

The Hurry and Uproar of Their Passions Images of the Early 18th-Century Whig

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Abstract The period between the Glorious Revolution and the end of Queen Anne's reign was a time of fierce antagonism between the political parties. This rivalry defined the political situation in early eighteenth century Britain and laid the foundation for the development of the ministerial machine of propaganda aimed at discrediting opponents and justifying the policies of the government. Methodically developed, the system was well applied during Oxford's Ministry (1710-14). The establishment of a ministerial newspaper – *The Examiner* – played a significant role in solidifying public opinion behind the transfer of power to the Tories. Remaining a 'right-wing' organ, it became a sharp edge of anti-whig propaganda. The main objective of this article is to analyse the rhetoric of passions, one of the literary tools used in *The Examiner* to build up a negative image of Whigs. This image, created on the pages of *The Examiner*, represents an element of a wider vision depicting passionate Whigs and reasonable Tories.

Keywords Propaganda. Tory. Whig. The Examiner. Passions.

The well acknowledged categorisation of the eighteenth century as an Age of Reason, though capturing some of its dominant cultural characteristics, tends to greatly underestimate the role of passions and affections. As a matter of fact, the eighteenth century, after a hundred years of political and philosophical debate, is precisely the period in which the discourse of passions reaches its height. Thomas Dixon, in his study *From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, refers to Pope's *Essay on Man* to summarise the eighteenth century's treatment of passions and indicate its important characteristics, namely "the desire to find a middle position between a frosty Stoicism and overheated enthusiasm; the need to moderate passion with reason; and the appeal both to God and nature as efficient psychological agencies" (2003, 63). The aspect of imposing control over passions has been the subject of philosophical thought since antiquity. During the early eighteenth century, not only did writers draw on the knowledge of ancient thinkers, but they obviously reflected the philosophical inheritance of the previous century. The influence of Descartes, Locke and Bacon shaped the eighteenth century, increasing the understanding that there should be a place for emotions in human life. For example, De Carro and Maraffa, juxtaposing the Cartesian and Baconian views on emotions, state that "according to Descartes, rational

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consciousness can fail only because of the influence of emotional and affective motions that originate from the opacity of the bodily machine” (2014, 562). Bacon accordingly exemplified the ways that passions can affect reason:

The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections; whence proceed sciences which may be called ‘sciences as one would’. For what a man had rather were true he more readily believes. Therefore he rejects difficult things for impatience of research; sober things, because they narrow hope; the deeper things of nature from superstition, the light of experience from arrogance and pride, lest his mind should seem to be occupied with things mean and transitory; things not commonly believed, out of deference to the opinions of the vulgar. Numberless, in short, are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections colour and infect the understanding. (Spedding et al. 1858, 57)

Thus the seventeenth century philosophical inheritance regarded passions as “an overbearing and inescapable element of human nature, liable to disrupt any civilised order, philosophy included unless they were tamed” (James 1997, 1). The fact that by the early eighteenth century the mind was identified as the true source of the passions, rather than being located in other organs of the body,¹ signified the necessity of imposing greater control over them.² Such approaches were further developed throughout the following century and, as Aleksandra Hultquist broadly indicates: “perhaps more than any other era, the eighteenth century was embroiled in trying to best understand how the passions created public systems, such as governmental structures, and how controlling those passions would lead to a harmonised society” (2016, 88).

In order that semantic confusion should not obscure the concept of passions during the eighteenth century, it became a subject of scientific research; an enquiry and debate which concluded that passions should not be equated with emotions (Dixon 2003; Diller 2012). Passions included concepts such as love, anger and melancholy, which nowadays are primarily understood as emotions. Equally, other so-called passions such as curiosity, revenge or avarice are not treated as emotions in our post-twentieth century world.³

1 Hobbes, for instance, located passions in the heart (Molesworth 1840, 34).

2 Some critics claim that the eighteenth century view on passions indicated their greater value or that they were not considered obstacles to reason (Reddy 2001, 216; Denby 1994, 240; Dixon 2003, 66).

3 For the transition from differentiated typologies including passions, affections, appetites or sentiments into one over-arching psychological category of emotions, see Dixon 2003.

