retains something of the private and conversational character of the earlier manuscript whereas the newspaper is communal in nature and more explicitly informational in manner. But though different, the two had begun to merge in the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the appearance of such hybrid publications as *The Review*, *The Tatler*, and *The Spectator*.⁸

As the two forms merged, their characters merged also, creating a new kind of verbal eloquence and substituting this new eloquence and its resulting world-view for the older "Ciceronian" eloquence, with its stress on harmonizing our faculties and unifying all knowledge. The new eloquence was grounded in print, as the old eloquence was grounded in classical rhetoric or oral speech, and now that print had come to replace speech, the old harmony and unity were destroyed. Word specialism and "denudation" introduced by printing brought about a division of sense and a separation of words from their functions (McLuhan, "*Dunciad*," pp. 172-173).

Print came more and more to dominate aesthetic sensibilities,

⁷For an example see Donald F. Theall's answer to McLuhan's analysis of the *Dunciad* in *The Media is the Rearview Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* (Montreal/London: McGill-Queens Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 70-76.

⁸McLuhan, "*Dunciad*," pp. 170-171. This premise is common to most of McLuhan's criticism.

and it is this growing domination that Pope considers in *The Dunciad*. In Books I, II, and III, he examines the authors, booksellers and audience, or "collective unconscious," as McLuhan calls it, of the century, respectively. In each case Pope posits the thesis that the "fogs of Dulness" and the homogenization of the audience are direct results of the printing press. The uniformity and infinite repeatability of print gave reincarnate life and fame to anything and everything. This pseudo-life conferred on dull themes by dull heads penetrated formalistically every part of existence. The very dullness of such writings was, in fact, their attraction, for they represented the conglomerate image of the public; and rather than being bored by what it read, the public was thrilled to see its own visage reflected in the press (McLuhan, "*Dunciad*," p. 174).

The homogenization brought about by print, which Pope examines in Book IV of *The Dunciad*, was, if anything, more pervasive than the old harmony, being a leveling or "reduction of diverse modes into a single mode of homogenized things" (p. 176), rather than a balancing of such modes. Pope asserts that, far from simply transmitting studies and disciplines, print actually transforms them completely, homogenizing them and, along with them, the human mind as well. Armed with the Gutenberg technology, the dunces now have been invested with the powers necessary to "uncivilize" the world (pp. 177-178).

Though not in these terms, Addison, too, was aware of Pope's theme of the all-pervasive leveling of learning and society as a result of print, and in his gentle way vents his awareness satirically in a lengthy passage in *Spectator* 85:

It is the custom of the *Mahometans*, if they see any printed or written Paper upon the Ground, to take it up and lay it aside

carefully, as not knowing but it may contain some piece of their *Alcoran*. I must confess I have so much of the *Mussulman* in me, that I cannot forbear looking into every Printed Paper which comes in my way, under whatsoever despicable Circumstances it may appear: For as no Mortal Author, in the ordinary Fate and Vicissitudes of Things, knows to what use his Works may, some time or other, be applied, a Man may often meet with very celebrated Names in a Paper of Tobacco. I have lighted my Pipe more than once with the Writings of a Prelate; and a Friend of mine who, for these several Years, has converted the Essays of a Man of Quality into a Kind of Fringe for his Candlesticks. I remember, in particular, after having read over a Poem of an eminent Author on a Victory, I met with several Fragments of it upon the next Rejoycing-day, which had been employed in Squibs and Crackers, and by that means celebrated its Subject in a double Capacity. I once met with a Page of Mr. *Baxter* under a *Christmas* Pie. Whether or no the Pastry-Cook had made use of it through Chance, or Waggery, for the defence of that superstitious *Viande*, I know not; but, upon the Perusal of it, I conceived so good an Idea of the Author's Piety, that I bought the whole Book. . . . Thus is my inquisitive Temper, or rather impertinent Humour of prying into all sorts of Writing, with my natural Aversion to Loquacity, give me a good deal of Employment when I enter any House in the Country; for I can't, for my Heart, leave a Room before I have thoroughly studied the Walls of it, and examined the several Printed Papers which are usually pasted upon them. (I, 361)

In *Spectator* 367, Mr. Spectator speaks in the same vein about his own works:

If I do not take care to obviate some of my witty Readers, they will be apt to tell me, that my Paper, after it is . . . printed and published, is still beneficial to the Publick on several Occasions. I must confess I have lighted my Pipe with my own Works for this Twelve-month past: My Landlady often sends up her little Daughter to desire some of my old *Spectators*, and has frequently told me, that the Paper they are printed on is the best in the World to wrap Spice in. They likewise make a good Foundation for Mutton-pye, as I have more than once experienced, and were very much sought for last *Christmas* by the whole neighborhood. (III, 380)

Addison's gentle satire reveals a sympathetic identification on his part with his readers and a recognition of the identity they shared in print. Like Pope, Addison was concerned about the quality of the material placed in print and of the immortalizing capacity of print itself; he writes in *Spectator* 166: "If writings are . . .

durable, and may pass from Age to Age throughout the whole Course of Time, how careful should an Author be of committing anything to Print that may corrupt Posterity, and poyson the Minds of Men with Vice and Errour?" (II, 155). But unlike Pope, he was not willing to concede that the transmission of works via the Gutenberg technology to all levels of society was a process of un-civilization:

The Circumstance which gives Authors an Advantage above all [other] Masters, is this, that they can multiply their Originals; or rather, can make Copies of their Works, to what Number they please, which shall be as valuable as the Originals themselves. This gives a great Author something like a Prospect of Eternity, but at some Time deprives him of these other Advantages which Artists meet with. . . . What an inestimable Price would a *Virgil* or a *Homer*, a *Cicero* or an *Aristotle*, bear, were their Works, like a Statue, Building, or a Picture, to be confined only in one Place, and made the property of a single Person? (II, 154)

Instead of "homogenizing" men, Addison would prefer to say that print "democratized" them; but in either case, the leveling effect of print was recognized by both and considered significant.

In expressing himself on this matter, Addison again displays his ability to conceptualize the unarticulated and possibly unconscious tastes of his readers, demonstrating in this ability the brand of aesthetic populism he set forth in *Spectator* 29: "Music, Architecture, and Painting, as well as Poetry and Oratory, are to deduce their Laws and Rules from the general Sense and Taste of Mankind and not from the Principles of those Arts themselves, or in other Words, the Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste" (I, 123). It could be said that this is a chicken-or-egg argument, but in either case, certainly, there was no better aesthetic for deducing the "Laws and Rules" of such an utilitarian art as printing. *The Spectator*, as an expression of printing art, was, therefore, also an expression of

this popular aesthetic, and the terms of Addison's concern for the effects of print on men, which we quoted from *Spectator* 166, with its comparisons of printing with sculpture, architecture and painting, reveal some of the ways in which Addison and hence his audience conceived, howbeit unconsciously, of print.

The public taste in printing, conscious or unconscious, was not, as we have seen, highly defined in eighteenth-century England; nonetheless, it did exist. This taste in printing is perhaps most evident in the art of bookmaking. The eighteenth-century reader took care that book bindings should be long lasting and beautiful. Books were regularly bought unbound so that the bindings which the owner finally obtained could be fully expressive of his personal tastes. And because the bindings were durable, the books which they bound constituted a kind of slowly evolving sculpture, in which generations of owners could collaborate. Thus the library in an ancestral house composed an important and rather permanent architectural feature. It made a sort of three-dimensional sculpture, giving the walls of the house some of the values of high relief, and other architectural features of the room had to be designed to present their ornamental values in a harmonious interplay (Bronson, 376).

Addison was well aware of the architectural values of a library, as evidenced by his humorous account of the library of Lady Leonora:

as it was some time before the Lady came to me, I had an Opportunity of turning over a great many of her Books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful Order. At the End of the *Folios* (which were finely bound and gilt) were great Jars of *China* placed one above another in a very noble piece of Architecture. The *Quartos* were separated from the *Octavos* by a Pile of smaller Vessels, which rose in a delightful Pyramid. The *Octavos* were bounded by Tea Dishes of all Shapes, Colours and Sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden Frame, that they looked

like one continued Pillar indented with the finest Strokes of Sculpture, and stained with the greatest Variety of Dyes. That Part of the Library which was designed for the Reception of Plays and Pamphlets, and other loose Papers, was inclosed in a Kind of Square, consisting of one of the prettiest Grotesque Works that ever I saw, and made up of Scaramouches, Lions, Monkies, Mandarinines, Trees, Shells, and a thousand other odd Figures in *China* Ware. In the midst of the Room was a little Japan Table, with a Quire of gilt Paper upon it, and on the Paper a Silver Snuff-box made in the Shape of a little Book. I found there were several other Counterfeit Books upon the upper Shelves, which were carved in Wood, and served only to fill up the Number, like Faggots in the Muster of a Regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixt kind of Furniture, as seemed very suitable both to the Lady and the Scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy my self in a Grotto, or in a Library. (S 37, 152-154)

This passage also indicates another aspect of eighteenth-century culture which revealed English taste in printing--the English garden. Not only did Addison compare the prospect of an orderly garden with the prospect of an orderly essay, but he was able to employ the garden for other comparisons. A legacy of terms implying an association between nature and books comes to us from a time antedating Christianity, when books were handwritten; they include *Liber*, the inner bark of a tree; *paper* from "papyrus," *book* from "beech," *folio* from "folium"; and the interchangeable terminology, such as *margin*, *border*, *river*, *flowers*. There are even terms which borrow from books to describe nature, such as "sermons in stones," "books in the running brooks," and "the Book of Nature," that archetypal image in which Addison read the message of his famous hymn and which landscapists of the eighteenth century, like its philosophers and poets, attempted to interpret in their own fashion. Headpieces and tailpieces, floral initials, twining borders suggesting vines, trees, birds, or flowers, all "call in the country," as it were, a practice dating from the days of illuminated manuscripts. And here again one needs to remember the literary tastes of Addison's Lady Leonora:

"As her reading," wrote the Spectator,

has lain very much among Romances, it has given her a very particular turn of thinking, and discovers it self even in her house, her gardens, and her furniture. Sir Roger has entertained me an hour together with a description of her country-seat, which is situated in a kind of wilderness, about a hundred miles distant from *London*, and looks like a little enchanted Palace. The rocks about her are shaped into artificial grottoes covered with wood-bines and jessimines. The woods are cut into shady walks, twisted into bowers, and filled with cages of Turtles. The springs are made to run among pebbles, and by that means taught to murmur very agreeably. They are likewise collected into a beautiful Lake, that is inhabited by a couple of Swans, and empties itself by a little rivulet which runs through a green meadow, and is known in the family by the name of The Purling Stream.⁹

Edward Hyams, in *The English Garden*, offers the observation that "what the English garden-makers were doing with soil, stone, water and plants was very much what the French *paysagistes* of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were doing on canvas. . . . The French did it with paint; the English did it with Nature's own materials; but both were making pictures."¹⁰ This move toward landscape in the eighteenth century indicates that the traditional politics and literature were being supplanted by science in contemporary opinion. The notion that simplicity could replace confusion through the unconscious operation of landscape on the passive mind--especially when a Newton had guaranteed the precise mathematical order of the external world--was an attractive possibility,¹¹ and it was of just this function of

⁹Bronson, "Printing . . . Part II," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 62 (Sept., 1958), 452-454. Bronson quotes *Spectator* 37 (I, 158) in this passage.

¹⁰Hyams (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), p. 30.

¹¹McLuhan, "Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry," *Landscape*, p. 148. Reprinted from *Essays on Criticism* (1951); Cf. William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Vintage, 1957), p. 266.

landscape that Addison was speaking when he wrote: "It is but by opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy, with very little Attention of the Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the Symmetry of anything we see, and immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it" (S 411, III, 538).

Landscape, McLuhan has said, is "the means of presenting, without the copula of logical enunciation, experiences which are united in existence but not in conceptual thought" ("*Dissemination*," p. 144). Such a definition might serve equally well to describe *The Spectator* itself. Thus its very format, or "printscape," functions with an automatic and unconscious operation on the passive mind--or, in Addison's words, "with very little attention of the Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder"--to restore the disordered passions of the human heart to their pristine integrity, so that they strike us with their symmetry, their beauty, unconsciously, without our having to enquire in the particular causes and occasions of it.

CHAPTER IV

PRINT, FORMAT AND STYLE

Sculptural and architectonic values are inherent in individual books as well as in libraries. Books can be classical or romantic even in a physical sense, and, ideally, perhaps, every book ought to be physically expressive of its content. But the difficulties of type founding in the eighteenth century alone would have defeated any attempt to implement such a scheme.¹ There were attempts, however, to integrate at least the physical format of a book with its content. Here again *The Dunciad* provides a ready example; in a letter to Swift, Pope writes:

The Dunciad is going to be printed in all pomp. . . . It will be attended with *Proeme*, *Prolegomena*, *Testimonia*, *Scriptorium*, *Index Authorium*, and *Notes Variorum*. As to the latter, I desire you to read over the text, and make a few in any way you like best, whether dry raillery, upon the style and way of commenting of trivial critics; or humourous, upon the authors in the poem; or historical, of persons, places, times; or explanatory; or collecting the parallel passages of the ancients.²

Instead of attacking Dulness merely as an individual book, then, Pope was intending that *The Dunciad* provide a collective newspaper format and much "human interest." It thus injects Dulness with a dramatic quality that invigorates the very subject it decries.³

There is evidence, too, that the format of the *Spectator* papers

¹ Bertrand Bronson, "Printing as an Index of Taste in Eighteenth Century England: Part I," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 62 (Aug., 1958), 376.

² Pope, quoted in Aubrey Williams in *Pope's Dunciad*, p. 60.

³ Marshall McLuhan, "On Pope's *Dunciad*," in *The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962*, ed. Eugene McNamara (New York/Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1969), pp. 175-176.

was "physically expressive" of its content in that the overall format of the *Spectator* folio half-sheets bore the unmistakable impression of a Greek or Roman architectural facade. The recto presented the viewer with two columns of text, or vertical shafts of print, topped by an entablature defined by two horizontal and parallel rules, between which was inscribed the frieze, or title. The verso of the sheet was composed entirely of two columns of print and the imprint which ran in one line double column across the bottom of the page. Thus if the verso of one *Spectator* sheet were placed beneath the recto of another, they would form two continuous shafts or columns of print, resting on the base-imprint and topped by an entablature and frieze-title, composing complete classical facade.

This format is emblematic of the process of publishing the *Spectator* itself, in that the text is supported by the printer, the body or bulk of the papers supplied by the writer, all headed by the title or verbal signature of the work which both the printer and writer have directed and coupled their arts to produce; but the architectural motif of the *Spectator* format held more significance than that. Addison, writing in *Spectator* 415, indicates the special regard he had for "Architecture," by which he means classical or neo-classical architecture: "I shall in this Paper throw together some Reflections on that Particular Art, which has more immediate Tendency, than any other, to produce those primary Pleasures of the Imagination. . . . The Art I mean is that of Architecture. . ." (III, 553). In the face of the pillars of print in the *Spectator*, Addison's remarks on the aesthetic nature of the architectural pillar also contained in this number take on a new meaning: "In a Square Pillar, the Sight often

takes in but a fourth Part of the Surface, and, in a Square Concave, must move up and down to the different Sides, before it is Master of all the inward Surface" (III, 557). This passage seems to indicate that the pillars of the *Spectator* contain a hidden third dimension beyond the apparent two dimensions they form on the page, and that the "Sight" must be employed in its fullest sense in order for the reader to be master of the dimensions of the print pillar visible to the outward eye as well as the dimensions visible only to the inward eye, i.e., the dimension occupying the imagination. Therefore the format of the *Spectator* half-sheets brought the content of the *Spectator*, in as much as it was itself a pleasure of the imagination, together with the popular, visually oriented world-view provided by print in eighteenth-century England, to form a concrete, all-inclusive emblem of the world grounded ontologically in print, which was itself, as we saw in Chapter I, a concrete manifestation of light, reason and sight.

By bearing the imprint of such a facade, the *Spectator* was associating itself with the quality of "Greatness," the perception of which Addison mentions as being one of the two primary pleasures of the imagination. Yet there was a problem with such an association. The eighteenth-century concern with decorum extended to the relations between subject matter and physical size; just as there was one style appropriate to epic and another to satire, so too, there might be correspondingly appropriate relations between the body and face of type. As in architecture, the rules of proportion should be visible in print, and, in fact, we can find Luckombe pronouncing that a Dedication should be set in letter two sizes larger than the body of the work, the Contents in Italic of the same size as the body, the Index in a letter

two sizes smaller than that of the body, and so on (Bronson, I, 379). Far from suggesting greatness, then, the architectural motif of the *Spectator* would seem to lend the publication only an air of laughable presumption for daring to suggest the magnificence of classical architecture in a mere penny-sheet of Foolscap.

The second primary pleasure of the imagination, the perception of "Greatness of Manner," however, was Addison's answer to this problem. He wrote of it: "*Greatness of Manner* in Architecture . . . has such Force upon the Imagination, that a small Building, where *it* appears, shall give the Mind nobler Ideas than one of twenty times the Bulk, where the Manner is ordinary or little" (III, 555). The Manner of the *Spectator* folio half-sheet was the manner of just such a small building, imitating the image and invoking the force of the greatest of architectural ideas at that time and containing in its body (if one examined the invisible third dimension of the pillars) certainly many ideas nobler than those of publications with twenty times its bulk, ideas which, because they were actually composed of print, would incidentally last longer than if they had in fact been embodied in a classical facade. As Addison wrote of the permanence of ideational media: "All other Arts of perpetuating our Ideas [except print] continue but a short Time: Statues can last but a few Thousands of Years, Edifices fewer, and Colours still fewer than Edifices. . . . These several Arts are expressed in mouldring Materials; Nature sinks under them, and is not able to support the Ideas which are imprest upon it" (*S*. 166, II, 154).