Bacon's views on the relations between passions and reason differed little from the commonly expressed opinions of his contemporaries (James 1997) and the control of human desires (passions) formed an integral part of his philosophical programme (Gigliani 2016, 6). For example, it is Bacon's views that they are most consistently represented in *The Examiner*.⁴ Consequently, this article sets out to trace the evolving rhetoric of passions deployed in this well-known essay periodical as a technique set on discrediting political opponents.

The impact of the Glorious Revolution was reflected in the increasingly clear division in Parliament between two parties. Though at the beginning of the eighteenth century this two-party system was not yet fully visible on an ideological level, nevertheless, the Whigs and Tories were becoming the two most politically influential factions. This rivalry defined the political situation during this period in British history and laid the foundation for the development of the ministerial machine of propaganda aimed at discrediting opponents and justifying the policies of the government. At the same time, the rapid growth of the press resulted in the development of the printing industry. The editing and publication of the newspapers was carried out by the printers who usually also printed books and pamphlets. Therefore they were very often driven by political interests. The issues raised by the authors of the periodicals most often concerned domestic and foreign news, but in some cases they also offered commentaries on political, economic and moral topics. Over the course of time some of the newspapers were established in the form of so-called essay periodicals.

Essay writing is considered to be one of the most important achievements of the eighteenth century. Defined as the intermediary between Elizabethan drama and the novel,⁵ essay periodicals emerged as a direct response of the publishing market to the rising demands of the newly established middle class. Periodical essays seem to reflect brutal reality more than any other genre. They help to create a picture of society and define its reaction towards the policy of the state, economy and often less serious matters such as manners or fashion. In terms of the prevailing topics discussed, the essay periodicals can be divided into two main categories: political and non-political – the difference obviously lying in

4 See *The Examiner*, III, no. 19; II, no. 46; II, no. 10; V, no. 26. Owing to erroneous numbering in the six-volume edition of *The Examiner*, reference to volume and number will be given instead of date.

5 Such an evolutionary scheme was briefly traced by George Marr who associated the decline of the Elizabethan drama with the emergence of the periodical essay and draws attention to their influence on the first novels (1970, 36). Later theories of the rise of the novel summed up by Lennard Davis include the osmotic and convergence models that he enriched by defining them as an "ensemble of written texts that constitute the novel" (1996, 7). All these models acknowledge essays as constitutive elements underlying the emergence of the novel.

their editorial attitude toward politics. For example, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, considered the first real literary magazines of their kind, were mostly devoted to contemporary social life. Their authors, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, who both entered the literary canon and are regarded as prominent essay writers, only occasionally refer to the current political situation. The sponsored press on the other hand was adopted by the government to serve its propaganda purposes; politics, therefore was a topic that the governmentally subsidised papers were fully devoted to. Jeremy Black points out the specific character of the early political press:

Political opinion and information was not a specialised function of the press, particularly in the case of domestic news. Opinion rather than events dominated the political news of those newspapers that specialised in politics. Instead of 'in depth reporting' there were discursive essays on general, particularly ideological themes. (1987, 145)

The general classification of periodicals in terms of political content is fairly clear, but such categorisations often ignore the fact that they were subsidised by the political elites and therefore less original and offering less from the literary perspective (Marr 1970, 46-51; Powell 2012, 12), with some of the titles considered even of "ancillary status" (Osell 2002, 165).

Political periodicals, though targeted at different audiences, had a two-fold task: to project government policy and at the same time remain attractive to the readership. Consequently, the rivalry with the newly established *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* was not easy. The latter, targeting a mostly female readership, tackled issues concerning the everyday life of the newly emerged middle class and with such attractive domestic and class-related topics the fame and popularity of the two periodicals soon increased. The content of political newspapers by definition concerned state affairs and targeted a rather different audience consisting mostly of educated men and, as a consequence, not always offering equally amusing and interesting themes.

One such political essay periodical was *The Examiner*,⁶ established in 1710 during Robert Harley's ministry.⁷ Harley, installed as the Chancellor of Exchequer, tried to create a new ministry that would charter a moderate course between the extreme political right and left. Such a policy faced opposition from the members of the Tory group gathered in the October

6 Further references to the paper will be made either to the magazine (*The Examiner*) or to its persona (the Examiner).

7 During the Tory government (1710-1714) Harley hold the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer (1710-1711) and later served as Lord High Treasurer (1711-1714).