Though Addison does not make an explicit association between the folio half-sheet format of his publication and the primary pleasures of the imagination expressed in architecture, he had made statements

earlier in *Spectator* 124 which suggest that such an association might not have been far from his mind. Speaking of the penny-sheet, he said, "notwithstanding some Papers may be of broken Hints and irregular Sketches, it is often expected that every Sheet should be a kind of Treatise, and make out in Thought what it wants in Bulk. . . . Were all Books reduced thus to their Quintessence, many a bulky Author would make his Appearance in a Penny Paper. . ." (I, 506). Remembering that thought is ontologically grounded in print, we can see how Addison might well consider the format of the *Spectator* especially competent to convey the "Quintessence" of thought, for the penny-sheet itself contained the essence of thought; indeed, Addison admits to being "amazed that the Press should be only made use of in this way by Newswriters" (I, 507). And he leaves no doubt as to the manner of greatness he considers this medium capable of: "Had the Philosophers and the great Men of Antiquity . . . been possessed of the Art of Printing, there is no question but they would have made such an Advantage of it, in dealing out their Lectures to the Public" (I, 507).

Addison's ideas on the decorum of printed matter were, as usual with his judgment of public tastes, very much in step with the times. Many men of his day would have concurred with his wish that "there would be scarce a Thing in Nature as a Folio." When Boswell later in the century talked of printing the *Life* in folio, Malone told him he "might as well throw it into the Thames, for a folio would not be read." Indeed, as the readership swelled, descending to include the lower social levels as the century wore on, so the size of books began also to descend, the result being that the end of the century saw the publication of many more octavo and duodecimo volumes.

To return to the three-dimensional qualities of the columns of print in the *Spectator* half-sheets, it would take a man unfamiliar with the printer's trade, as Addison was, to say, as he does in *Spectator* 416, that, "*Description* runs yet further from the things it represents than Painting; for a Picture bears a real Resemblance to its Original, which Letters and Syllables are wholly void of" (III, 559). Obviously Addison looked at words with the eye of a poet, not a printer, for in actuality, the printed letters, syllables and words he considers void of any real resemblance to their originals do indeed carry such a quality. Print properly derives from engraving, and engraving involves three-dimensional description. Indelible contributions to the character of modern upper-case letters have been made by Roman inscriptions, for example, and in the eighteenth century such influences were even more pronounced (Bronson, I, 375). As Bronson points out: "The later divergence of the arts of writing and pictorial illustration need not blot from our minds their radical relation. As in the Platonic myth of the sexes, the impulse to reunite, or at least reaffirm the primitive kinship, has been both spontaneous and inerradicable throughout the history of the book" (II, 382). Thus that the title of the *Spectator*, for example, could be considered analogous to the frieze in an architectural facade is not as association foreign to eighteenth-century ideas of print.

In bookform editions, the "primitive kinship" Bronson speaks of can be seen even clearer. Tonson's 1718 edition of the *Spectator*, for instance, begins each even-numbered volume (there were eight) with a large engraved headpiece. Substituting for, but not replacing in function, the frieze-titles of the folio half-sheets are a number of smaller headpieces ordinarily composed of a series of engraved

flowers, scrolls and other like objects, strung together from left to right, the pattern beginning at the left hand margin of the page and ending at the center, where usually an ornament unique to the pattern appeared, followed by a repetition of the initial pattern in reverse order, so that the first and last objects in the series were the same. These engravings strongly resemble, and no doubt were meant to suggest, the friezes of classical architecture; the scrolls and various other figures resemble Doric metopes and triglyphs, and the geometric designs that divided the papers in the odd-numbered volumes of the edition show a marked similarity to various Greek mouldings.

In setting these headpieces, Tonson's compositors apparently went to some amount of trouble to match them with the content of the particular number they headed; Henry R. Plomer, commenting on another Tonson production, an octavo edition of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (1713), observes the same consideration: "While some of the head-pieces are pictorial," he admits, "they are in some measure called forth by the text, and perhaps [are] more in the nature of illustrations. . . ."⁴ Since the headpieces were somewhat standardized by taste, tradition and mechanical limitations (e.g., the large head-piece introducing the first number of volume VI is also used in Tonson's editions of Congreve;⁵ furthermore, many of the geometric designs of

⁴Plomer, *English Printer's Ornaments* (New York: Bert Franklin, 1924, 1968), pp. 77-78.

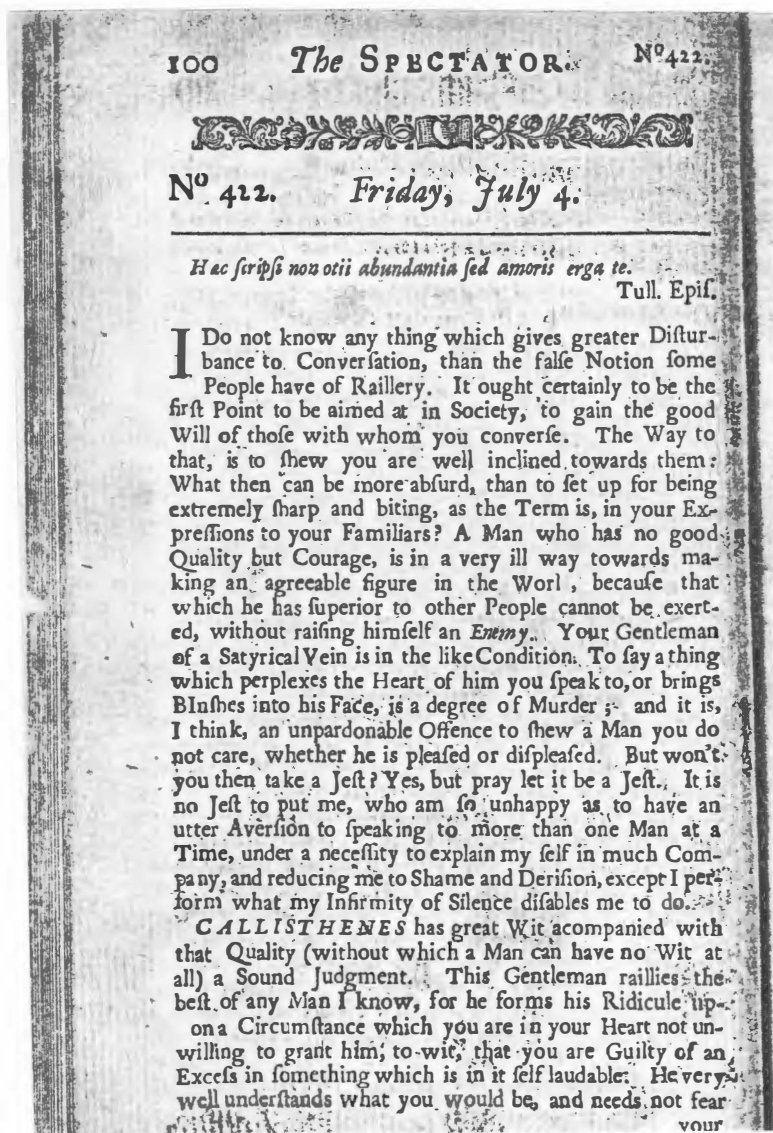
⁵Albert M. Lyles and John Dobson, compilers, "Appendix A: Ornaments Used by Tonson in his Editions of Congreve," in *The John C. Hodges Collection of William Congreve in the Univ. of Tennessee Library: A Bibliographical Catalog* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Libraries, 1970), Item 37, p. 123.

the odd-numbered volumes of the edition can be seen later in the Specimens of Baskerville),⁶ and since only a finite number of them were available for use in any one edition, the association between headpiece and text, as Plomer notes, is sometimes only approximate, if that. But in many cases, if not the majority of them, the association is indeed close enough for the headpiece to act as an illustration of the text.

Volume II of the 1718 edition,⁷ for instance, heads the first number with an engraving of a cupid looking through a telescope at a landscape containing a dove, a radiating sun, billowing clouds over a grove of trees, and flowers; beside him lies an open notebook in which to record his observations. It would be difficult to find a more appropriate headpiece with which to introduce the *Spectator*; here is an instance where an actual engraving could serve as the title of the work, pointing out again the closeness of writing or printing and illustration, as well as the function of the frieze-title. In fact, several headpieces which divided the individual numbers in a volume were quite literal illustrations, almost visual puns as it were, of the content. For example, a floral scroll pattern with a center design of a heart superimposed over an open book heads *Spectator* 422 (VI, 100), where the word "heart" appears in the first paragraph of the number, the design of the headpiece thus illustrating not only the physical relationship of the printed word to the book in which it appears, but also the subject of the essay (Figure 2a).

⁶Updike, II, Fig. 273, 274, pp. 117, 118.

⁷The *Spectator*, 4th edition (London: J. Tonson, 1718).



(a)

Figure 2. Headpieces from the *Spectator*.



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figure 2 (continued)

More often, however, the compositor had to settle for a more abstract association between headpiece and text, as evidenced in the series on the pleasures of the imagination. For instance, *Spectator* 411 (VI, 58) and 418 (VI, 84), the first number and the last number dealing directly with the primary and secondary pleasures of the imagination, open with the same headpiece (Figure 2b). Reading from left to right, it starts with a leafy scroll-like flourish which flows into a bouquet of fruit. The center design is most appropriate for a series of essays based on the aesthetic primacy of the eye: it consists of a rather cadaverous-looking face, with huge scowling eyes that seem to stare at the reader, and a deeply frowning mouth.

Spectator 412 (VI, 61), which takes up the discussion of the great, the uncommon and the beautiful, is headed by an ornament that starts with two sunflower-like blossoms, the stems of which flow into an architectural design, which in turn flows into some leafy flourishes that frame the center design of a basket filled with fruit and flowers (Figure 2c). Here it is possible to establish an association between the flowers and the basket with Addison's category of the beautiful, and perhaps between the architectural design and the category of the great. *Spectator* 416 (V, 76), which begins, "I at first divided the Pleasures of the Imagination into such as arise from Objects that are actually before our Eyes, or that once enter at our Eyes . . .," has a headpiece that appears to pick up on these lines with a mural of a hound, a flying insect with four wings, a flower bunch, a rabbit as the center design, another flying insect, this one with only two wings, and a repeat of the flowers and the hound (Figure 2d). In other numbers of the series the associations are not as distinct, but

there need not be a direct association between the text and headpiece in all numbers to demonstrate that an awareness of such a correspondence did exist and that an attempt was made to honor that correspondence.

This relationship of typography to content was very much in line with eighteenth-century understanding of print. "Typography," Bronson notes, "has never entirely lost its pictorial appeals."

At its most conventional, it still *illustrates* its meaning, both by the aesthetic values of its characters and by the ornamental suggestion of natural objects. Varieties of type-face, modulations of page-color and inking, interplay of upper and lower-case, the use of printers' flowers, are all of them means to the same end of illustration. Thereafter, more obviously, come engravings on wood or metal, of emblems, factorums, head- and tail-pieces, vignettes, calligraphic inventions; and lastly, full pictorial illustration. So far as engraving could carry them at that time, all these resources were of course available to the eighteenth century printers. (I, 382)

They were certainly available to--and used by--Tonson, as his 1718 edition of the *Spectator* testifies.

We can begin to see, then, that though printing had been an active and important trade in England since the sixteenth century, the full measure of its significance to English letters, society and to the world itself was just beginning to be discovered in the eighteenth century. Among the first to comment and capitalize on print were Addison, Steele, and the *Spectator*; indeed, the *Spectator* itself, in both its penny sheet and book forms, represents something of an emblem of print. But since British critics, Addison included, exhibited "a strong desire to account for aesthetic experience by fixed external *causes* either grossly observable, or corpuscular" (Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 259), and since print is the concrete embodiment of sign, the *Spectator*, as its name suggests, composes a "grossly observable," visually oriented model of existence.

As such, the *Spectator* made pictures, insofar as its medium could do so, printscapes which blended or homogenized all experience into a single mode of existence. The *Spectator* was possibly more successful in this effort than its authors realized, or at least more than Addison realized, for apparently Addison, who bore the brunt of the intellectual justification for this aesthetic, while suggesting an association between print and architecture, apparently did not fully comprehend the three-dimensional and illustrative qualities inherent in print which the *Spectator* manifests in its format, design and composition.

In all of these various aspects of print and its function with regard to the *Spectator*, the evidence, such as it is, is fragile, perhaps even whimsical. We are dealing with only the whisper of an aesthetics of print so far; we have yet to see how print works its effects, especially on the *Spectator*. We have seen a possible connection between the sense of sight and the visual orientation of the age, between this orientation and the mode or manner of being of the *Spectator*. Now let us see if the connection extends farther, tangibly, into the bones of the periodical itself, the structure and arrangement of the words themselves, in the renowned "energetic" style and organization of the *Spectator*, wherein lies the bulk of its reputation.

"The first great change in style," writes Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media*, "came early in the eighteenth century, when the famous *Tatler* and *Spectator* of Addison and Steele discovered a new prose technique to match the form of the printed word. It was the technique of equitone. It consisted in maintaining a single level of tone and attitude to the reader throughout the entire composition.

By this discovery, Addison and Steele brought written discourse into line with the printed word and away from the variety of pitch and tone of the spoken, of even the handwritten, word."⁸ Elsewhere McLuhan suggests that "Until Addison . . . the author felt little pressure to maintain a single attitude to his subject or a consistent tone to the reader. In short, prose remained oral rather than visual for centuries after printing. Instead of homogeneity there was heterogeneity of tone and attitude, so that the author felt able to shift these in mid-sentence at any time, just as in poetry."⁹

The unique equitone of Addison's style was not, however, the subject of much comment in the eighteenth century. Especially during the latter part of the century, when the "energetick" style of Johnson dominated the literary world, Addison's style was described as "weak," "feeble," and "enervated." His style was considered by many to be not only inferior to Johnson's but lacking in a more general, rhetorical sense. Rhetoricians of the time placed much emphasis on the importance of energy in discourse, oral or written.¹⁰ John Ogilvie, writing in his *Philosophical and Critical Observations on the Nature, Character, and Various Species of Composition* (1774), admires a "nervous, or forcible Composition," which he defines as "strength and energy, either of thought, of expression, or of both

⁸ McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 206.

⁹ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (New York: New American Library, 1962/1969), p. 166.

¹⁰ William Kenney, "Addison, Johnson, and the 'Energetick' Style," *Studia Neophilologica*, 33 (1961), 103.

taken together."¹¹ "A nervous manner," he states, "is of all others the most universally affected; and at the same time in consequence of the faults allied to it, the most difficult to be obtained" (II, 272). Another rhetorician of the period, George Campbell, held vehemence to be the "supreme qualification in an orator," defining vehemence as "an artful mixture of that which proposes to convince the judgment, and that which interests the passions."¹² With regard to the written word, Campbell emphasizes the importance of vivacity, which he says is the product of great care taken in "the choice of words, their number, and their arrangement" (II, 158).

Samuel Johnson, in his criticism of style, puts much stress on the need for energy and cites the lack of it as characteristic of Addison's style (Kenney, 103). Critics are fond of quoting one line of Johnson's comments on Addison: "Whosoever wishes to attain an English style . . . must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."¹³ While undoubtedly this is a remark of high praise for Addison, critics fail to quote the two paragraphs that precede the remark, the tone of which is but lukewarm, describing Addison's style in a series of negatives: it "never blazes in unexpected splendour. . . . What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be entergetick; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods,

¹¹Ogilvie (London), II, 199. Quoted in Kenney, 103.

¹²Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London, 1776), I, 33. All quotations from Kenney, 103.

¹³Johnson, *The Works of* . . . (Troy, N.Y.: Pafraets, 1903), IX, 102. All references to and quotations from this edition, as cited in Kenney, 104-105.

though not diligently rounded, are valuable and easy" (IX, 201-202).

Johnson, in fact, "might be describing the opposite of his own style . . .," William Kenney observes (104).

Two of Johnson's satellites, Sir John Hawkins and James Boswell, no doubt picking up ones from the great Doctor's conversation and wishing to vouchsafe Johnson's stylistic reputation from hostile critics, were less circumspect in their opinion of Addison's style. Writes Hawkins: "The vulgar opinion is, that the style of this century is the perfection of our language, and that we owe its ultimate and final improvement to Mr. Addison, and when we make his cold and languid periods the test, it is no wonder if we mistake strength and animation for tumidity."¹⁴ Adds Boswell, with the faint praise that damns, "Though comparatively weak, when opposed to Johnson's Herculean vigour, let us not call [Addison's style] positively feeble."¹⁵

The "vulgar opinion" Hawkins makes reference to was also countered by other critics who did not find Addison to be the paragon of English style. Indeed, at least one contemporary critic, Thomas Wallace, found Addison decidedly to be in a position secondary to that of Johnson. In "An Essay on the Variations of English Prose, from the Revolution to the Present Time" (1797), he puts forward this theory of stylistic evolution: "The progress of language marks the progress of the human mind. They proceed together with equal step from the rudeness of barbarism

¹⁴Hawkins, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (Dublin, 1787), pp. 239-240. Quoted in Kenney, 105.

¹⁵*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. George B. Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), I, 224. Quoted in Kenney, 106. Elsewhere, however, Boswell acknowledges a deep appreciation of the *Spectator*. Cf. Bond's "Introduction" to the Yale edition of the *Spectator*, xcvi.

toward that state beyond which improvement cannot go, in which language exhibits the highest polish of elegance and accuracy, and the mind exerts all its faculties in their full force."¹⁶ While Wallace praises Addison for bringing style into a state of high elegance, he finds him deficient in energy and thus lacking the one other essential quality of perfect style: after Addison "if any thing is yet to be added to the improvement of English style, it must be more nerve and muscle, not a nicer modification of form or feature" (p. 58). The whole point of Wallace's argument is that in the eighteenth century language first acquired eloquence with Addison and then energy with Johnson, so that with Johnson it became perfect.¹⁷

The Reverend Robert Burrowes, while hardly a spokesman for the vulgar opinion, disagrees with the conclusions of Hawkins and Wallace. Johnson, he complains, should adopt a style that can be readily understood if Johnson intends, as he claims, to write for the moral improvement of the people. Instead, he uses a "learned and antiquated phraseology," which minimizes his effectiveness; and indeed, Burrowes says, "if rules for periodical essays are to be drawn from the practice of

¹⁶Wallace, *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1797), IV, 41. Quoted in Kenney, 107.