Club.⁸ Harley's political position became particularly uneasy when this group of Tory backbenchers, whose position was strong enough to determine the party's policy, took Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke as their potential leader. One of the reasons for their dissatisfaction with Harley's approach was the perceived failure to remove Whig or moderate politicians from the administration.⁹

Sheila Biddle sums up the situation when stating that "Harley's moderate scheme clearly could not satisfy them. Bolingbroke was their champion, and he shared their belief that Harley's policy barred the entrance to a safe Tory world" (1975, 9). Both politicians tried to use the press to force through their political objectives. The machine of ministerial propaganda was methodically developed throughout the last decades of the seventeenth century and it was during Oxford's Ministry that it became most effectively applied (Downie 1979; Patterson 1974). The then establishment of a ministerial newspaper (*The Examiner*) played a significant role in gathering support for the transfer of power to the Tories.

The Examiner, which was in print from 3 August 1710 till 26 July 1714 (Hope 1865, 19-21) and later continued till 1716 (Allen 1947, 162), remained a 'right-wing' organ and a cutting edge of anti-Whig propaganda. The editors of the periodical included Bolingbroke, William King, Jonathan Swift, Mary Delarivier Manley, William Oldisworth and Joseph Browne. Little is known about the origins of the paper and scholars have put forward theories concerning its original function either as an organ "specifically designed both to justify past actions and indicate future ministerial policy" (Lock 1983, 28) or as a paper representing not Oxford's projected moderate administration but St. John's supporters (Patterson 1974, 154).

Though the details of the inauguration of *The Examiner* are rather obscure, its later fate was undoubtedly linked with Harley and Bolingbroke's rivalry, especially during the second half of Harley's administration. Being the secretary of state, Bolingbroke was responsible for all the tasks relating to the press. Not only did he start the paper but he also defined the themes that were to be discussed in its pages. These themes had been included in his "Letter to *The Examiner*" which was a bitter critique of the previous ministry's policy. This was not only directed against Harley's plan of creating a moderate Cabinet, but also reflected Bolingbroke's High Tory

8 Geoffrey Holmes refers to early eighteenth-century club society as one of the factors, along with discussions at the coffee-houses and dinner tables, that "reflected political schism within the nation" (1987, 21). The October Club, founded in the Winter 1710-1711, was formed by Tory backbenchers representing the most extreme opinion in the party.

9 In the address presented to the Queen on 1 June 1711, the members of the October Club stated their discontent openly, accusing the former government of abuses and mismanagement and the present administration of "its equivocation and its favour toward the Whigs as enemies of Church and country" (Holmes 1987, 343).

radicalism in hoping to sweep the Whigs out of the Ministry. In publishing the "Letter" he "hoped to cut Harley's line of retreat to the Whigs when the Tory character of the new regime became clear" (Downie 1979, 270).

It was fairly obvious to Harley that the fiery propaganda disseminated by *The Examiner* during the election in October 1710 would all but end his objectives of creating a balanced Parliament. In this situation Harley had to find a writer who would be willing to put his moderate approach and policy into print. Swift appeared to be the ideal writer to fulfil the task. However, the conflict between Harley and Bolingbroke over political matters was further reflected in the varied tone and increasingly radical views represented in the periodical, which

under Swift's auspices can be seen to have swung from this exalted position of disinterested patriot to a High Flying tory standpoint in the course of the first six months of 1711 as he [Swift] fell under the spell of the secretary and forgot the dictums of the moderate head of the ministry. (Downie 1979, 278)

Swift's voluntary departure from the paper has been questioned (Herman 2003, 133; Downie 1979, 137), although he himself gave an impression of his willingness to stop writing for the magazine when he announced that he "laid it [*The Examiner*] down on purpose to confound guessers" (Scott 1814, 396). Nevertheless, Harley's political situation and his increasing problems with the ever-growing power of the Tory opposition gathered in the October Club may have influenced his decision to change *The Examiner's* editor. Swift, whose views had radicalised during his editorship (probably under the influence of St. John), might simply have been replaced by someone more moderate.

The character of *The Examiner*, as a ministerial essay periodical, determined its content, which was mostly aimed at discussing and supporting the current government's aims and policies. Nevertheless, a good deal of space was still devoted to raising philosophical questions from which the concept of the passions was not excluded. One recent critic went as far as to claim that "the debate about the proper relationship of reason with the passions, sentiments and affections was one of the characteristics concerns of eighteenth-century thought" (Dixon 2003, 72). *The Examiner's* discourse upon passions is a good case in point.

Machiavelli and Bacon, two thinkers mentioned in *The Examiner*, undoubtedly influenced its philosophical approach. The reference to Baconian philosophy¹⁰ is clearly visible in the essay on *Natural and Political*

¹⁰ It is visible in the terminology, e.g. the use of notions of *Sympathy* and *Antipathy* (III, no. 19), though there is no direct reference to Bacon.

Genius (III, no. 49), a division reflecting Bacon's definitions of natural and political philosophy. The Examiner elaborates on "Publick Genius", the feature of "every Nation, whose Government is of any long standing, and the People preserved Pure and Unmixe'd in their Race to a tolerable degree". And in doing so it makes a further distinction between the 'Natural' and 'Political', with the former clearly identified with the so-called passions:

The natural genius of a People arises chiefly from Soil and Clime of their Country, from their Diet Diversions and those hereditary Tinctures, which are entail'd upon their Race, and run down in the same Channel with their Blood: This shews it self in their Passions, Appetites, Pleasures and Inclinations. (*The Examiner*, III, no. 49)

It is possible that the piece is directly drawing on an essay in the *Spectator* (no. 160), in which Addison delineates two possible types of genius, the "great natural Genius's that were never disciplined and broken by the Rules of Art," and the "Great Genius's [...] that have formed themselves by Rules, and submitted their Greatness of their natural Talents to the Corrections and Restraints of Art". The are the exact parallel of *The Examiner's* 'Natural and Political Genius', respectively.

Machiavellian thought as a synonym of "an instrumental and opportunistic view of rationality", which has been recently traced in Bacon's works (Gigliani 2016), is reflected in the Examiner's statement subordinating 'Natural Genius' to that of the political mind:

The Wise Men and Patriots of all Ages, who have distinguish'd themselves [...] by their Care of the Publick, and Love of Society, and merited the Applause and Thanks of Posterity, by the Planting and Modelling, or the saving and securing of States and Communities, always took their Measures from the Right Observation of the Natural Genius of People, to direct and qualifie the Political, and by humouring the one, to advance and enoble the other. (*The Examiner*, III, no. 49)

This passage mirrors the Examiner's view on the necessity to control the passions of 'Natural Genius' via 'Political Genius' which is remarkably directed by reason and taught by experience stemming from long and careful observation.

The Examiner's conformity to the general opinion that the so-called passions are the source for "blindness [...] cast over the Understanding" (I, no. 20) is further developed and elaborated in III, no. 19, which discusses "the mutual Entercourse between the Conscience and the Passions" and "the Mischiefs that may follow from such a Dependence". Ideas and elements consistent with the philosophical division of the passions as represented in Plato's chariot allegory constitutes a point of reference in

further deliberations upon the effects of the rhetoric of emotional appeal. Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* is evoked on several occasions to indicate the biased nature of human inclination, which "Passion Philosophy and [...] Romances" strengthen by dividing "every thing into Love and Fighting". Establishing a kind of diagnosis of contemporary society, the Examiner reveals the declining weight of reason on the one hand and the growth in prejudice on the other, and thus concludes that

Men now begin to sort their Principles by their Inclinations, without any regard to Truth, or enquiring into the Nature of Things. They affirm and deny for no other Reason in the World but that they may be said to Vote with their Friends and to Contradict their Enemies. (III, no. 19)

Upsetting the balance that should be maintained by 'the use of reason' results, as in the case of Plato's chariot allegory, in a situation where "Good and Evil seem to be regarded no otherwise than as two indifferent Things". Consequently, people diverge from the path that leads to truth when "Reason is no longer our Guide, but we follow Faces and Complexions and chuse our Principles by Sympathy and Antipathy". Moreover, discussion loses its purpose when "the Question is not *Is it true? Is it useful? Is it necessary to the Welfare of the State?*" and, instead, "we ask, *Who said it? Who proposed it?*" (III, no. 19). The initial aura of The Examiner's impartiality seems to fade away with the course of time, and the sting of criticism towards the Whigs increasingly sharpens when the balance of power changes under the influence of the Harley-Bolingbroke rivalry, in favour of the latter.