¹⁷Kenney, 107. Johnson's reputation as the epitome of eloquence in the eighteenth century is still defended today in highly contemporary terms. J. Clement Jones, for example, in his essay "Dr. Johnson--Mass Communicator" (*Transactions of the Johnson Society* [Dec., 1969], 19-29), asserts that Johnson was born 200 years before his time, for he was a McLuhan man living in a Gutenberg age. Various passages in the *Rambler*, according to Jones, demonstrate him to be a "natural mass communicator, capable of the immediate impact which our electronic age calls for," and his parliamentary debates in the *Gentleman's Magazine* indicate that he would have made an excellent television scriptwriter. Jones concludes that Johnson could "communicate with anybody on anything," looked not so unpleasantly as one might suppose, and "had a good radio and TV voice."

their great English original, Mr. Addison, as the rules of epic poetry from Homer's, nothing can be more opposite to their true character; for as their professed intent is the improvement of general manners, their stile, as well as their subjects should be levelled to understandings of every description."¹⁸ Johnson's fundamental stylistic flaw, Burrowes asserts, is just this very quality of energy that Hawkins and Wallace approve. Johnson often is guilty of overemphasis and monotony when attempting to stress ideas, Burrowes says. He also put his sentences in novel arrangements and selected unusual words to impress his ideas firmly on his readers; but he used so much emphasis that all his ideas, regardless of importance, are put on the same level (Kenney, 109). An excess of energy also causes harshness, which, according to Hugh Blair, arose with Johnson "from unusual words, from forced inversions in the construction of a Sentence, and too much neglect of smoothness and ease,"¹⁹ and even Blair, a friend of Johnson, admits that Johnson's style is harsh, at least in the speeches he gives to his female characters (Kenney, III).

Johnson himself notes that Addison deliberately did not strive for an "energetick stile." A closer look at the formal elements of Addison's style might tell us why, and here Jan Lannering's *Studies in the Prose Style of Joseph Addison* and Zilpha Emma Chandler's Iowa studies are extremely helpful. Lannering notes that the most characteristic formal feature of Addison's prose style is its parallelism.

¹⁸Burrowes, "Essay on the Style of Doctor Samuel Johnson," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1787), I, 30. Quoted in Kenney, 108.

¹⁹Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Dublin, 1783), II, 19. Quoted in Kenney, 111.

Addison went to considerable lengths to conceal it, wanting to acquire the perspicuous order, but not the rigidity of form, that it provided. Hence he preferred asymmetrical parallelism in his longer forms of it, characteristically established by an extension of the last member: "They are the Scorn of all good Men, and the publick Marks of Infamy and Derision."²⁰ In the shorter forms of parallelism, he frequently used pleonastic pairs of words, mostly for rhythmical effect rather than emphatic efficacy: "Nature has given all the little Arts of Soothing and Blandishment to the Female, that she may cheer and animate her Companion in a constant and assiduous Application to the making of a Provision for his Family, and the educating of their common Children."²¹ He found triplets, however, too heavy; he hesitated to employ them and when he did use them it was usually to emphasize contexts explicitly dealing with moral precepts or philosophical abstractions: "a cold, lifeless, insipid Condition of Virtue . . .," or "These Lines are perhaps as plain, simple, and unadorned, as any of the whole Poem."²² He used quadruplets hardly at all (p. 32). Addison also seems to have avoided extended forms of symmetrical parallelism (p. 194).

²⁰Lannering, "Essays and Studies of the English Language in Literature," ed. S. B. Liljegren, No. 9 (Upsala: Lundquist/Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1951), p. 194. See also Lannering's subchapters on asymmetrical parallelism, pp. 57-70.

²¹Lannering, pp. 193-194. See also Lannering's subchapters on symmetrical parallelism, pp. 21-56. Passage from *Spectator* 128 (II, 9); quoted in Lannering, p. 53.

²²Lannering, p. 194. See also Lannering, pp. 32-39. Passages from *Spectator* 201 (I, 287) and *Spectator* 303 (III, 84). Quoted in Lannering, p. 33.

Over the years parallelism has been used in literature for various purposes. The word-pair is largely interpretive in Old and Middle English, whereas in the modern English of Samuel Johnson it is mainly emphatic. Addison, however, designed a third purpose for his parallelism, a purpose which also concerned the matter of emphasis, but which implied just the opposite of the Johnsonian manner of ponderous reinforcement. Addison employs parallelism to distribute, rather than concentrate his emphasis. In his prose he attempts to lessen the weight of natural stress by distributing it over a greater number of words than necessary for mere sense content (Lannering, p. 193).

Thus his complex sentences typically are arranged in clauses in natural conversational order, beginning with a main clause and following with subordinant clauses. Since this ordering is rather top-heavy, to balance it off he delegates as much sense-content as possible from the main clause to the subordinant clauses. In this way he makes the subordinant clauses carry the bulk of his meaning, and not infrequently, he will even delegate sense-content from these subordinant clauses to other clauses subordinant to them. Besides distributing the emphasis and thus ensuring coherence, this use of parallelism also gives Addison's sentences an easy, flowing rhythm (Lannering, pp. 194-195). In all of this Addison was responding to the demands of a visual rather than an oral medium; thus the leveling of the sense-content in his writing, in McLuhan's word, "homogenized" his style to conform ontologically to the uniformity and linearity of print.

"This manner of building sentences," Lannering states, "is so common in modern discursive prose that we never stop to think about it at all, but in Addison's days the situation was altogether different"

(p. 195). In other words, Addison, perhaps alone for his day, understood the nature of print and conformed his style primarily to its demands rather than conforming to the characteristics of rhetorical or oral discourse that had been the deciding influence on prose style until the eighteenth century. We need look only to the most influential prose-writers of Addison's day, Dryden and Swift, to see that only he, with regard to organization of matter into sentence, used a method of sentential development that has ever since been recognized as the pattern for discursive prose writing. And here again we can see that the ultimate end of Addison's organization of matter was to distribute the emphasis as much as possible²³--to make his prose "equitone," as it were.

Addison's diction consistently carries the characteristics of a writer for a mass audience. In the first thousand words of the more or less random passage Chandler chose for her study, she discovered that Addison used 336 different words, which is a relatively small number (e.g., in similar length passages she found that Addison used 71 words fewer than Johnson, 41 fewer than Hazlett, 107 fewer than Pater). Moreover, these words were mostly of Saxon derivation (49.7% of the words in the passage, or 6.2% more Saxon derivatives than words of classical descent); consequently he employed a largely Anglo-Saxon diction that was highly monosyllabic (38.6%) and disyllabic (36.2%), and none of his words have over five syllables. Chandler notes also two outstanding structural qualities of Addison's prose--simplicity

²³Lannering, p. 195. See also Lannering's subchapters on structural background, pp. 74-85.

and lack of variety. Apart from his nominal phrases, she finds only five complex word patterns, none of them very involved; and the sentences in this passage range in length from only seven words to sixty-three, showing a range of fifty-six--again, not a high number for the time (Johnson varied from six words to sixty-five--thus showing a range of fifty-nine).²⁴

Ironically, Wallace, in citing the rhetorical weaknesses of the style of his contemporary Addison, its lack of energy, also singles out its strength when it appeared in print: "the language of Addison . . . was too weak for the weight of abstract moral disquisition, and too vague for the nicities of metaphysical distinction. It was fitted for him whose object was to catch what floated on the surface of life. . . ." ²⁵ In other words, Addison's homogenized style, identified, significantly, by none other than Johnson as "the model of the middle style," is uniquely suited to the mass audience which print had created and to which the *Spectator* was meant to appeal.

As Robert Potter, a contemporary of Addison's, has observed, "his judgment was just, his manner simple and elegant, and from his taste there is no appeal; his page was, like the vernal sun, bright and gentle; it gradually and imperceptably dispelled the mists of barbarism which hung over learning, and spread an intellectual light, the influence of which was universal and permanent."²⁶ The description

²⁴Chandler, "An Analysis of the Stylistic Technique of Addison, Johnson, Hazlitt and Pater," *Univ. of Iowa Studies*, 4 (1928), 25-30.

²⁵Wallace, 60. Quoted in Kenney, 107-108.

²⁶Potter, *An Inquiry into Some Passages in Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets: Particularly his Observations on Lyric Poetry, and the Odes of Gray* (London, 1738), I. Quoted in Kenney, 113.

of Addison's prose as sun-like, "Bright," dispelling mists of "barbarism," spreading "intellectual light," and his predisposition toward clarity above all in his style recalls again the eighteenth-century association of print with sight, light and logical reason that we disclosed in Chapter II.

Addison's stylistic distribution of emphasis is evident both in the arrangement of his words and phrases and in the expressive quality of the words themselves. Figures of speech, such as metaphors, concentrate sense-content and emphasis instead of distributing them; Addison, believing that truth was the basis of wit, held that an idea must "shine in its own natural Beauties" and not in artificially illuminated rhetorical figures, thus implying that the expressive power of the diction must be restrained considerably (Lannering, p. 196). Rhetorical figures, he believed, were more the province of poets than of prose essayists. And he explains in *Spectator* 285: "If Clearness and Perspicuity were only to be consulted, the Poet would have Nothing else to do but to clothe his thoughts in the most plain and natural Expressions. But, since it often happens that the most obvious Phrases, and those which are used in ordinary Conversations, become too familiar to the Ear, and contract a Kind of Meanness by passing through the Mouths of the Vulgar, a Poet should take particular Care to guard himself against idiomatic Ways of Speaking" (III, 10). Simile and metaphor, in other words, are not the stuff of prose.

Addison's diction too shows the effects of his characteristic manner of distributing emphasis. His prose shows little use of similes and metaphors, what few there are being restricted to an illustrative function only, and taken from stock subjects for metaphors such as fire, spring, and so on. In his non-literal diction we can see the same

tendency. Comparisons between MS and printed papers demonstrate that he consistently worked to suppress imagery in his verbs and epithets. The alterations he made in the MS copy before printing consist more times than not in changes from the vivid and particular to the non-sensory and general: "bright and florid" is altered to "pleasing and beautiful," for example.

The distribution of emphasis in his diction is especially evident in his corrections of verbs to this effect. For instance, he altered "used to say" to "frequently made use of in private conversation," thereby changing the aspect of the phrase from the verbal to the nominal. This change not only suppresses the vivid sensory element of the phrase, but also transfers the sense-content and emphasis from the middle of the clause to the end (Lannering, p. 196).

Only in the lengthening or shortening of a phrase for rhythmical effect, did Addison admit a poetical element into his to any extent (Lannering, pp. 195-196), but even here the motive for usage was not so much the elevation of speech as it was the attainment of a smooth, even-flowing tone, which, as Wallace suggests, would aid the reader "whose object was to catch what floated on the surface of life."

As Alexander Chambers remarked in his series on the British essayists, Addison's prose style has one characteristic that made it preferable to that of Johnson, or any other prose stylist of the period, and that was that it has "more general utility."²⁷ Chandler notes, too, that "a natural adaptation of language to the means of utterance together with an employment of familiar terms and a methodical

²⁷Chambers, *British Essayists* (London, 1823), XVI, xli-xlii. Quoted in Kenney, 114.

system of organization has . . . weighed greatly in [Addison's] favor" (35). And Addison himself, in his defense of Milton's style, hints of his own concern for utility: "I must confess, that I think Stile, tho' admirable in general, is in some Places too much stiffened and obscured by the frequent Use of those Methods, which Aristotle prescribed for the raising of it"; he notes that "where the Verse is not built upon Rhymes, there Pomp of Sound, and Energy of Expression, are indispensably necessary to support the Stile, and keep it from falling into the Flatness of Prose" (S 285, III, 14). But it was this very flatness which was the essence of printed prose, and it was such a flatness, marked by a uniform distribution of emphasis, a linear smoothness in rhythm--the equitone style of print, in other words--that Addison strove for in his prose and manifested in the *Spectator*. Indeed, Addison's style marks the crossover from the primacy of rhetoric, or of the ear, in popular writing, to the primacy of the eye.

CHAPTER V

PRINT, PERSONA AND FORM

The *Spectator* is not a work generally felt to occupy a place of special relevance for the twentieth century. Recent writings by Marshall McLuhan and others have dealt at some length with the demise of a society oriented to experience by the medium of print and the birth of a new society cognizant by many media of communication and thus many facets of experience. In this new society Mr. Spectator might well have felt ill at ease.

But that is not to say that the *Spectator* bears no relevance to this century. On the contrary, Donald F. Theall states at the onset of *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* that his book is "written in the spirit of an awareness of the social and political issues involved in aesthetics as well as the way in which McLuhan potentially distorts sources as he creates his own popular myth, just as Addison did."¹ He goes on to say:

My particular Gutenbergish . . . approach to McLuhan will place him in a series of developments where he appears like the twentieth century Addison he really is. Addison was a popularizer working in a rather new medium. He realized the important role that the periodical essay, as a mode of early mass education, could play in developing a new code of manners and morals during the transformation of an aristocrat-dominated society into a mercantile one. The *Spectator Papers* provided documentation of the phenomenon as well as contributing to the process which Addison strongly supported. In his way, Addison contributed to the change of taste, sensibility, manners and morals in eighteenth century London. (p. 2).

¹Theall (Montreal/London: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1971), p. xvii.

McLuhan, says Theall, like Addison, is "spokesman for an important set of philosophic and aesthetic points of view. . ." (p. 203).

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan himself attempts to set out just what Addison's philosophic and aesthetic point of view was. Typography, he argues, was the first mechanization of a handicraft and thus is the perfect example of applied knowledge, since the mechanization of the handicraft of the scribe--the visual arresting and splitting up of scribal action--was itself applied knowledge. The process of mechanization could then be extended to the mechanizing of many other actions; moreover, people accustomed to the repetitive, linear patterns of the printed page were predisposed to transfer these approaches to all kinds of problems.² Addison, and Steele as well, articulated the tendency to transfer to other problems the approaches suggested by the printed page, especially the problem of public morality.

There is, indeed, little if any doubt that Addison and Steele did greatly affect the manners of English society. Donald F. Bond observes that many parents in the eighteenth century thought the *Spectator* second only to the Bible as a source of moral instruction.³ Addison's contemporaries and later generations including even Johnson, a great moralist himself, were willing to credit him with such an influence, which Macauley in another century would confirm.⁴ A close

²McLuhan (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 184.

³Bond, "Introduction," *The Spectator*, xcv.

⁴Theall has detected a moralizing effect also in the works of McLuhan: "McLuhan is recommending moral drift in the name of a 'suspended judgment' . . . [But] 'Whether he wants it or not, or whether he is aware of it or not, anyone who spends his life studying society and publishing the results is acting morally and usually politically

examination of the *Spectator* papers in their entirety, suggests Peter Gay, will allow us "to see Addison, the silent Mr. Spectator, as a leading actor in the great moral drama."⁵

Most eighteenth century essays, including Addison's, are concerned with belonging, in either an explicit or implicit way. The reader is constantly asked to recognize a kinship with the author and to separate himself from "certain young gentlemen." The rhetoric thus draws in the reader, inducing him to align himself with the author and thus the proper moral stance in a way that essays before the eighteenth century almost never do.⁶ The relationship between the "I" and the "they"--a literary correlative, in a sense, to the biblical I-Thou relationship--was central to the familiar essay of the eighteenth century. The "I" as well as the "they" are invested with an enlarged significance, the relationship often shaping the very structure of the essay itself.

Addison, in addition, uses the "we," usually to mean men of good taste, moderation, and good will; by designating the "I" to be more

as well.' . . . Perhaps like Addison, McLuhan hopes to be a 'Spectator,' inculcating a new society through changing men's manners and consequently their morals surreptitiously" (pp. 43-44).

⁵Peter Gay, "The Spectator as Actor: Addison in Perspective," *Encounter*, 29 (Dec., 1967), 29. Bond confirms Gay's assumption of Addison's dominant role in the constitution of the *Spectator*: "From the first . . . Addison seems to have taken a leading share in the direction of the *Spectator*. The most important statements of policy in the early papers occur in Nos. 1, 4, 10, and 16, of which three are by him. Later on it is in essays by Addison that we find the really significant statements as to the direction and purpose of the paper--on the reception of the *Spectator* (124 and 448), on its two classes of readers (179 and 598), on the kinds of papers attempted (124, 435, and 476), on the choice of mottoes and signatures (221), and on the increased stature of Mr. Spectator when the daily papers will be collected into handsome octavos (529). Bond, I, lxiv-lxv.

⁶Phillip Stevick, "Familiarity in the Addisonian Familiar Essay," *College Composition and Communication*, 15 (Oct., 1965), 169.

a shared state of mind than a specific person, he could move back and forth between the "I" and "we" with facility. Notice, for example, how Addison begins *Spectator* 355: "I have been very often tempted to write Invectives upon those who have detracted from my Works, or spoken in Derogation of my Person." He, of course, does not give in to this temptation, and, as the essay develops, he discloses a position so little individualistic that the "I" becomes more a device for introducing a norm than an identification of personal opinion. Thus he writes later on in the essay: "This is a Piece of Fortitude which every one owes to his own Innocence, and without which it is impossible for a Man of any Merit or Figure to live at Peace with himself in a Country that abounds with Wit and Liberty." The "I" of the wounded Addison at this point becomes the "we" of all decent men (Stevick, pp. 171-172).

Much of the success the periodical had in reforming manners and morals also lay in the nature of its medium and that of the Mr. Spectator persona. A key statement revealing how he was to establish a rapport with his readers comes in the first number: "since I have neither Time nor Inclination to communicate the Fulness of my Heart in Speech, I am resolved to do it in Writing; and to Print my self out, if possible, before I die." His choice of medium allowed him to preserve his anonymity, for it required no face-to-face contact with his audience; he could, then, exploit fully the artistic--as opposed to the practical or political--advantages this anonymity allowed him, as well as the artistic advantages of print as a medium.⁷ He is, then, the "typographic

⁷Kinsley, "Meaning and Format: Mr. Spectator and His Folio Half-Sheets," *Journal of English Literary History*, 34 (1967), 490.

man," the essence of his authors and the reflection of his readers.

The details of how Addison and Steele tailored Mr. Spectator to the medium of print are fairly easy to illustrate. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan describes the "typographic man":

Perhaps the most significant of the gifts of typography to man is that of detachment and non-involvement--the power to act without re-acting. . . . The very word "disinterested," expresses the loftiest detachment and ethical integrity of the typographic man. . . . The same integrity indicated by the term 'disinterested' [was a] mark of the scientific and scholarly temper of a literate and enlightened society. . . . It was precisely the power to separate thought and feeling, to be able to act without reacting, that split literate man out of the tribal world or close family bonds in private and social life.⁸

The character of the "typographic man" described here is remarkably similar to Mr. Spectator's characterization of himself:

Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than one of the Species; by which means I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part of Life. I am very well versed in the Theory of a 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. I never espoused any Party with Violence, and am resolved to observe an exact Nutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself 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. (S 1, I, 405)

Although Mr. Spectator is not always consistent in this role, as in the case of his insistence on accompanying Will Honeycomb to the boudoir of a "Travell'd" lady to experience first-hand the shocking practice of receiving "Visits in Bed,"⁹ and despite his experiment in talkativeness

⁸McLuhan (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 173.