The rhetoric of passions denoted in *The Examiner* refers to three aspects of anti-Whig propaganda: shaping the image of an impassioned Whig, exposing party tactics of enslavement towards its followers and revealing the harmful use of *pathos* aimed at gaining control through the stirring of passions. Using Bacon's philosophical language, the Examiner claims that "[t]he Whigs of all Men breathing are the greatest Slaves to Sympathy and Antipathy" (III, no. 19).

The rhetoric of passions seemed to fluctuate considerably with the appearance of important elements of government policy and the need of support against Whig criticism. Such was the case during the war with France. For example, the handing over the Spanish crown to the Habsburgs was one of the aspects of Whig government policy before 1710 that was strongly criticised by the opposition. The Tories' desire to pursue peace was an altogether appealing sentiment and after their landslide victory in October 1710, the prevalent propaganda was aimed at grounding the validity of a pro-peace policy. *The Examiner* II, no. 22 powerfully depicted the state of near madness the Whigs were being brought to by the debate over peace:

Talk of Peace, and they appear like those miserable Wretches vex'd with an incurable Lunacy, who fall into fresh Ravings and strange Distractions, at the least hint of what occasion'd their Distemper. If Peace be but mention'd in our Coffee-houses [...] they Goggle, Foam, Rave, Cry.

The theme is further reiterated in one of the letters to the paper, in which a reference to Juvenal's satires opens the passage depicting the subject of peace as the source for the Whigs' inexhaustible flow of Passions: "Hinc Irae et Lacrymae; from this Fountain flow the Resentments and Rancour, which the Leaders of that Faction so liberally bestow on our Peace-Makers" (II, no. 25).

An interesting aspect of the rhetorical techniques characterising the Examiner's discourse is the use of a specific vocabulary aimed at drawing an alarming as well as comic image of its political rivals. The analysis shows that the most often repeated adjectives refer to two principal characteristics, namely Whig as 'liar' and as 'rabble-rouser' (Lein 1977). This latter strain is further sustained by repeatedly identifying Whigs with noise, movement and rage. Emotionally charged words such as: Clamorous, Hurry, Whine, Fretfulness, Poignancy, Rage, Franticness, Anger, Tears or Cry indicate a broad spectrum of irrational behaviour: from wailing, through agitation and fury up to madness. Whigs, as well as writers publishing in their support, are consistently presented as "Inflamers" and "Make-bates",¹¹ with "Mouth so deep and Open so wide, that the Art of Whispering is become perfectly useless" (VI, no. 12), as men who "had lost their Senses" and whose "Fury is little abated" (II, no. 36).

Often heavily symbolic visions, stories or tales forming a part of a wide range of literary tools are used in the essay periodicals to make their content more attractive to readers. In the case of *The Examiner*, these devices served as clever and powerful instruments for creating anti-Whig propaganda. A good example of this is the story of the Sharpers where the Whigs are not only compared to Papists but again depicted as somebody whose "rage [...] burst into all the artful Extravagances of personated Madness". His "Noise is much louder [...] Oaths deeper, and [...] Menaces more bloody than usual" (III, no. 4).

Reminding his readers of the fact that the Whig Party "for eight years together, had Sacrificed and Betray'd their Native country to a Foreign Interest", the Examiner, while describing the party's reaction to this unfinished plan, strengthened the emotional aspect by introducing a potent animal image:

¹¹ Both terms are an allusion to Whigs' use of pathos (which is described in more detail later in the article). The comparison between passions and flames is frequently used in *The Examiner*, denoting the devastating nature of the passions (see III no. 19; IV, no. 32; V, no.47).

again that Engine being wrested out of their Hands and Themselves happening to be found out, and stripped of their Power, just as their grand Project was ripe for Execution; They at Home and their Accomplices abroad are as enraged and mad, as a wild Beast who has his Prey taken from between his Paws, the very Moment he is going to devour it. (II, no. 40)

The demonized Party is presented as being riven with mere animal instinct rather than human passions.

The Examiner extends this idea by indirectly associating madness and fury with irrationality. Blinded by passions, the Whigs are depicted as madmen unable to adhere to the rules of fair discussion, an indispensable element of political activity. This idea sows doubt as to the Whigs' reliability as politicians. Whiggish mastery in the use of *argumentum ad personam* is presented by the Examiner as

magick of Antipathy, the Moment a Man happens to have the Name of Tory affix'd to him, he is immediately stript of his Honour, Conscience, Profession, Oaths, Religion, Understanding, Estate, and Self-preservation; has a New Church, a new King, a new God put upon him. (III, no. 19)

The Examiner ironically concludes that "after all these Out-rages and Indignities, the good-natur'd Persecutors call themselves Men of Temper and Moderation". While such a description often appears in the course of the paper's publication, the particular elements are built up with vocabulary which specifically refers to noise, movement and negative passions - the whole resulting in the image of a bad-tempered individual unable to control their passions, and certainly not exhibiting the proper behaviour for an acting politician.

Here we see the beginning of a multi-faceted criticism of the Whigs' rhetoric of emotional appeal, which at the same time attempts to expose their supporters as nothing more than victims of "the arbitrary Dominion and Force of Party". This particular tactic is part of the wider discourse aimed at emphasising distinction between the party and its followers. In one particularly fascinating essay in *The Examiner* VI, no. 10, a demonized image of the Whig party enslaving its own followers is carefully and brutally created. Using illustrative language the description reveals the process of "carving out the Person very Anatomically". It symbolises the party's control not only over their followers' minds but also over their bodies.

The roots of such a complete indoctrination are identified with the authoritative power of the party whose

Fury and Demon may indeed keep entire Possession of the Passions, by being able to find constant Employment for them; and by allowing them

to run riot, and fly out into the most unwarrantable Excesses [...] may indeed make an entire Conquest of the Appetites, and tie every one of them fast to her Interests; not by curbing an subduing them, but by giving them a loose, and gratifying all their most unlawful and inordinate Desires, when she has Power and stands upon the Pinnacle [...]; or when she is fallen, herself, by promise to regain Paradise for them, and by raising their Expectations far above all probability or even possibility of Enjoyment. (*The Examiner*, VI, no. 10)

This kind of treatment transforms party followers into the zealous victims of party policy: “whatever Power can far command the Passions and Appetites, must have no small Influence upon Understanding”.

The tactics of separating passively obedient Whig supporters from the party itself is reflected in the Examiner’s attempt to explain and justify their zeal, and thus place all the blame for such stirred passions on the party itself:

Reason can never bear up with such a Load of Corruptions continually oppressing it; and Conscience is in no small danger of being deprived of all Force and Vigour, all endeavours even for its own Preservation, when there are so many Delusions to amuse, so many Mistakes to mislead, so many Temptations to blind, and so many strong Habits to fear and harden it. (VI, no. 10)

According to the Examiner, however, such a policy had a beneficial effect on the Whigs’ political opponents, simply because it “perfectly exclude[d] their best and ablest Heads: The Men of Thought and Temper, and Masters of their own Passions” removed and substituted by “noisy Creatures”, “bus-tling Fools” and “petulant Wittals” who were “made Slaves to the Passions of their Party” (VI, no. 10). That passage follows the above-mentioned tactics aimed at creating internal divisions within the Whig Party, and seems to be a message addressed to nobler members as well as an appeal to their reason as a source for detecting insidious party policy.