⁹Mr. Spectator on this occasion displays some remarkably unspectator-like reactions: "For my part, I am so shocked with every thing which looks immodest in the fair Sex, that I could not bear taking off my Eye from her when she moved in her Bed, and was in greatest

recorded in *Spectator* 556, still, in his final dedication to Lord Halifax, Mr. Spectator reaffirms his character as taciturn spectator and on-looker, which is his essential character throughout.

The significance of the similarity between Mr. Spectator and the "typographic man" is important. Mr. Spectator exuded the qualities of aloofness, taciturnity, "scientific" detachment and disinterestedness that print had given to men; hence he personifies the qualities of the medium of print. Furthermore, he also possesses a body constituted of print: literally, Mr. Spectator exists only in words. Taken together, then, Mr. Spectator possesses both the "body" and "soul" of print and is, in effect, the archetype of "typographic man"--the "Everyman" of the eighteenth century.

Mr. Spectator thus became a cultural object himself. And the very fact of his central role as a cultural myth suggests that he was deeply involved in some essential problems which reveal something about the culture of the eighteenth century. Mr. Spectator's constitution and Addison's emphasis on sight as the most important sense indicate that perhaps primary among these cultural issues was the much discussed concept of *ut pictura poesis*. Ronald Paulson, in his study of this concept in eighteenth century England, starts with the English garden

Confusion imaginable every time she stirred a Leg or an Arm" (S 45, I, 192-193). And there were times when he seems to have regretted accepting the public role of being merely an on-looker to life, as when he is approached by a pretty prostitute near Covent Garden: "I was jogged on the Elbow . . . by a slim young Girl of about Seventeen, who with a pert Air asked me if I was for a Pint of Wine. I do not know but I should have indulged my Curiosity in having some Chat with her, but that I am informed that the Man of the *Bumper* [Tavern] knows me; and it would have made a Story for him not very agreeable to some Part of my Writings, though I have in others so frequently said that I am wholly unconcerned in any Scene I am in, but merely as a Spectator" (S 266, II, 534).

and notes that at the beginning of the century landscapes were planned so that when a visitor sat on a bench he would look in the direction it was pointed and see a scene carefully prepared to look like a page from an emblem book, accompanied even by inscriptions. As one followed the path around the garden, emblem followed emblem in a prescribed order.¹⁰

By as early as the 1720's, however, this linearity in garden layout had begun to change. In Alexander Pope's Twickenham garden, for instance, various paths converged from different directions to terminate at an obelisk erected to the memory of his mother, thus revealing different aspects of the central object as it was seen down different garden paths from various directions. Paulson observes that over the next twenty years, this trend toward viewing one object from multiple perspectives had formalized into definite "pictorial circuits" or "perimeter belts" in gardens. Instead of just wandering through the garden, one would follow a path which made a circuit of it, pausing at benches which revealed a series of points of view that gave different perspectives on the same scene (Paulson, 166).

Though the pictorial circuit was a cultural phenomenon of the mid-1700's, manifested in literature in the works of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett (Paulson, pp. 174-181), the *Spectator* even at its early date showed signs of the drift. Just as the pictorial circuit set up different perspectives of something which was itself various (Paulson,

¹⁰Paulson, "The Pictorial Circuit and Related Structures in 18th Century England," *The Varied Pattern: Studies in the 18th Century*, eds. Peter Hughes and David Williams (Toronto: A. M. Hakkart, 1971), p. 166.

169), so a similar mosaic view was presented by the "Club" device in the *Spectator*.

Spectator 34 provides a good example of the "club" circuit or round, with the *Spectator* itself as the central object:

I last night sat very late in Company with this select Body of Friends, who entertain'd me with several Remarks which they and others had made upon these my Speculations, as also with the various Success which they had met with among their several Ranks and Degrees of Readers. WILL. HONEYCOMB told me, in the softest Manner he could, That there were some Ladies (but for your Comfort, says WILL., they are not those of the most Wit) that were offended at the Liberties I had taken with the Opera and the Puppet-Show; That some of them were likewise very much surpriz'd that I should think such serious Points as the Dress and Equipage of Persons of Quality, proper Subjects for Raillery.

He was going on, when Sir. ANDREW FREEPORT took him up short, and told him, That the Papers he hinted at had done great Good in the City, and that all their Wives and Daughters were the better for them: And further added, That the whole City thought themselves very much obliged to me for declaring my generous Intentions to scourge Vice and Folly as they appear in a Multitude, without condescending to be a Publisher of particular Intrigues and Cuckoldoms. In short, says Sir ANDREW, if you avoid that foolish beaten Road of falling upon Alderman and Citizens, and employ your Pen upon the Vanity and Luxury of Courts, your Paper must needs be of general Use.

Upon this my Friend the TEMPLAR told Sir ANDREW, That he wonder'd to hear a Man of his Sense talk after that Manner; that the City had always been the Province for Satyr; and that the Wits of King *Charles's* Time jested upon nothing else during his whole Reign. He then shew'd, by the examples of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, *Boileau*, and the best Writers of every Age, that the Follies of the Stage and Court had never been accounted too sacred for Ridicule, how great soever the Persons might be that patroniz'd them. But after all, says he, I think your Raillery has made too great an Excursion, in attacking several Persons of the Inns of Court; and I do not believe you can shew me any Precedent for your Behaviour in that Particular.

My good Friend Sir ROGER DE COVERLY, who has said nothing all this while, began his Speech with a Pish! and told us, That he wonder'd to see so many Men of Sense so very serious upon Fooleries. Let our good Friend, says he, attack every one that deserves it: 'I would only advise you, Mr. SPECTATOR, applying himself to me, to take Care how you meddle with Country Squires: They are the Ornaments of the English Nation; Men of good Heads and sound Bodies! and let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you that you mention Fox-hunters with so little Respect.

Captain SENTRY spoke very sparingly on this Occasion. What he said was only to commend my Prudence in not touching upon the Army, and advised me to continue to act discreetly in that Point.

By this Time I found every Subject of my Speculations was taken away from me by one or other of the Club; and began to think my self in the Condition of the good Man that had one Wife who took a Dislike to his grey Hairs, and another to his black, till by their picking out what each of them had an Aversion to, they left his Head altogether bald and naked. (I, 142-143)

We can see here how Addison and Steele point out that how something looks and what sort of reactions it calls forth depend a great deal on the point of view from which it is seen. So while the point of view of Mr. Spectator might predominate in the *Spectator*, and while his view might very well have coincided with that of the vast majority of his readers, the use of the "Club" device points up that it was not the only viewpoint, that others did exist, and that, indeed, value or lack of value of something had very much to do with its value in the mind of its beholder.

One explanation of this shift in perspective could be that the world order--the shared myths--of the renaissance had dissolved, leaving the viewer incapable of seeing the object as a whole. With single, wholistic meaning no longer possible, each man brought his own meaning to bear on it, as symbolized by the various viewpoints along the pictorial circuit or club round (Paulson, p. 169). This possibility thus brings up another aesthetic problem the *Spectator* had to deal with.

The unique artistic potentialities of the single folio half-sheet of printed paper had not been exploited before the time of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*; indeed, the printed folio half-sheet had no literary character at all except when used for a broadside ballad, the lowest literary genre. By the time the *Spectator* did appear, the single sheet was firmly established in the public mind as a journalistic medium; so another problem that faced Addison and Steele was how to

adapt an established journalistic medium to handle what was essentially a literary task (Kinsley, 486-487).

Obviously, the solution was to discriminate between the advantages and disadvantages of the folio half-sheet format and then to design their journalistic literature, their periodical essays, so as to utilize the advantages while escaping the disadvantages (Kinsley, 490). One quality that the newspaper format offered was a presentation of the discontinuous variety and incongruity of everyday life through its juxtapositioning of random news items on a page of print--a presentation analagous to that of the pictorial circuit or club round--which formed a mosaic of the community (McLuhan, *Media*, p. 207). "The press," states McLuhan, "is a daily fiction or thing made, and it is made out of just about everything in the community. By the mosaic format, it is made into a communal image or cross-section" (*Media*, p. 212).

Through the "club-round" device and by the juxtaposition of a wide variety of subjects in their series of daily essays, Addison and Steele used the journalistic mosaic to create such a communal image or cross-section. Since the journalistic mosaic helped to break up the continuum of linear art and narrative and thus allow the possibility of cinematic montage to emerge, eighteenth-century writers who worked in or were exposed to journalism were naturally attracted to and employed the retracing and reconstruction principle of art disclosed by montage. Forward montage yields narrative, while backward it reconstructs events and gives analysis; arrested, montage constitutes mosaic, in this case the landscape or printscape of the press, the coexistence of all aspects of communal life.¹¹

¹¹McLuhan, "Joyce, Mallarmé and the Press," *McLuhan: Hot & Cool*

It is thus a printscape of London and its environs that is presented in the *Spectator*. *Spectator* 101 contains a description of the periodical as it might be written by a future historian: after sketching briefly Mr. Spectator and a few members of his circle, the historian notes that "as for [Mr. Spectator's] Speculations . . . we still understand enough of them to see the Diversions and Characters of the *English Nation* at his Time. . ." (I, 425). Further on, in *Spectator* 435, Addison states that

Most of the Papers I give to the Publick are written on Subjects that never vary, but are ever fixed and immutable. Of this kind are all my serious Essays and Discourses; but there is another Sort of Speculations, which I consider as Occassional 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 Behaviour of my Contrymen 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. (IV, 27)

Indeed, a mosaic of London is vividly rendered in the *Spectator*. The routine of the members of coffee-houses and clubs with their news sheets and debates are all pictured and commented upon. Theaters, actors and performers, churches, ships and ship traffic on the Thames are topics that sit side-by-side in the *Spectator*. There is the outer image of a "blind" beggar thriftily mending his stockings with a needle and thread while a "lame fellow" brings him a pot of ale, and the inner image of St. Paul's as a "huge mis-shapen Rock," hollowed out and made regular by "Industrious" natives, provided by King Sa Ga Yean Qua Rash Tow. Here too are the gravel pits at Kensington, second-hand dresses hanging in Long Lane, a tub of ale set abroach at Parson's Green,

weddings at St. Pancras in the Fields, executions at Smithfield, term-time at Westminster Hall, screens and sets of hangings for sale in St. Paul's Churchyard, Mr. Boul's auction in "Shandois-street," and the auction of pictures in Convent Garden, elephants at Bartholomew Fair, lions at Hay Market, bears at Hockley-in-the-Hold and Holborn.

But that is by no means all. People of all kinds make an appearance: the directors, secretaries, clerks of The Bank; an "honest" tradesman and a haberdasher in Cheapside, a dancing-master in The City, a player in Convent Garden, the "gladiators" of Hockley-in-the-Hold, a mannish equestrienne in Hyde Park, beggars and stationers in Lincoln's Inn-fields, a fortune teller in Moorfields, an eminent banker in Lombard Street, the fishmonger in The Strand, a gay gentleman of The Temple, a young rake of the Inner Temple, "Mohocks" in Fleet Street, Drury Lane, Norfolk Street and The Temple; quack doctors in Barbican, Drury Lane, Hammersmith and Russell Court; "Vainloves" and "Silk-Worms." Landmarks are described: Bedlam, the Custom-House, the Royal Exchange, Ludgate Prison, Whitehall, the Workhouse, St. Bartholomew's, Chelsea and Bridewell Hospitals, dueling places at Barn Elms, Hyde Park and behind Montague House. Beyond the town, the *Spectator* also managed to depict something of the sport, superstition and comedy in the old-fashioned social life of the country gentleman.

All of these images the *Spectator* arranged in a sequence of associations, logical or at random, that collectively provide a mosaic or even cross-section of the community in which it existed. Bacon might have seen his world as a book, but Addison and Steele saw theirs as a journalistic mosaic, a printscape or "actualized realism" which Karl Capek discovered to be "the ontological system of newspapers [which was

itself] eternally expressing new realities in a stabilized and unchangable form."¹²

McLuhan has pointed out many times the situation wherein old media of communication become the content of new media;¹³ in this case, speech, both written and oral, becomes the content of the print medium of the *Spectator*. The two modes of composition spoken of in number 435 and analyzed again in more detail in *Spectator* 476, i.e., the "serious" essay and the "occasional" loose discourse, back up this contention; and though Mr. Spectator goes on to point out the merits that the serious, more traditional and rational, composition has over the "wild" essay, he nonetheless admits that he himself uses both (IV, 186).

He says in *Spectator* 249 that the loose and free essay is the mode of composition he uses "when I make a Choice of a Subject that is not been treated by others. . ." (II, 465). Further on, *Spectator* 476 observes that ordinary conversation wanted method as badly as did writing: "I," states Mr. Spectator, "who hear a thousand Coffee-house Debates every Day," note that there "is not one Dispute in ten which is managed in those Schools of Politicks, where of the three first Sentences, the Question is not entirely lost" (IV, 466). In *Spectator* 46, Addison goes into some detail on Mr. Spectator's method of composing the loose essay, which consists first in taking notes on overheard conversations, on correspondences and observations, in a sort of loose

¹² Capek, *In Praise of Newspapers*, trans. M. and R. Weatherall (New York: Arts, 1951), p. 12. Cited in McLuhan, "Mallarmé," 134.

¹³ National Association of Educational Broadcasters, "Report on Understanding Media," consultant Marshall McLuhan (June 30, 1960), p. 14.

shorthand which only he could decipher, and then, secondly, in transcribing and organizing them so that the question would not be lost in the first three sentences (I, 196). The "occasional" essays in the *Spectator*, thus, were in one sense at least an attempt to render the everyday conversation of London visually in print.

But casual conversation is not the only mode of speech used by a community; formal discourse, essential for scholarship, sermons, ceremonies, debates in parliament and the like must also be represented in a communal image. Therefore, when dealing with such great topics as morality, aesthetics, philosophy--subjects, in other words, already treated by others--the *Spectator* uses a more rhetorical or traditional mode of composition. To this end, Mr. Spectator in number 491 speaks of running from book to book, searching for stories which illustrate his thinking, in order to discover "the Truth for which there is good Authority" (IV, 240). But whether occasional or formal, the content of the *Spectator* consisted of the older medium of speech, and its inclusion in the periodical allowed the *Spectator* to form a comprehensive communal image.

As a group confessional form the press provides a mosaic or collective image that commands deep communal participation (McLuhan, *Media*, pp. 205, 211). Besides the inadvertant or accidental participation provided through reader-identification with persons, places or situations that might be discussed in a given essay, the *Spectator* also obtained part of the necessary participation through its use of letters, both spurious and real. *Spectator* 1 announces that the periodical would publish all correspondence "as may contribute to the Advancement of the Publick Weal" (I, 6). *Spectator* 37 reveals that Mr. Spectator

viewed the opinions of his correspondents seriously and that he considered their thoughts before offering his own opinion on difficult topics; *Spectator* 16, 46, 271 and 442 indicate that Mr. Spectator regularly made use, either partially or wholly, of letters from readers in his own papers. Kinsley notes an interesting phenomenon: so close was reader-identification with Mr. Spectator that almost all of the real letters sent to the *Spectator* not only were written in remarkably close imitation of the style which Addison and Steele used in composing spurious letters but also usually bore the same purpose, i.e., the reformation of morals, and had the same tone, i.e., gently satiric, as that of Mr. Spectator himself (Kinsley, 483). No doubt this phenomenon is partially the result of the ordinary typographic man's identification with and thus imitation of the archetypal typographic man embodied by Mr. Spectator, but this situation may also be a case of audio-tactile (speech) involvement or participation brought about by the nature of print as "a HD visual" medium--a McLuhan designation which means that print, because of the high definition of the visual sense structurally inherent in the medium, forces a high degree of reader involvement or "subjective completion" in senses of low definition in the medium, in this case the audio-tactile or spoken word.¹⁴ The *Spectator*, being as it was the emblem of print, would naturally elicit a high degree of audio-tactile subjective completion or communal participation via speech. Readers were further involved in the periodical by the practice of using the *Spectator* as a kind of bulletin board, wherein one reader could "post" a message to another (Kinsley, 493-

¹⁴NAEB Report, p. 16.

494). The *Spectator* acknowledged its readers' involvement in numbers 215 and 555, which pay tribute to the "many unknown hands" who contributed to the compilation of the periodical. The end effect of this direct communal participation in the *Spectator* was that the roles of reader and writer became virtually indistinguishable; the anonymity in which Mr. Spectator cloaked himself actually reveals his catalytic function, for the reader of his words was thus in ignorance as to whether he was reading the views of Mr. Spectator, his neighbor, a stranger, or possibly even himself (Kinsley, 483-484).

In number 124, Mr. Spectator contrasts the design and nature of his periodical with that of the book, saying that the *Spectator* could travel further and faster than could a book, could fit into the "Nooks and Crannies of the fashionable Mind" where no book could possibly fit (I, 505). However, though the *Spectator* had the look and feel of a work of journalism, there is no escaping that it was intended to be a work of literature, that its purpose was literary, and that such intents and purposes are traditionally conveyed by the book form.

A literary intention is first declared in *Spectator* 10, where is found the well-known pronouncement that the *Spectator* would bring "Philosophy out of the Closets, and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and Coffee-houses" (I, 44). By "Philosophy" the *Spectator* meant many kinds of knowledge and wisdom, from morals to fashions, and on many matters. In fact, it conveyed to its readers the very best thought of its time, and Samuel Johnson was able to give it credit for the high standard of

"General Knowledge which now circulates in common talk. . . ." ¹⁵ In *Spectator* 58, the intention announced is the banishment of vice and ignorance; number 245 wishes to give readers an insight into the ways of men; the revival of the "Allegorical Way" of writing is proposed in *Spectator* 501; number 525 speaks of restoring the "proper ideas of things." Periodically the *Spectator* even reviews its plans and intentions in a sort of running account of its successes and failures. ¹⁶ None of these subsequent elaborations, however, conflict with the purpose the *Spectator* initially set for itself, which was to be a repository of non-topical knowledge--in other words, to be a work of literary art.

In this sense, then, the *Spectator* was a book even when issued in penny sheets; and it was in truth a book when it was collected into volumes. As such it is an extension of the visual faculty, and thus emphasizes perspective and point of view (McLuhan, *Media*, p. 172). It also has a confessional character in as much as it conveys the authors' inner thoughts to the outer world, creating the effect of an "inside story." From the standpoint of medium, then, the printed book can be defined as "a private confessional form that provides point of view" (McLuhan, *Media*, p. 204).

But engaging a journalistic cart to carry a literary load presents certain problems. As Karl Capek has said, "The ontological system of newspapers is actualized realism: what is just *now* exists [emphasis

¹⁵ James Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. George B. Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 4, 217, n4.

¹⁶ *S* 262, II, 516-520; *S* 409, III, 530; *S* 455, IV, 27-28.

added] . . . literature is the expression of old things in eternally new forms, while newspapers are eternally expressing new realities in a stabilized and unchangable form" (see note 13). The mosaic realism of the newspaper effects a complex and many-leveled group awareness and participation which the book had never been able to achieve. The press, therefore, expresses a collective and communal image and assumes quite naturally a posture of opposition to private interests and manipulation. Thus the book reader and writer find their private and fragmentary point of view natural ground for hostility toward the press with its big communal powers. "As media," McLuhan observes, "the book and the newspaper seem to be as incompatible as any two media could be" (*Media*, p. 216). Not without careful consideration, then, could Addison and Steele subvert the fundamental incompatibility of the newspaper and the book.

But Addison and Steele apparently did consider carefully this problem. By way of illustrating their solution to it, Theall notes that McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* has "affinities with surrealism and dadaism on the one hand, and gloss, marginalia, and illumination on the other," and thus its form shows "the way that the McLuhanesque method marries the present to the past" (p. 24). Similarly, Addison and Steele crossed the journalistic format with the book form and conceived the periodic essay, thereby homogenizing the diversity of print forms and "tempering animosities," says Harold Innis, in the process of making the newspaper "a purifying and constructive force of value to the divine and the philanthropist as well as the politician."¹⁷

¹⁷Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p. 145. Quoted in Theall, p. 38.

Or, as Mr. Spectator put it:

as I am very sensible my Paper would lose its whole Effect, should it run into the Outrages of a Party, I shall take care to keep clear of every thing which looks that Way. If I any way assuage private Inflammations, or allay Publick Ferments, I shall apply my self to it with my utmost Endeavours: but will never let my Heart reproach me, with having done any thing towards increasing those Feuds and Animositities that extinguish Religion, deface Government, and make a Nation miserable. (*S* 16, I, 72-73)

This tempering effort climaxes in the persona of Mr. Spectator who, as the archetypal typographic man, renders all the world into homogenized notes of equitone prose.

To understand better the unique brilliance of Addison and Steele in manipulating their media, we might contrast the *Spectator* with one of its ostensible followers, the *Rambler* by Samuel Johnson. While generally considered to be a work of the periodical essay genre which Addison and Steele founded, the *Rambler* did not achieve, indeed, possibly did not even recognize, the fine balance of media characteristics so fundamental to the success of the *Spectator*.¹⁸ The *Rambler* essays appeared in the journalistic format of the single sheet for business reasons more than aesthetic ones; it never attempted to reconcile the character of the press with that of the book--i.e., journalism with literature. The *Rambler* did not employ a mosaic format in as much as the topics considered were restricted to those of morality, religion, and criticism, nor did it attempt to provide a communal image or cross-section through topical references, as Johnson himself declares in *Rambler* 208:

I have never complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topick or the day; I have rarely

¹⁸Ed., W. J. Bate and Albrecht Strauss, Yale edition of the *Works* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), "Introduction," III, xxxii.

exemplified my assertions by living characters; in my papers, no man would look for censures of his enemies, or praise of himself; and they only were expected to peruse them, whose passion left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity.¹⁹

W. Hale White illustrates just how aloof the *Rambler* was from the community:

The *Rambler* takes but little notice of public topics. It has nothing to say about the earthquakes which in March and April of 1750, frightened London out of its senses, when people of fashion left it and sat in their coaches on the open roads. . . . The Bishop of London charged . . . [that] they were a judgment on the infidel literature of the age, on the blasphemy in the streets, . . . and lastly on the increase of Popery. The first number of the *Rambler*, published when the Bishop was still sounding the episcopal trumpet, was an apology for issuing the *Rambler* in parts; the second was a meditation on the common weakness of anticipating the future, and the third was an essay on criticism.²⁰

As further indication of non-involvement with the community, the *Rambler* allowed very little opportunity for communal participation. There was none of the *Spectator's* elaborate manipulation of real and spurious letters or the bulletin function that created at least the illusion of communal involvement; the letters of the *Rambler* were for the most part used only to give diversity to the moral instruction of the paper. And due to its failure to recognize the aesthetics of print, the *Rambler* effected only minimal involvement via its medium.

Neither was Mr. Rambler developed or utilized to the extent or for the purpose Mr. Spectator was; so entranced, in fact, was the public with the motif of the *Spectator*, that Johnson felt compelled in an

¹⁹Bate and Strauss, *Rambler*, V, 316. All further citations to this source.

²⁰White, "Preface," to *Selections from Dr. Johnson's 'Rambler'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), xv.

early issue to answer criticism that his *Rambler* was not more like its predecessor. He states in number 23:

Some [critics] were angry that the Rambler did not, like the Spectator, introduce himself to the acquaintance of the publick, by an account of his own birth and studies, and enumeration of his adventures, and a description of physiognomy. Others soon began to remark that he was a solemn, serious, dictatorial writer, without sprightiness or gaiety, and called out with vehemence for mirth and humour. Another admonished him to have a special eye upon the various clubs of this great city, and informed him that much of the Spectator's vivacity was laid out upon such assemblies. He has been censured for not imitating the politeness of his predecessors, having hitherto neglected to take the ladies under his protection, and give them rules for the just opposition of colours, and the proper dimensions of ruffles and pinnners. He has been required by one to fix a particular censure upon those matrons who play cards with spectacles. (III, 128-129)

So strong was the influence and impression of Mr. Spectator on the public that Mr. Rambler was expected to be a carbon copy of him, even down to the subjects of his discourse. He is, in fact, very much like Mr. Spectator in some ways; for instance, both Mr. Spectator and Mr. Rambler have qualities of aloofness and personal detachment. But Mr. Spectator, by virtue of his typographic constitution, allows the energy and force of his character to be transferred to the paper; literally, he "printed himself out." Thus, although Mr. Spectator remains detached, the agility, ubiquity, and convenience of his substance--i.e., the material sheet of paper on which he exists--allows his audience to become closely involved with him (Kinsley, 402) in a way that they did not with Mr. Rambler. And in this characteristic Mr. Spectator seems remarkably similar to Mr. Addison:

Addison, rather than seeking to demonstrate his distance from the mass which he ministers to, seeks to efface it; for all his promotion of the 'Spectator' image, his view of himself is that of participant, not sage. The identification with the mass is never complete, of course, and we never forget that Addison and his imitators represent, in their capacity as 'secular archbishops,'

as viable an elite as the eighteenth century ever had. But one has only to imagine the Addisonian formulas--'I,' 'they,' 'certain young gentlemen,' and 'for my part'--in the prose of, say, the judicious Hooker or Johnson to recognize how incongruous they would seem there and to recognize how congenial to the mass the Addisonian elite had sought to become. (Stevick, 173)

In other words, by marrying the mosaic techniques of the press with the single point of view of the book, Addison and Steele fuse their narrator personality with its manifestations in print: Mr. Spectator and the *Spectator* are indeed one (Stevick, 492). Johnson, on the other hand, never succeeds in equating Mr. Rambler with the *Rambler*, if indeed he ever attempted such an equation, which is doubtful, for Mr. Rambler throughout the life of the periodical resolutely represented only the single point of view afforded by the book and never the mosaic of the community. In this light, we might understand why the *Rambler* was not successful as a periodical, at best circulating no more than 500 copies per number²¹ compared with the *Spectator's* 3000, but when put in book-form, i.e., when it moved finally into its aesthetically proper medium, it attained a wide popularity and readership with ten editions of it appearing in Johnson's lifetime alone.²² Mr. Spectator could satisfy instinctively the taste of his audience while insinuating his own message at the same time (Kinsley, 483), and this ability derived in great measure from the understanding that Addison and Steele had of the nature and application of print.

Not only through the anonymity of Mr. Spectator who was himself the embodiment of print but also by means of a communal mosaic revealed

²¹Bate and Strauss, *Rambler*, III, xxi.

²²O. F. Christie, *Johnson the Essayist* (New York, 1925), p. 10.

in the *Spectator*, they raised existence to the level of scientific and/or poetical intelligibility and conferred on things and persons a new mode of existence, an existence in print, which the authors felt helped to perfect them. Thus the very medium of the *Spectator* itself was brought to bear on reforming its readers, and because these readers were predisposed to the logic of the medium, they responded to its appeal. Mr. Spectator reports of his print-hungry readers that

"They read the Advertisements with the same curiosity as the Articles of Public News; and are as pleased to hear of a Pyebald Horse that is stray'd out of a Field near Islington, as or a whole troop that has been engaged in any Foreign Adventure. In short, they have a Relish for everything that is News, let the matter of it be what it will." (S 452, IV, 92)

Moreover, the use of juxtaposition that Addison and Steele borrowed from the newspaper was refined in the *Spectator* not just to reform the morality of the age but to present the age with the universe transcribed into a new mode of being that was implicitly intelligible, one by means of which each reader could orchestrate for himself a world order or mosaic or emblem based solely on how he saw the various parts of the universe fitting together.²³

"Philosophically," Stevick concludes, "the entire century

²³This effect is precisely that of the press medium: The public press presents a kind of group picture or verbal telephoto of the global human community, hour by hour. This image is made by means of a collage or assembly of dozens and even hundreds of small items much as a wire photo is achieved by means of numerous dots forming a stippled pattern.

The make-up of each page must tend toward a selection in order to include a very large range of human interests. The mosaic of human interests thus achieved creates a strong impression of depth and range so that the ordinary reader is quite satisfied that he has made a real contact with the collective life of the community under the dateline indicated at the top of the page. (NAEB Report, p. 66.)

The *Spectator* presented such a mosaic with the dateline removed, thus making its mosaic timeless and all-inclusive.

demonstrates a sympathy for what Lovejoy calls 'rationalistic anti-intellectualism,' the conviction that all ideas can be understood, if stated lucidly, by any rational mind and the complexity of argument is only a device of obscurantism. Both socially and intellectually, the eighteenth-century audience was genuinely in search of good sense and was consequently willing to make social adjustments according to the rhetorical promptings of its counsellors" (173). Print gave to eighteenth-century man a mode of existence which promised that all the universe was within the grasp of his understanding, and the true measure of the extent of this promise was for the first time disclosed in the pages of the *Spectator*.

CHAPTER VI

PRINT AND CINEMA

In the eighteenth century virtually all critics and rhetoricians agreed with Alexander Pope that imagery was fundamental to poetry.¹ Beyond this point there was basic disagreement, however, most of it stemming from different conception of vision. The contention lay implicit in Johnson's definition of vision:

1. Sight; the faculty of seeing.
2. The act of seeing.
3. A supernatural appearance; a spectre, a phantom.
4. A dream; something shown in a dream. A dream happens to a sleeping, a vision may happen to a waking man. A dream is supposed natural, a vision miraculous; but they are confounded.

There were thus two distinct and separate notions of vision--one was that it is the power of perceiving reality; the other was that it is the power for expanding it--and critics tended to follow one or the other of these two notions.²

Among artistic sensibilities, the power of perceiving reality was manifested in a concern with producing meaning or understanding, while the power of expanding reality or of enhancing it led to a concern with feeling. Some critics of the century, including Addison, argued that the proper medium for a sensibility primarily concerned with understanding was prose, while the medium for feeling was poetry; others, often practicing poets of the period, showed that both understanding and

¹Pope, *Correspondence* . . . , ed. George Shuburn, III, 419 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956--). Dryden, of course, would have agreed. See recent studies by Miner, Hoffmann et al.

²Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Poetry of Vision: Five Eighteenth-Century Poets* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 2.

feeling could be expressed in poetry alone. These poets argued that poets can produce understanding and feeling if they made "pictures" endowed with color and shape:

If the historian describes a river, a mountain, or a country, he ought to mention chiefly those circumstances, which may make, what he has afterwards to say of them, understood; but the poet must draw a picture of the thing by an enumeration of such particulars, as would strike the eye or other sense of a person present. In giving such images or pictures, the great art of poetic description consists.³

Actually, a comparison between poetry and painting was very easy to establish in the eighteenth century because formal correspondences were believed to exist between the two "sister arts"; indeed, "design equals plot" and "color equals words" were common critical equations made between them.⁴ As might be expected, Addison subscribed to this correspondence too, as seen in *Spectator* 595 where he applies the pictorial test to metaphor: let the reader, he asserts, consider "Metaphors or Images actually painted," for "by this . . . Rule, a Reader may be able to judge of the Union of all Metaphors whatsoever, and determine which are Homogeneous, and which Heterogeneous; or to speak more plainly, which are Consistent and which Inconsistent" (V, 36). Other critics of the time agreed with Addison; in fact, one of them, William Whitehead, went so far so to say that the "pencil" was the proper test of every "piece of poetry."⁵

³Henry Pemberton, *Observations on Poetry, Especially the Epic: Occasioned by the Late Poem upon Leonidas* (London, 1738), p. 76. Quoted in Chester E. Chapin, *Personification in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1955), p. 31.

⁴Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *The Art Bulletin*, 22 (1940), 202. Cited in Chapin, p. 32.

⁵Whitehead, *An Essay on Ridicule* (London, 1753), pp. 57-61. Cited in Chapin, pp. 32-33.

Imagery, thus, was generally extolled as the "essence" of poetry, the "substance" of a poem, but there were numerous arguments over what constituted good or proper imagery. Those poets and critics adhering to the idea of vision as a perception of reality valued an image that was an accurate and vivid picture, almost scientifically precise in its rendition of actuality. Others, contending that an image was more than just a picture of actuality, argued that a good and proper image was a precise and vividly rendered picture of a fiction, of some thing or being or scene that did not exist in actuality (Spacks, p. 5).

But whether the picture was rendition of actuality or of fiction, the poem to Addison should indeed be a picture, precisely and vividly expressed: We can safely say," C. D. Thorpe concludes "that, so far as we find it described in its purer form, imaginative pleasure with Addison is basically related to the picture-making function of mind," and Addison regarded the imagination itself primarily as a picture-receiving, picture-retaining, picture-building factory, inseparably related to aesthetic response."⁶ He believed that "Beautiful descriptions and images are the spirit and life of Poetry."⁷

This belief derived from the Lockean description of perception, which asserts that only a few primary qualities actually reside in a perceived object and that more numerous secondary qualities are the

⁶Thorpe, "Addison's Theory of the Imagination as 'Perceptive Response,'" *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters* (1953), 514, 522. Quoted in Chapin, p. 31.

⁷Addison, "Essays on Virgil's Georgics," *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. Guthkelch (London, 1914), II, 4. Quoted in Chapin, p. 31.

product of the perceiver's mind. The eye itself, or physical sight, is therefore limited in the degree of accuracy with which it can render a picture of actuality. Only with the aid of the imagination or wit of the perceiver's mind could an accurate picture of actuality be made. The division between critics and poets centered on the degree of imaginative activity necessary for such a rendition (Spacks, p. 6).

Part of the confusion over the aesthetic nature of vision or imagery can be seen in conflicting statements made by Addison on this issue. On the one hand we find him defending the value of the precise image of actuality achieved by the camera obscura landscape:

If the Products of Nature rise in Value, according as they more or less resemble those of Art, we may be sure that artificial Works receive a greater Advantage from their Resemblance of such as are natural; because here the Similitude is not only pleasant, but the Pattern more perfect. . . . I must confess, the Novelty of such a Sight [as a camera obscura landscape] may be one Occasion of its Pleasantness to the Imagination, but certainly the chief Reason is its near Resemblance to Nature, as it does not only, like other Pictures, give the Colour and Figure, but the Motion of the Things it represents. (S 414, III, 550-551)

Yet on the other hand we find him suggesting that a poet's deviations from actuality are not only inevitable but also invaluable, and that the poet's expansion of vision is vital to a successful aesthetic effect:

because the Mind of Man requires something more perfect in Matter, than what it finds there, and can never meet with any Sight in Nature which sufficiently answers its highest Ideas of Pleasantness; or, in other Words, because Imagination can fancy to itself Things more Great, Strange, or Beautiful, than the Eye ever saw, and is still sensible of some Defect in what it has seen; on this account it is the Part of the Poet to humour the Imagination in its own Notions, by mending and perfecting Nature where he describes a Reality, and by adding greater Beauties than are put together in Nature, where he describes a Fiction. (S 418, III, 569)

But poetic vision itself is a single continuum of imaginative activity, and underlying it is the necessity for the poet to alter

actuality in his very attempt to render it. In *The Sister Arts*, Jean H. Hagstrum has traced the tradition of literary pictorialness in English letters from Dryden to Gray, noting these contradictory statements of Addison regarding the aesthetic nature of vision. He suggests that Addison made a further requirement of poetry beyond the traditional ability to reproduce direct visual experience, the requirements being that poetry should also produce empathetic psychological effects. For Addison, then, Hagstrum concludes, aesthetic value lay primarily in nature, and secondarily in the mind of man.⁸ If we can assume that most of the problems of painting are also the problems of poetry--a safe assumption for the eighteenth century--then André Bazin's remarks concerning the effect of the camera obscura on the direction of painting have a bearing here:

The artist was now [after the discovery of the camera obscura phenomenon] in a position to create the illusion of three-dimensional space within which things appeared to exist as our eyes in reality see them.

Thenceforth painting was torn between two ambitions: one, primarily aesthetic, namely the expression of spiritual reality wherein the symbol transcended its model; the other, purely psychological, namely the duplication of the world outside. The satisfaction of this appetite for illusion merely served to increase it till, bit by bit, it consumed the plastic arts.⁹

With Addison, this "appetite for illusion," this ontological urge, was satisfied by means of an expanded conception of the rhetorical figure and critical notion of *enargeia*, or lifetime vividness. Besides the traditional view that located *enargeia* in the verbal rendition of

⁸Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Pope* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 136-137.

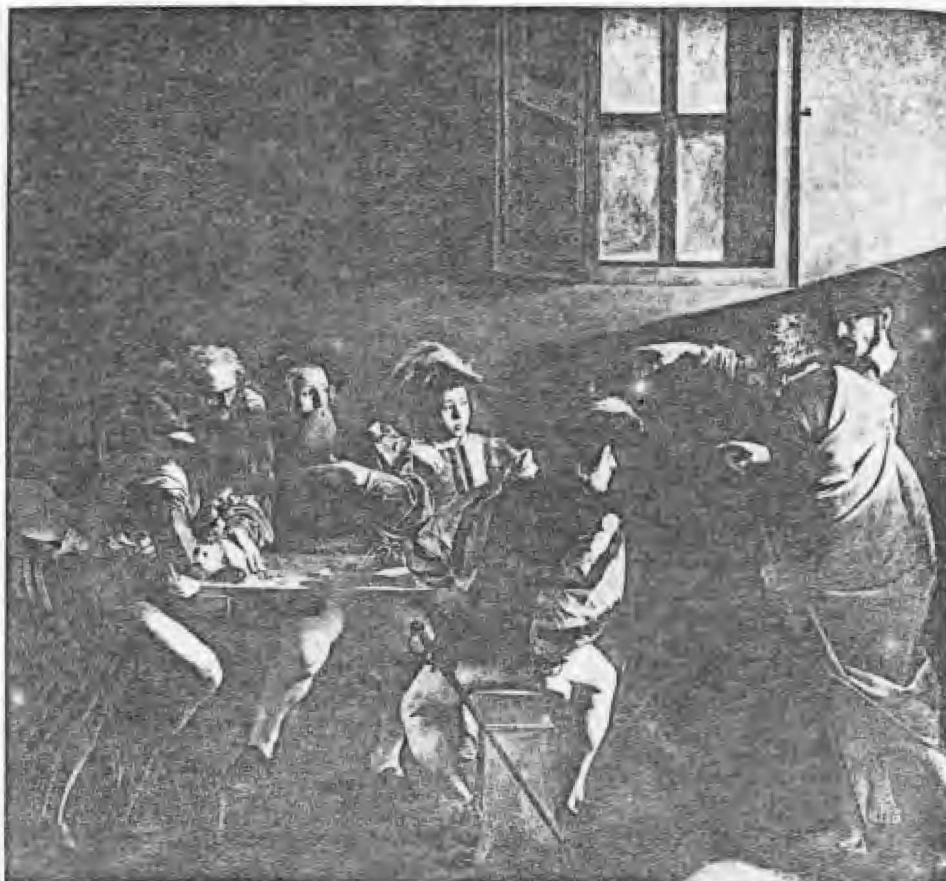
⁹Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray, I (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1967), p. 11.

natural objects and scenes, Addison went one step further and said that *enargeia* also arises from the process of seeing itself (Hagstrum, pp. 137-138). We can see here, then, the reason for the meticulous use of medium in the *Spectator*, for inasmuch as print was the empirical manifestation of sight it also was intimately and essentially involved in satisfying the ontological urge. But, as Bazin notes,

painting [and therefore poetry also] is, after all, an inferior way of making likenesses, an ersatz of the processes of reproduction [see Figures 3, 4 and 5]. Only a photographic lens¹⁰ can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, a kind of decal or transfer. The photographic image is the object, itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discoloured, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model. (p. 14)

While Bazin is no doubt right in asserting that only photography can truly satisfy the ontological urge, it was precisely this kind of photographic reproduction that was the goal of painters and poets in the eighteenth century (see Figure 6). Certainly we can see definite attempts at photographic reproduction in the engravings of Hogarth; and in the *Spectator*, recording all that Mr. Spectator sees with his "objective" eye, we also can see a manifestation of such reproduction. And, in the case of the *Spectator*, at least, with its almost perfect integration of content and form, medium and message, some argument could be made that it, too, like the photographic image, shares the being of the model of which it is the reproduction (Figure 7).

¹⁰Gray makes this observation on the translation of the word "Lens": "Bazin makes a point of the fact that the lens, the basis of photography, is in French called the 'Objectif,' a nuance that is lost in English" (Bazin, p. 13).



Michelangelo Caravaggio. THE CALLING OF ST. MATTHEW. Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome

The isolated moment moves us toward photographic stress on visual realism.

Darkness is to space what silence is to sound, i.e., the interval.

No ambient light--the world of the proscenium arch and stage lighting.

The contrast between low living and high thinking--the Caravaggio formula.

"To live without clocks is to live forever."--R.L.S. Time is only divisible in visual space.

Figure 3. McLuhan plate a[†]

†Marshall McLuhan and Harley Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting* (New York/Evanston/London: Harper and Row, 1968). All subsequent figures are from this work.



Joseph Mallord William Turner. STEAMER IN A SNOWSTORM. The National Gallery, London

An augury of the Romantic shift from the picturesque scene to the dynamics of process.

"Painting is a science . . . an inquiry into the laws of nature."--Constable

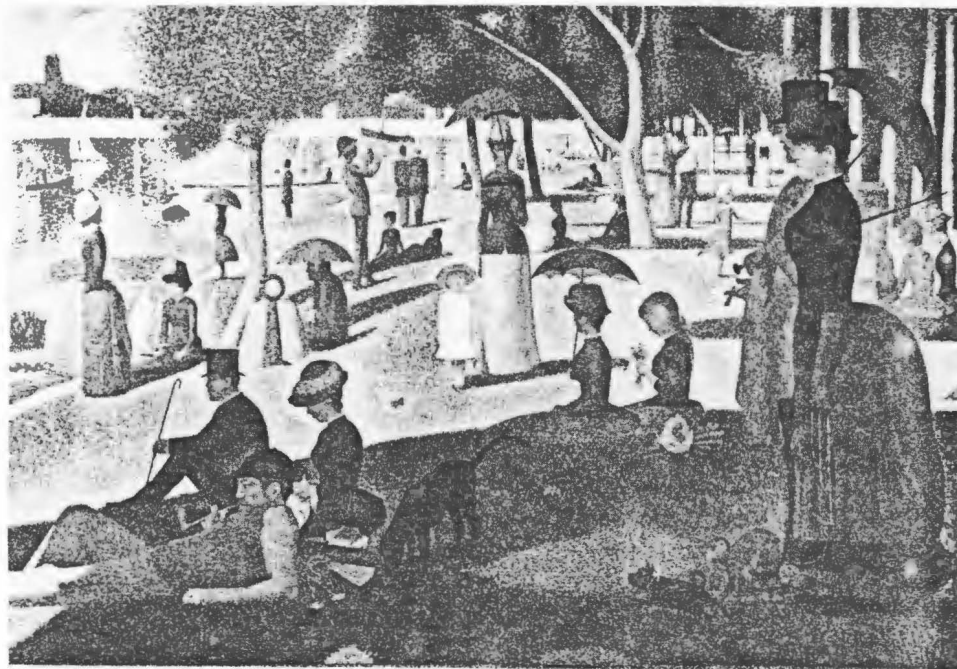
The key to the theme of Ruskin's "innocent eye"
--pure discovery. Child's awareness as
"scientific" probe, a fidelity to the natural
process of knowing and learning.

A slight foretaste of light through.

Preview of the spaces of cinema, just as Seurat
anticipates the spaces of TV.

The struggle of American education to obtain the
freedom and spontaneity of nonvisual values by
visual blueprints. Compare the dilemma of the
tourist attempting to enjoy the wilderness via
rail, road and photography, the exclusion of all
but the visual faculty.

Figure 4. McLuhan plate b.



Georges Seurat. A SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE. The Art Institute of Chicago

Painting as light source flips viewer
into vanishing point.

The Oriental moment of reversal--
Seurat prophet of TV.

Seurat is the art fulcrum between Renaissance
visual and modern tactile. The coalescing of
inner and outer, subject and object.

Seurat, by divisionism, anticipates quadricolor
reproduction and color TV.

Foreshortening as one adjunct of perspective is
not relevant in "light through" situation.

Figure 5. McLuhan plate c.



Thomas Gainsborough. LANDSCAPE WITH A BRIDGE. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

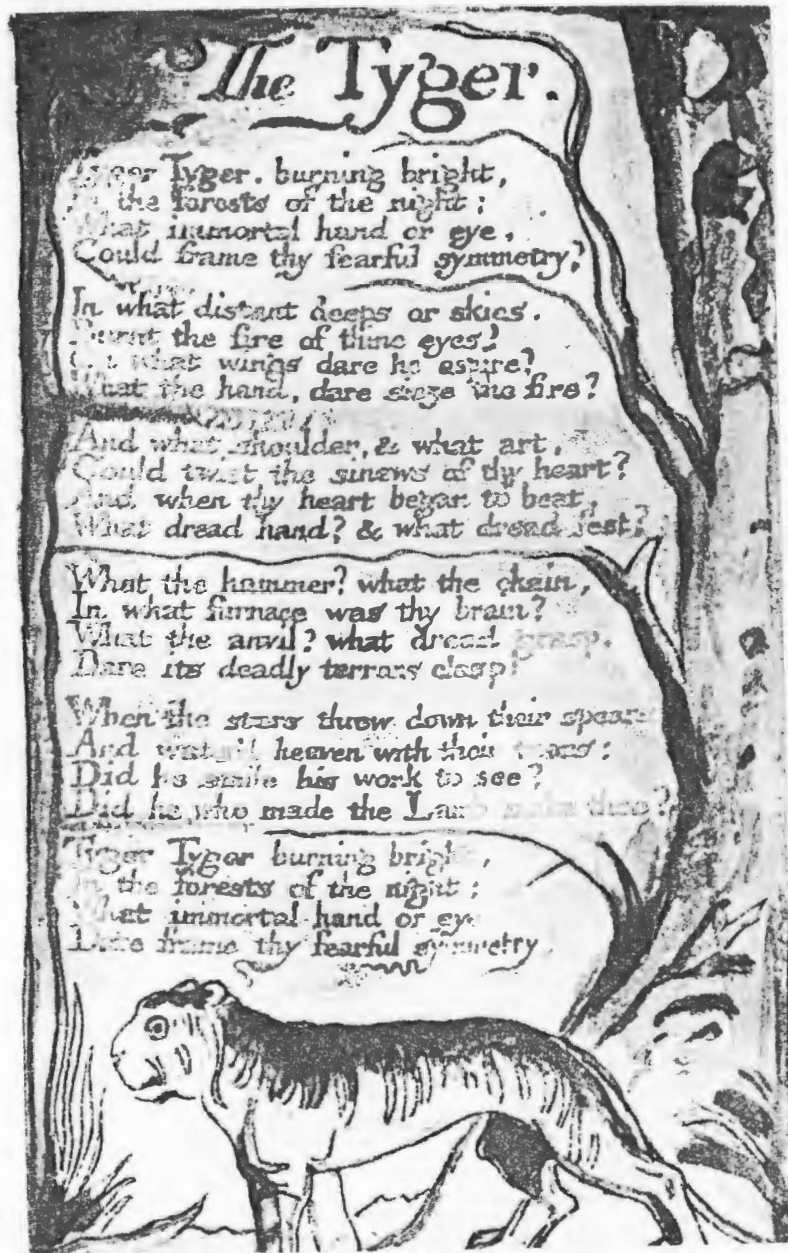
No leap yet from the beautiful to the sublime.
--it comes a little later.

A lake "will appear to most advantage when
approached from its outlet, especially if the
lake be in a mountainous country."
--Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*

Romantic poets and painters offer probes into
the world of the aesthetic process.

The eighteenth century was dedicated to the
proposition that the outer world existed to
end in a picture.

Figure 6. McLuhan plate d.



The bounding line above all as a counter-stimulant for the senses in an age of jaded pictorialism.

Blake, in this day, would have preferred the comic book to the photograph?

Perhaps you would prefer a Delacroix tiger to this icon?

Visual sensory fragmentation scorned. Iconic sensory unity used as exploratory thrust into new age.

Blake's insistence on art as a means of perception appears in his own aphorism:

"No man can embrace True Art
Until he has Explor'd and cast out False Art."

Blake, the craftsman, fought industrial specialism and fragmentation, by writing, designing and engraving his own works.

Figure 7. McLuhan plate e.

To get an idea of the ontology of the *Spectator* "image," we might first contrast it with an image from the *Tatler*. Here Steele describes the following scene at Will's Coffee-house:

A good company of us were this day to see, or rather hear, an artful person do several feats of activity with his throat and windpipe. The first thing wherewith he presented us, was a ring of bells, which he imitated in a most miraculous manner; after that, he gave us all the different notes of a pack of hounds, to our great delight and astonishment. The company expressed their applause with much noise; and never was heard such harmony of men and dogs: but a certain plump merry fellow, from an angle of the room, fell a crowing like a cock so ingeniously, that he won our hearts from the other operator in an instant. As soon as I saw him, I recollected I had seen him on the stage, and immediately knew it to be Tom Mirror, the comical actor. He immediately addressed to see a virtuoso take satisfaction in any representations below that of human life; and asked me, whether I thought this acting of bells and dogs was to be considered under the notion of wit, humour or satire? 'Were it not better,' continued he, 'to have some particular picture of man laid before your eyes, that might incite your laughter?' He had no sooner spoke the word, but he immediately quitted his natural shape, and talked to me in a very different air and tone from what he had used before: upon which, all that sat near us laughed; but I saw no distortion in his countenance, or any thing that appeared to me disagreeable. I asked Pacolet, what meant that sudden whisper about us? for I could not take the jest. He answered, 'The gentleman you were talking to assumed your air and countenance so exactly, that all fell a-laughing to see how little you knew yourself, and how much you were enamoured with your own image. But that person,' continued my monitor, 'if men would make the right use of him, might be as instrumental to their reforming errors in gesture, language, and speech, as a dancing master, linguist, or orator. You see he laid yourself before you with so much address, that you saw nothing particular in his behavior: he has so happy a knack of representing errors and imperfections, that you can bear your faults in him as well as yourself: he is the first mimic that ever gave the beauties, as well as the deformities, of the man acted.'¹¹

Unlike the *Spectator*, the *Tatler* utilizes both visual and aural qualities of experience: in our verbal picture here from the *Tatler*, we can literally see the significance of sound. Phyllis Goldfarb

¹¹ *Tatler* 51, *The Tatler*, II (London: Bye and Law, 1797), 4-6.

makes some observations on the function of sound within a two-dimensional visual scene that bear on the function of sound in the *Tatler* scene:

There are three basic classes (or "uses") of cinematic sound: spatial sound, ideational sound, and music. Everything we hear falls into one of these categories--or is a combination of two or three. Spatial sounds obey the laws of real sound. Our ears place the source of the sound within space. We're not limited aurally, as we are visually, by the flat screen. If the sound track of a movie accurately conforms to the behavior of natural sound in space, we receive aural cues with which we can determine the surroundings, direction and distance of the sound source. This results in a definition of space.¹²

In the *Tatler* scene, then, we are concerned initially with spatial sound: the "ring of bells," the sounds of the hound pack, the crow of the rooster. The fact that we do not actually hear these sounds, as we would in the soundtrack of a film, does not present a real obstacle here, for Lockean psychology and Addisonian aesthetics allows that the initial perception of the secondary qualities of things, such as sound, is provided by sight. Just as the mere mention of a detail or two of dress or insignia would be enough to stimulate a more or less complete mental picture in the eighteenth-century reader,¹³ so a mere reading or "sighting" of these sounds in the text of the essay would be sufficient to set in motion the psychological effects of sound.

¹²Goldfarb, "Orson Welles's Use of Sound," *Take One*, 3 (July-August, 1971), 11.

¹³Chapin, p. 60. Chapin also notes that "Some critics stress the desirability of the full-formed image; others recognize the esthetic value of an economy of detail as leaving something for the imagination of the reader to complete" (p. 34). This division corresponds to the division McLuhan makes between a "HD" or "High Definition" medium (a full-formed image) and a "LD" or "Low Definition" medium (an image which leaves something for the reader to complete). National Association of Educational Broadcasters, "Report on Project in Understanding Media," consultant Marshall McLuhan (June 30, 1960), pp. 14-15, 19-23.

Thus in the "soundtrack" of the *Tatler* scene, we receive visually the aural cues with which to determine the surroundings, the direction of the sound and the sound source, or in this case, sources, resulting in a definition of the space in which the scene takes place experientially.

"But spatial definition is only one of two perceptual contributions sound lends experience," says Goldfarb. "The other is an attention-getting mechanism. We are perpetually surrounded by noise, but we are only aware of part of it. The rest is toned down by our mental processes and remains on a lower level of our consciousness" (Goldfarb, 13). Bickerstaff, as "sound editor" of this scene, wrests this power from us; he "turns down" the general sounds of the coffee-house and draws the reader's attention to the objects producing the sounds he wishes him to hear by giving them visual prominence--i.e., physical presence via words in the text.

Though the entire aural experience of this scene relies on visual stimulation, it does add a dimension to the scene, a depth, that the purely visual experience of the passage does not evoke. This dimension might be said to be an example of the difference between the effect of the primary qualities of ideas and that of secondary qualities. In any case, the aural quality of the passage tends to give the scene a three-dimensional effect psychologically.

The aural qualities also support to an extent the visual qualities of the scene. Visually, we perceive depth on a flat surface, such as a painting or screen, by certain visual cues, such as lines diminishing to a vanishing point, objects getting smaller as they retreat into the distance, objects being cut off by other objects in front of them,

and so on (Goldfarb, 11). In short, we perceive depth visually through perspective. The perspective depends upon the determination of the direction of sight, and in a limited way sound can aid in such a determination.

"Direction is understood biaurally," Goldfarb states, "our ears are incredibly sensitive: we can detect a time difference between the two ears, if the onset of the sound is sharp, of 0.65 milliseconds" (11). Unfortunately, a film or printed text can only roughly approximate this natural accuracy, for they are both monaural media: the film has but one sound source, the text but one speaker. The closest we can come to determining sound direction is by interpreting visual cues (Goldfarb, 11). In a film, we know where a voice is coming from because we see the speaker's lips move; in a text, we know where the sound is coming from because we read a designation for the sound. In the *Tatler* scene, we can determine the direction of the sound by following the gaze of Bickerstaff, in the first instance, to the first mimic, and in the second instance by picking up the visual cues that he drops, such as placing the sound source of the second mimic "in an angle of the room," or limiting laughter at one point of "those seated near us."

Sound, then, gives a definite three-dimensional sense of depth to the flat visual space of the *Tatler* scene. But this third aural dimension is, after all, merely a psychological dimension, not a real or tangible one. The real and tangible dimensions, the "primary qualities," of the scene are all visual (Figure 8).

The influence of Locke and Newton led the neoclassic period to fragment and specialize the inner feelings and emotions by applying



Benjamin West. THE DEATH OF WOLFE. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

No bugle could sound across such a landscape.
It exists only in a moment. Where the flat
Persian image serves all times via sound (see 6),
the three-dimensional space can exist only in a
fragmented moment of time.

Acoustical space cannot exist in a fragment of
visual space.

West is reportage in the style of a repertory
theater.

The sublime is in the foreground, anticipating,
in reverse, the later Romantic spatial
organization.

Figure 8. McLuhan plate f.

them to fixed, outer points of view (McLuhan, *Point*, pp. 19-20). The aesthetic principle behind the *Tatler* scene, therefore, is the notion that words correspond to reality and that they can thus match the outer with the inner. The reader is both within the *Tatler* scene and without it, and he knows it. He does the matching within the picture, and at the same time is himself matched to it by the device of the mirror. The mimic actor Tom Mirror involves the reader experientially in a response and thus makes him the actor. The reader, therefore, is constantly required to split himself in two, and this schizophrenic condition forces him finally to split subject from object. As in a seventeenth-century painting, Steele's picture turns subject into object and becomes, in effect, a self-portrait, a mirror, as it were, of the psychological vanishing point in the reader (Figures 9 and 10). The reader shares the view of the artist in slight anticipation of modern painting, where the spectator shares in the creative process.

Tatler 70 comments:

It must be confessed that artful sound will with the crowd prevail even more than sense [visual linear thinking]; but those who are masters of both, will ever gain the admiration of all their hearers; and there is, I think, a very natural account to be given of this matter; for the sensation of the head and heart are caused in each of their parts by the outward organs of the eye and ear: that, therefore, which is conveyed to the understanding and passions by only one of these organs, will not affect us so much as that which is transmitted through both. (II, 171-172)

If reader sensibility was still shaped by this renaissance-inspired belief in wholistic, heterogeneous experience, then it is possible to plot the emotional dimensions of Steele's picture, for Steele included both sight and sound to insure the most affective picture possible. The eye presents a point of view, yet we are enveloped by sound. We hear



Georges de La Tour. MARY MAGDALEN WITH A MIRROR. Collection André Fabius, Paris

Eyeball to eyeball. The skull is a Baroque mirror.

The visual confrontation of life as shallow horror. In a visual culture honor can assume the character of profundity.

The *feel* of the dark against the *sight* of the skull.

A universal symbol of death appears as a sensational stage property. "No contact possible to flesh/Allayed the fever of the bone."--T.S. Eliot, "Whispers of Immortality"

New alienation from inclusive unity by specialist fragmentation.

The mirror reflects the Baroque quest for depth through duality.

Figure 9. McLuhan plate g.



Rembrandt van Rijn. SELF-PORTRAIT. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

A time dominated by Du Fresnoy's admonition:
"Let your thoughts be wholly taken up with
acquiring to yourself a glorious Name, which
can never perish, but with the World; and
make that the Recompense of your worthy
Labours."

New self-awareness created by new public
environment.

The new public as mirror reveals the private
dimension, spurring the new enterprise of
self-expression.

The dualism of the Baroque idea appears in the
duality of the profile as it is drawn by light
from one position and as it is seen from the
position of the artist.

Figure 10. McLuhan plate h.

sounds from everywhere without having to focus; where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniform, connected kind, as the very arrangement of words on the page indicates, the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships. Sound, therefore, adds a third dimension to printed space. The reader is located not only two-dimensionally in the experience of the text, but also three dimensionally through the suggestion of bell tones, hound notes, and cock crows that work like sonar to indicate the depth of the experience the blind reader is attempting to enter visually through his mind.

But while sight and sound are harmoniously joined here, at the same time it is important to remember that they are distinctly different, heterogeneous and not homogeneous experiences: the imitated sounds brought laughter from the audience at the coffee-house, while the imitated sight aroused in them somber reflection and thought. The planes of sight and sound might be linked, especially if sensibility is predisposed to heterogeneous, wholistic experience, but only with caution, or else they could easily clash.

In contrast to the presence of the aural dimension in the *Tatler*, the *Spectator* takes pains to eliminate as much as possible the aural dimension from its pages. Here is Steele again, two years later, describing another Coffee-house scene for the pages of the *Spectator*:

In the Place I most usually frequent, Men differ rather in the Time of Day in which they make a Figure, than in any real Greatness above one another. I, who am at the Coffee-house at Six in a Morning, know that my Friend *Beaver* the Haberdasher has a Levy of most undissembled Friends and Admirers, than most of the Courtiers and Generals of *Great Britain*. Every Man about him has, perhaps, a News-Paper in his Hand; but none can pretend to guess what Step will be taken in any one Court of *Europe*, 'till Mr. *Beaver* has thrown down his Pipe, and declares what Measures the Allies must enter into upon this new Position of Affairs. Our Coffee-house is near one of the Inns of Court, and

and *Beaver* has the Audience and Admiration of his Neighbours from Six 'till within a Quarter of Eight, at which time he is interrupted by the Students of the House; some of whom are ready dressed for *Westminster*, at Eight in a Mourning, with Faces as busie as if they were retained in every Cause there; and others come in their Night-Gowns to saunter away their Time, as if they never designed to go thither. (*S* 49, I, 148)

Steele continues in this vein for the entire essay, yet, except for the possible noise of Mr. Beaver's pipe hitting the table, not a sound comes out of the scene.

To exclude sound from the visual space of the printed page, all coffee-house noises, to take one common class of sounds in the *Spectator*, are relegated to letters; they are thus twice-removed from the scene, as it were, and never described in direct observation by Mr. Spectator. Number 145, for instance, complains of "Whistlers, Singers and Common Orators" in the coffee-houses, but it is presented in a letter, as is another complaint in *Spectator* 155 about the sounds of "Raillery" in coffee-houses. The most lengthy passage concerning coffee-house sounds appears in *Spectator* 457 in letter form also, and even then it is an account of whisperers. Unlike the *Tatler*, the *Spectator* does not anywhere dwell at length on descriptions of the coffee-house scene, preferring rather to allude to it generally or mention it only in passing. Indeed, the only coffee-house activity that Mr. Spectator describes in any length or detail is a grinning match--a visual event if ever there was one. And *Spectator* 476 deplores the "want of Method in the Thoughts"--i.e., lack of visual linear thinking characteristic of print--in the speech of coffee-house patrons.

Significantly, in the passage taken from the *Spectator*, there are no direct quotations of Mr. Beaver's remarks or of any other figure

mentioned as there was in the *Tatler* passage. In fact, this characteristic is the rule with regard to speeches in the *Spectator*, not the exception. For example, in *Tatler* 39 there is a discussion involving several parties which is recorded in simple transcript form: i.e., the speaker's name is given, followed by his remarks. It looks like a passage of dialogue from a play, as Steele the playwright no doubt meant to suggest. In the *Spectator*, there are also a number of lengthy discussions, as is the case with an essay we have already cited (*S* 34), where the various members of Mr. Spectator's Club discuss the relative merits of their companion's literary efforts. Here, however, the speeches of each part are not left to stand verbatim--allowed to speak for themselves, as it were. Here they are paraphrased--closely paraphrased doubtlessly, but paraphrased nonetheless.

In the *Tatler* dialogue, print is merely the dumb carrier of speech; in the *Spectator*, print renders speech dumb, or at least less vocal, in the very process of paraphrasing it. Indeed, *Spectator* 568, which contains the lengthiest verbatim record of a conversation in the periodical, coffee-house or otherwise, uses the medium of speech to discuss typography, making an ironic reversal in the roles of media as they appear in the *Spectator* and thus providing the exception that proves the rule.

Even Mr. Spectator's report of his experiment in loquacity in number 556 is rendered in very "silent" terms:

Upon the first opening of my Mouth, I made a Speech consisting of about half a Dozen well-turned Periods; but grew so very hoarse upon it, that for three Days together, instead of finding the use of my Tongue, I was afraid that I had quite lost it. Besides, the unusual Extension of my Muscles on this Occasion, made my Face ake on both Sides to such a Degree, that nothing but an invincible

Resolution and Perserverance could have prevented me from falling back to my Mono-syllables.

I afterwards made several Essays towards Speaking; and that I might not be startled at my own Voice, which happen'd to me more than once, I used to read aloud in my Chamber, and have often stood in the Middle of the Street to call a Coach, when I knew there was none within Hearing. (IV, 498-499)

No bells, no hound bayings, not even a cough is "sighted" to evoke the aural dimension.

This is not to say, however, that sound or sounds are completely absent from the *Spectator*; any superficial perusal of a random dozen or so essays will point up examples of speech or noise. But a closer examination of any such passage is likely to show, more often than not, a principle of description at work that is first stated early in the *Spectator* (S 4). Here, in writing of the nature and limitations of his taciturnity, Mr. Spectator comments: "It is remarkable, that those who want any one Sense, possess the others with greater Force and Vivacity. Thus my Want or rather Resignation of Speech [sound], gives me all the Advantages of a dumb Man. I have, methinks, a more than ordinary Penetration in Seeing; and flatter my self that I have looked into the Highest and Lowest of Mankind, and make shrewd Guesses, without being admitted to their Conversation, at the inmost Thoughts and Reflections of all whom I behold" (I, 21). To Mr. Spectator, sounds and speeches are superfluous, or at best peripheral, and we can see them relegated to such a station in the bulk of his descriptions.

Even very late in the periodical we can see this principle at work. For instance, to take an essay not of the coffee-house genre, *Spectator* 454 chronicles Mr. Spectator's journey from Richmond to London. At the onset of the number he announces to his readers once more his preference for the pleasures which sight afford him: "the

greatest Pleasure I know I receive at my Eyes, and that I am obliged to an agreeable Person for coming abroad into my View, as another is for a Visit of Conversation at their own Houses" (IV, 98). His sensory priorities established, Mr. Spectator then proceeds to describe the "most pleasing Scene imaginable to see." Setting off from Richmond, he mentions the flow of commerce on the Thames, the industry, and "Chearfulness" of the traffickers, the beauty of the shoreline "Landscape," the countenances of "ruddy Virgins," "Morning Rakes," and the like. Not until he lands at Strand-bridge in London and is making his way to the markets at Covent-Gardens does he record a sound, and this he renders only as "some Raillery" between a fruit-wench and a chimney-sweep. What the raillery was or sounded like we do not hear. His impression of Covent-Gardens he sums up in the phrase, "that variety of Objects," indicating again a total sensory bias toward the visual.

He then describes at some length the activities of a "Vainlove," or young lady who enjoys leading young men on almost as much as she does avoiding their company. This passage consists of visual sights alone, as does the account of "Silk-Worms" (window shoppers) that follows. Only at sunset, when "The Day of People of Fashion began now to break," do we again encounter a sound. It occurs on the corner of "Warwick-Street," where Mr. Spectator is "listening to a new Ballad." Here again the sounds of the ballad are not recorded, but merely classified and dismissed. The real significance of the scene is visual: "[A beggar] urged, with a melancholy Face, that all his family had died of Thirst"; The ballad serves only to mark the periphery of the experience. Around the shops at the Exchange Mr. Spectator does take note also of a "confused Humming," the only instance of onomatopoeic

sound in the essay, and quotes two lines of speech, but they are his own and are spoken only to himself.

He spends the remainder of the evening at Will's, and there notes the subjects of the various conversations ("Cards, Dice, Love, Learning and Politicks"), but not the conversations themselves. The only sound that actually escapes from the printscape in the entire essay is the cry of the Bell-man: "Past Two of Clock." Mr. Spectator then retires to his chambers to minute his day and, after some difficulty in attempting to show the instruction of such an account, finally concludes that it "will make every Face you see give you the Satisfaction you now take in beholding that of a Friend; will make every Object a pleasing one. . . ." The message is clear: sight alone is capable of instruction. The whole essay, in fact, is governed by the principle of perception and description set out in *Spectator* 4: "I have looked into the Highest and Lowest of Mankind, and make shrewd guesses, *without being admitted to their Conversation*, at the inmost Thoughts and Reflections of all whom I behold" [emphasis added].

In short, the *Spectator*, as its name implies, invokes the ontology of the homogeneous experience of sight,¹⁴ while the *Tatler*, as its name implies, invokes the ontology of the heterogeneous experience of sound.¹⁵

¹⁴For further examples of the ontology of sight in the *Spectator*, see *S* 69 (I, 294), *S* 218 (II, 348-9); *S* 228 (II, 389).

¹⁵For further examples of the ontology of speech in the *Tatler*, see *T* 41 (I, 367-369); *T* 44 (I, 387-390); *T* 66 (II, 131-137); *T* 85 (II, 302-306); *T* 86 (II, 310-315); *T* 94 (II, 371-373); *T* 106 (II, 455-459); *T* 121 (III, 45-51); *T* 126 (III, 78-84); *T* 137 (III, 151-154); *T* 158 (III, 296); *T* 163 (III, 327-333); *T* 165 (III, 341); *T* 171 (III, 377-383); *T* 210 (IV, 119-121); *T* 217 (IV, 172-173); *T* 233 (IV, 288-290); *T* 243 (IV, 354-356); *T* 249 (IV, 386-387); *T* 256 (IV, 444-446).

Both, however, subscribe to the notion of the "aesthetic moment," a notion inferred by artists from Newton's *Opticks*, which pertained to the natural power of the eye to refract the visual world. In his word-painting, for instance, Steele arrests a moment of vision intended to involve the reader at a dramatic point in the narrative in order to hold him for the narrative that follows. The narrative itself is not dramatic; the action of the figures in his picture is only imminent action (Figure 11). Action expressed in print is a refractive function of the eye, and so, like Zeno's arrow, is not in motion at all; therefore the narrative is an interval of aesthetic stasis created by the illusion of motion refracted in print.

Bazin observes that "since perspective [provided by the camera obscura] had only solved the problem of form and not of movement, realism was forced to continue the search for some way of giving dramatic expression to the moment, a kind of psychic fourth dimension that could suggest life. . . ." (p. 11). Implicit in this observation is a further extension of the appetite for illusion, specifically the need to transcend the static canvas or page, to infuse it with some dramatic dimension, some psychological equivalent to motion.

In man's search to satisfy this need, it seems likely that the periodical essays of Addison and Steele anticipate the ontology and arrangement of experience of the cinema. Through their recognition of the fundamental relationship of print to vision and their disposition to connect and relate the arts of painting and poetry, and thus the image and the word, they composed ontological emblems of sight and arranged them in montage sequences, thus realizing if not in essence then in form the experience of cinema--i.e., moving pictures.



Antoine Watteau. PERFECT HARMONY (*L'Accord Parfait*). The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor, England

"Created by a non-participant just outside the borders of life."--John Canaday

The great Baroque waves of Rubens are here reduced to the ripples on a satin skirt.

Chinese saying applies: "People in the West are always getting ready to live."

A playful, elegant world which can only exist in the equivalent of the circumscribed spaces of the boudoir.

Figure 11. McLuhan plate i.

Long before the cinema was even conceived of as a medium of art, the moving picture was a fact of life; indeed, some historians locate the birth of the cinema in the eighteenth century. In 1781, a theatrical scene-painter named De Louthembourg contrived a panorama in London which he called the "Eidphusikon," which was designed "to realize pictures in all four dimensions," and which he advertised as containing "Various Imitations of Natural Phenomena, Represented by Moving Pictures."¹⁶ But even before this occurrence, moving picture shows of one kind or another were fairly commonplace; Erik Barnouw offers a good account of one such entertainment form:

In the days when John Gutenberg's Bible, printed from movable type, was stirring wonder in Germany, another innovation was gaining a foothold in Italy. It was a kind of game, having at first no apparent relationship to the dissemination of information or ideas.

The device was described in Leonardo da Vinci's unpublished notes. If on a sunny day you sit in a darkened room with only a pinhole open on one side, you see on an opposite wall or other surface images of the outside world--a tree, a man, a passing carriage.

The principle was described in detail in a book, *Natural Magic*, by Giovanni Battista della Porta, published in 1558. A few years later it became known that a lens, in place of the pinhole, would sharpen the image.

A group of people in a darkened room, watching images on a wall--thrown by a beam of light cutting through the darkness--must have resembled a group watching home movies. There was one difference, the picture was upside down.

Presently the lens was being put in one side of a box instead of in the wall of a room. Through mirrors the image would be thrown on a glass screen in the box, and seen right side up.

The box, still though of as a small room, was called a "dark room," or '*camera obscura*.' This camera could be aimed at a landscape, street, garden party. A group of people looking in amazement at the moving images in the box may well have resembled a group watching television.

¹⁶See McLuhan, "Joyce, Mallarmé and the Press," *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, ed. Gerald Emanuel Stearn (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p. 133. Reprinted from *The Sewanee Review* (Winter, 1954).

Magicians began using the device for mystification and delight. It became a pastime among the well-to-do throughout Europe.

By the 1600's, painters in many countries were using it to solve problems of perspective. Some artists found it easier to trace the two-dimensional image of the *camera obscura* than to work from three-dimensional reality.

The next step was obvious. Could the image be preserved, saving the artist even more work? The idea seems to have been present for two centuries, awaiting the development of chemistry-- and of demand.¹⁷

In London in the early 1700's, besides the camera obscura show Addison records in *Spectator* 414, which was probably the one located at Greenwich Park, there were at least four other "Moving Pictures," all of them noted by various periodicals (*S* 31, I, fn. 5, 128-129). One of these, exhibited between 1709 and 1711 at the Duke of Marlborough's Head in Fleet Street, was described in the *Daily Courant* of 20 Feb. 1709/10: "It is a most noble Landskip finely Painted by the best Hand, it contains the prospect of a City with a Harbour; a large Extent of Lane with a River winding and running into the Sea; a Bridge leading to the City; and near 70 Figures in lively Motion: viz. Several stately Ships and Vessels sailing; a Coach and 4 Horses, a Gentleman in a Chair saluting the Company. . ." (*S* 414, IV, fn. 2, 550-551). (This notice, by the way, is perhaps the first moving picture review.) In a letter to Stella on 27 March 1713, Swift describes a similar moving picture.

The desire to infuse motion into the static pictures of the time can be seen also, particularly in the engravings of Hogarth. To see the "progress" of his rake, for example, we must contrast the content

¹⁷Barnouw, *Mass Communication* (New York: Rinehart, 1956), pp. 13-14. Quoted in McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), pp. 167-168.

or composition of each engraving by juxtaposing various frames sequentially, a process which, if it does not quite introduce motion into the frames, does at least infuse dramatic tension. Juxtaposition of this kind was the format of the press, a variant of the mosaic, and thus a mode of arrangement provided by print.¹⁸ "Wit lay in the poet's [or artist's] ability to unite widely disparate details," Hagstrum believes. "But those details must all come from natural reality. The wit lay in combining, not creating, them."¹⁹

And since prose was, according to Addison, the means by which to effect the understanding, i.e., to render reality into the linear logic of vision, then each *Spectator* number was in effect an emblem or verbal image preserved permanently on the page by the ontological chemistry of print.²⁰ So as with the Hogarth series of engravings, the *Spectator* infused an illusion of movement or drama into its static essays through the juxtapositioning of printscapes.²¹ This combination of factors--i.e., static visual composition, juxtapositioning, visual linear logic--brought about the disclosure of experience that was not fully realized aesthetically until the twentieth century, an arrangement of experience commonly called "montage" and almost exclusively

¹⁸See also Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York/Toronto/London: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 286.

¹⁹Hagstrum, p. 140. Spacks concurs with Hagstrum's comment: "a good deal of the verse written between 1726 and 1800," she remarks, "manipulates imagery in elaborate ways to express emotion or to stimulate associated thoughts or to sum up and emblemize multiplicity" (p. 11).

²⁰See also McLuhan, *Media*, pp. 285-286.

²¹See also McLuhan, *Media*, p. 295.

associated with film, but which was, in its rudimentary form, the mode of experiential arrangement offered in the *Spectator*.

Sergei Eisenstein has noted that, "While playing with pieces of film, [experimenters] discovered . . . the fact *that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition.*"²² He concludes from this observation that the role of montage is "that role set itself by every work of art, *the need for connected and sequential exposition of the theme, the material, the plot, the action,* the movement within the film sequence and within the film drama as a whole" (p. 3), and he illustrates this role in several literary works. Eisenstein goes on to explain what he found to be so vital about montage arrangement:

The basic fact was true, and it remains true this day, that the juxtaposition of two separate shots by splicing them together resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot as it does a *creation*. It resembles a creation--rather than the sum of its parts--from the circumstance that in every such juxtaposition *the result is quantitatively* distinguishable from each component element viewed separately. At this late date no one need really be reminded that quality and quantity are not two different properties of a phenomenon but only different aspects of the same phenomenon. This law of physics is just as true in other spheres of science as in art. Of the many fields to which it can be applied, Professor Koffa's application to the field of behavior is apropos to our discussion:

It has been said: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole-part relationship is meaningful.
(pp. 7-8)

And he speculates a few pages later: "The juxtaposition of . . . partial details in a montage construction calls to life and forces into the light that *general* quality in which each detail has participated

²²Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947), p. 4.

and which binds together all the details into a *whole*, namely, into that generalized *image*, wherein the creator, followed by the spectator, experiences the theme . . . " and evokes "in the perception and feelings of the spectator the most complete *image of the theme itself*" (p. 11).

A particularly clear example of this montage effect can be found in *Spectator* 95 (I, 402-405). The essay is composed largely of two letters, introduced by a short comment by Steele. The content of these letters is not so important to note here as is the form, which effects a juxtaposition of past reading experiences with the experience the reader is undergoing now, in the present.²³ The first letter starts off by recalling to the reader his or her experience with Mr. Spectator's "Discourse upon General Morning"; the second letter reminds him of Mr. Spectator's attempts to instruct the "fair Sex," particularly regarding his recommendations for reading. The writer, one "Anabella," then proceeds to weave together a sequence of references to past numbers that is almost too illusive to separate out. The sequence includes the essays which pointed out that many fair readers were already better scholars than many Beaus, and those which referred to the gentlemen at Will's, a character named Tom and a coffee-house called the Grecian. She also cites the letter of a "Judicious Trader of Cheepside" who recommended arithmetic to the ladies for their instruction.

The total effect of the juxtaposition of letters within this number, and of the further juxtaposition of letters within these letters, results not so much in a summary conclusion regarding the instruction of Mr. Spectator's female readers as it does in the realization

²³See also McLuhan, *Media*, p. 288.

that these letters invoking past letters or printscapes are really a form of introspection for a character (Mr. Spectator) who exists only in the print of these printscapes, and who, to the extent that he is an extension of the reader himself, is expressing in this kind of introspection the terms of the reader's introspection as well (Figure 12). This kind of realization derived from the montage sequence provided here and elsewhere in the *Spectator* is indeed a new concept, a new creation, and not merely a summation of the parts, arising out of the juxtaposition but being *of* the parts juxtaposed and evoking in the reader the image of the theme of the *Spectator*, i.e., of a print- or eye-rendered universe. The medium alone conveys the message in this case, not the ideas or content of the essays.



Peter Lely. PORTRAIT OF THE COUNTESS OF MEATH. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Lady Meath as Diana--mythic dimension created by
the trick omission of middle distance both in
time and space.

Here is the prologue to the drama of Big Brother
Watching You that later unfolds in the *Tattler*
and the *Spectator*
(*lo spettatore nel centro del quadro*).

Aristocracy as the custodian of tradition and
values.

A slice of mime in a slice of time.

Of Charles I, by Van Dyck, Henri Focillon:
"The Portrait as Sitter."

Figure 12. McLuhan plate j.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION--PRINT AND ENVIRONMENT

We began this study with a quotation from Bond and an examination of certain aesthetic problems implicit in his remarks; in particular, we investigated the problems with regard to the past of the *Spectator*. It might, then, be appropriate to end our study with a quick consideration of his remarks regarding the future of the *Spectator*: i.e., that it was "to be succeeded in our own day by the work of the newspaper 'columnist' and featured contribution to the weekly review."¹

The contribution of the *Spectator* to our own day is much greater than the meager legacy Bond allows. It should be evident by now that such a casual conclusion about this work, and no doubt about other works of the eighteenth century, is indeed superficial. One needs today to utilize different aspects of his or her existence, for example time, space, experience, public life, mass consumption, the impact of technology and science, to judge standards of beauty, taste and truth in order to clarify the emergence of a new humanistic orientation in the modern world. In the *Spectator*, at least, one can see the embodiment of many of the aesthetic principles that are now being redefined to fit new media; that these "new" principles also helped to shape works of the past is likewise just now beginning to be discovered. The *Spectator* is, therefore, a monumentally significant work for the twentieth century, filled with insight into current aesthetic questions.

¹Bond, "Introduction" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), xiii.

One aesthetic question which the *Spectator* has now been shown to provide at least a partial answer for is that of sight and its impact on culture. The *Spectator*, with its heavy dependence upon sight almost to the exclusion of every other sense, creates or establishes a manner of perception that renders all experience in terms of sight. The *Spectator*, in other words, created a sensory bias in the manner of perceiving the world in the eighteenth century and thus to a large extent predetermined the priorities of English culture during that period. Indeed, one might hypothesize that without the invention of moveable type a Newton could not have existed, or if he had, that he would not have had anywhere near the impact on the culture that he did. And in like manner, without print we might hypothesize that the *Spectator* itself could not have come into being, for its very being expressed ontologically the biases and priorities of the sight-based medium.

So, too, do media today create people and events, or rather, give or impart to them an impact greater than that which they would have if the medium had not existed to promote them. Print stresses logic and linearity, and therefore those events and persons who utilize these qualities in their being. Likewise, television today inherently emphasizes simultaneity--existentialism, in a sense--and thus tends to dwell on persons and events which are expressive of this quality.

The *Spectator* also partially answers such questions as how to understand the effects and aesthetics of television, film, and other visual media that have come to replace print as the central medium of our culture. In many ways, the *Tatler* and *Spectator* were the television and/or film of their day, in as much as they were devoted

primarily to entertaining and instructing the public in its everyday life. Just as television structures our lives today--determining when we will eat, sleep, talk, be silent, not to mention what we think and feel--so print or the press structured the lives of eighteenth-century Englishmen. The *Spectator*, especially, was very much a part of that structuring process, providing "content," as it were, for the medium certainly, but also subtly contributing to the ordering and mannering of living: it, too, helped determine when as well as how men ate, slept, talked, or were silent.

And, like television programming, the *Spectator* conformed inwardly to the characteristics of an older medium, in this case speech, but outwardly its message was that of a new medium, the medium of print, with its message of uniformity, regularity, linearity, and segmentation. This message carried into the very marrow of eighteenth century English urban society, just as the message of television--simultaneity--is at the heart of modern society.

But perhaps the most important of all the insights the *Spectator* offers us is into the nature of our perception of the world today. It is, or should be, abundantly clear by now that print no longer is the keystone in the center of the spectrum of media that covers the world.

. . . the only printed text that seems true to many readers now is not the fine writing of someone like Agee, but the raw unliterary record--unedited talk of people into tape recorders, fragments of subliterary documents (court records, letters, diaries, etc.). There is a rancorous suspicion in America of anything that seems literary. (Not to mention a growing reluctance on the part of young people to read anything that does not cater to them--reading matter including subtitles in foreign movies and copy on a record sleeve as well as novels and essays.) The Carlylean strut of Norman Mailer's prescient chronicles of the American political madness may wow the over-thirty-five set, but younger people prefer the brilliant gush of *Rolling Stone's* Hunter Thompson, whose

talents as an analyst of American politics, both presidential and cultural, are as distinguished and baroquely paranoid as Mailer's, but who takes care to write in a self-deprecating sloppy, sub-literary way.²

This "sub-literary" style, described here by Sontag, is in fact one effect of electronic media on our culture. The printed word is now being manipulated to manifest ontologically the simultaneous message/massage of television:

Liberal arts scholars, especially in McLuhan's field, English literature, start out in graduate school in little cubicles, known as carrels, in the stacks of the university libraries with nothing but a couple of metal Klampiton shelves of books to sustain them, sitting there making scholarly analogies--detecting signs of Rabelais in Sterne, signs of Byron--would you believe it? in Thoreau, signs of Ovid in Pound, signs of--analogies--hunched over in silence with only the far-off sound of Maggie, a Girl of the Stacks, a townie who puts books back on the shelves--now she is all right, a little lower-class-puffy in the nose, but--only the sound of her to inject some stray, *sport* thoughts into this intensely isolated regimen.³

This is how one of the most brilliant of these twentieth-century "gushers," Tom Wolfe, understands the creative milieu of the literary scholar.

Addison and Steele understood print the way Wolfe, Thompson, and other such writers understand television; they were perhaps the first of centuries of writers and readers who understood the uniformity, linearity, infinite respectability of the printed word instinctively, ontologically, existentially. Now those readers are gone and those writers are going. More and more the artist with the greatest impact on our society is the one whose fundamental tool is not the printed word: the filmmaker, the environmental sculptor, the photographer and

²Sontag, "Shooting America," *New York Review of Books*, 21 (April 18, 1974), 23.

³Tom Wolfe, "What if he is right?" reprinted in *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, ed. Gerald E. Stearn (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p. 45.

musician. Tennyson in his day had a tremendous and immediate impact on his society and culture; today, the only poet who can match anywhere nearly his popular stature is Rod McKuen--that is the state of the printed word in the modern world.

Since the day that Sputnik orbited the world and thereby put it into a man-made container, nature has been replaced by environment. Nature is no longer something apart from us but rather a part of us, and we a part of it, and thus there can be no more spectators on the globe, only participants.⁴ Everything is now a medium, from our television and newspapers to our cars and homes, and each expresses some bias to the participants in it, biases which often clash and appear incomprehensible.

They are not incomprehensible, however, if we can only see and understand them for what they are, i.e., media, environment; but in order to do this we must first have at our command the tools of comprehension itself, the media that give us access into and structure human sensibilities and experience. One of these tools, if no longer *the* tool, is the printed word, and we must be able to participate in it or its equivalent before we can hope to participate in our environment. Interpreting the *Spectator* can help us do just that.

"The task of interpretation" Richard Palmer writes,

is that of bridging historical distance. When interpreting a text from a past age, the interpreter does not empty his mind or leave the present absolutely; he takes it with him and uses it to understand in the dialectical encounter of his horizon with

⁴ Marshall McLuhan, "At the moment of Sputnik the plant became a global theater in which there are no spectators but only actors," *Journal of Communication*, 24:1 (Winter, 1974), 49.

that of a literary work. The ideas of historical reconstruction, or knowing the past solely in terms of itself, is a romantic myth, an impossibility like the idea of 'presuppositionless interpretation.' There is no such thing. Literary interpretation must, like theological and legal interpretation, relate to the present or die. That in literature which cannot be related to us standing in the present is dead. The task of interpretation may in some cases be to take what seems to be dead and to show its relation to the present, i.e., the present horizon of expectations and the present world of self-understanding.⁵

What is implied here is that we continually stand at the apex of history and that the constant buffeting we receive from the encounter with experience there discloses a new existential understanding of our world. We derive meaning now more from this raw experience than from ideas: "The basic unity for contemporary art is not the idea," Susan Sontag announces, "but the analysis of and extension of sensations (or if it is an 'idea,' it is about the form of sensibility.) Rilke described the artist as someone who worked 'toward an extension of the regions of the individual senses; 'McLuhan calls artists 'experts in sensory awareness.'"⁶

While one might readily agree that twentieth-century art is not concerned primarily with ideas, one would also hasten to point out that such a situation is certainly not the case of art prior to this century; we can be sure that ideas are very much a part of the composition of literary works before our day. Literary analysis so far has been directed primarily toward isolating these ideas, bringing them into sharp focus--as near to being physically visible as we can make them--

⁵ Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1969), p. 251.

⁶ Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965), p. 255.

standing them before the mind's eye so that they may be understood. This whole process, as McLuhan has pointed out, is visually biased; ideas themselves are the product of language, the product of the kind of visual linear thinking called reason that was the discovery of Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, Plato himself demonstrated the visual linear quality of reason with his use of the metaphoric image of the cave to illustrate the concept of the idea.

But, as Sontag also notes, "A great work of art is never simply (or even mainly) a vehicle of ideas or of moral sentiments. It is, first of all, an object modifying our consciousness and sensibility, changing the composition, however slightly, of the humus that nourishes all specific ideas and sentiments. . . . A work of art does not cease being a moment in the conscience of mankind when moral conscience is understood as only one of the functions of consciousness" (p. 255). There is, in other words, another encounter we have with a work of art that precedes the ideational encounter. This pre-ideational encounter necessarily precedes language also, since language generates ideas; hence it cannot be understood in terms of visual linear thinking. That this encounter is not understood in those terms, however, does not mean that it is not understood. We can and do comprehend literature on a primitive ontological level that is vague, total, multi-leveled, non-lingual, simultaneous. This comprehension is expressed variously as emotional response, inspiration, the "love" of literature. It is a subjective encounter, and because it does not readily fit the visual linear terms of our thinking, we have until now tended to discount it in our serious considerations of literature.

Interpretation carried on at the pre-ideational level must be

an experiential encounter with a work, one that is personal, subjective, intimate. "Enveloping and pervading the whole area of the mind," F. M. Cornford reminds us, "like a subtle and penetrating ether, there is a man's philosophy of life--a factor which does not obtrude itself at any particular moment, for the reason that it is always and everywhere present. In order to detect it, to guard against it, he would have to go outside himself."⁷ And it is the past that bequeathes to us our ways of seeing, our intentions and preconceptions. We move and exist in a world of understanding that is historically formed. We encounter another world of understanding when we confront a work of literature; this world is not entirely discontinuous to our world, merely different. Indeed, if we experience this new world sincerely, we will find our self-understanding deepened, for the encounter supplements and augments our own historically formed understanding. Thus to read a work of literature is to participate in a truly historical experience (Palmer, 251).

That is the kind of history we are attempting to bridge here. It is not so much a matter of bringing together two worlds separated by years but rather a matter of linking two worlds separated by experience. Specifically, in this study we have brought the experience of our world existing in the present together with that of the world of the *Spectator* existing also in the present.

We have used as lumber for our bridge certain "probes," especially those of Marshall McLuhan. They have been used in the manner in which

⁷Cornford, *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), p. 2.

he meant them to be used--that is, not as authoritative rules or dictates but as sparks that might fire up trains of thought and launch their own probes. It is an indirect approach to some extent, a "mosaic" approach if you like, which seeks to co-ordinate existing viewpoints rather than set out a new one. It is an approach dictated by the need to avoid discovering the ideas planted implicitly in a work of art by a direct rational--i.e., visual linear--assault on the work. That is to say, since language allows ideas to exist, it should come as no surprise that when one analyzes something rationally with language he finds in it the ideas he was looking for. By our very use of language in this manner, therefore, we demonstrate only that we presupposed the ideas were there to begin with; we look, although we know already what we will find.

But language used indirectly, like indirect lighting, can illuminate the boundaries of the encounter with a work of art. It is a process of using language but not allowing it to use us. Specifically, this process involves setting down ideas or points clearly before us, as in the traditional manner of analysis, but instead of following the idea to its logical conclusion--i.e., allowing it to lead us to a predetermined visual linear goal--it involves circling back to another different point, and another and another. In the end we have made a series of points, but points left unconnected--a mosaic, in other words.

The reader then becomes a participant, engaged in the process of connecting these points with points in his own personal world, revealing ultimately the profile of his experiential encounter with the work of art. It is a process that is very much like a child's connect-the-dots game, only with the dots left unnumbered. The profile of our encounter

with the *Spectator* so far seems to turn on these points: (1) the centrality of the eye or of vision to the sensibility of the eighteenth century, and (2) the ability of print to render the ontology of vision in physical terms. In this encounter we can see how the world of the *Spectator* as it is experienced in the present (point 1) moves within the horizon of our world experienced also in the present (point 2).

As the world grows smaller and its people closer together, the need to integrate all human experience grows larger. Participation in the experience of the *Spectator* is only a small part of this integration process; nonetheless, it is a valuable part, for not only do we learn more about our own experience in the present from our study of it, but the very study itself demonstrates an approach to literature that can expose its insights to more of our contemporary culture than ever before. This exposure cannot but enhance and establish the value of the printed word to the contemporary culture. In addition, it also satisfies the primary responsibility of interpretation that the scholar bears by giving works of the literary medium continued life in the post-literate age.

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