Whilst ‘Arbitrary Dominion and Force’ were established as the party’s instruments of ideological pressure on its supporters, it was the “pathetic writing” that the Examiner denoted as an attempt to influence others. *Pathos* as a mode of persuasion deriving from Aristotelian classification of the speaker’s appeal to the audience seemed to be well-known in the newspaper discourse of this particular period. In Jack Lynch’s *Guide* to eighteenth-century English vocabulary, the term ‘pathetic’ is defined as “evoking or arousing the emotions, especially the tender ones”.¹² There-

12 URL <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/C18Guide.pdf> (2017-06-12).

fore, the Examiner's reference to "pathetic writing" denotes the Whig rhetoric of emotional appeal. The line of anti-Whig propaganda included the accusation of ungrounded usage of "pathetic writing" that the Examiner metaphorically compared to relations between man and woman "when Men make Court to the Heart at the Expense of the Head, and Bribe the Passions to impose upon the Understanding" (VI, no. 11). According to another influential philosopher of the time, Nicolas Malebranche, affections could pass from person to person (James 1997, 172-3). Hultquist remarks that "because of this almost physical movement, they were remarkably hard to pin down, and caused a great deal of anxiety" (2016, 88). In the light of Malebranche's view, 'pathetic writing' appeared to be a dangerous mode of persuasion. What is more, the Examiner emphasises its defamatory character (II, no. 46) aimed at the unnecessary stirring of individual passions and "inflaming the Vulgar":

Their ill-using Us all manner of ways, both by Word and Deed, by Speaking, Writing and Acting [...] if we presume barely to take notice of That Usage, thou' without any Reflection, this is Heat and Passion. (*The Examiner*, II, no. 39)

The deviousness of such a method was made more noticeable by representing the Whig party's "secret and more artful Management" and by stressing its malicious intentions "in that other approv'd Method of corrupting the Political Genius of the Nation [...] and making use of the Humours, Passions and Appetites of our People" (II, no. 39). In such a state of mind the capacity for reasonable thinking is weakened and, consequently, "Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood, must lose their difference" (VI, no. 10). Such an insidious approach to the "Natural Genius of the Nation" brings about disastrous results because people who are blinded by passions seem to be unaware of their own deeds:

By a false Court to their Natural Genius [...] they strike a new Heat upon [peoples'] Passions, with a design to warp their Affections from the Government and by diverting or deluding their Humours and Appetites, make them serve to the Corruption of their best Principles [...] For a False Fear, or Ill-placed Affection [...] make Men Instruments for bringing about such Designs, as in cool Blood they would abhor. (III, no. 49)

Using figurative language the Examiner vividly portrays the effects of 'pathetic writing' on contemporary people who are apparently "so very Combustible, that a little Breath, a puff of Wind set us on Flame." The description is followed by a detailed process that reveals how "a few Vowels and Syllables serve to blow us up, and do the Work of Gunpowder" (*The Examiner*, III, no 19), ultimately preventing any form of debate:

The most violent Ravings and Excesses of Fury are to be roused and excited this way: As supposing you are talking of Government the word (Powers) does but just make the Blood circulate; if you go on and mention (Supreme) there is presently a gentle Commotion among the Animal Spirits; suppose you proceed and utter the Word (Monarchy) you will find the Fire begin to kindle: and after that, upon the first echo of the word (Prerogative) you may perceive some Smoke; till you pop out the Monosyllable (Right) and then the Man blazes; but if you offer to add to it (Hereditary) he is immediately all over in a Flame, and you must fly for fear of a Roasting. (III, no. 19)

The negative picture of the Whig that emerges from the Examiner's discourse is reinforced by juxtaposing it with the calmness and common sense of the Tory. The politeness expressed by simply addressing the Whigs as Gentlemen directs the readers' attention to the reasonable and noble tone of the Examiner's statements. What is more, the projected persona of the Examiner's 'impersonal' and 'impartial' character creates an image of objectivity and control over passions.¹³

One of the last issues of the *The Examiner* (before its temporary closure in July 1714) can be interpreted as a summary of the rhetoric of passions, where the irrationality of the Whigs' impassioned behaviour was presented as leading ultimately to their own self-destruction. Therefore, instead of attempting a lucid and logical debate, the Examiner suggests that it was more sensible to "wear them out with their own Heat and Violence, and to tire them... by letting them have their Heads" (VI, no. 12) as this would hinder them from making a reasonable and well-considered overview of the situation:

The Fury of the Faction will not suffer them to Contrive and Deliberate, or to lay a deep Scheme, that may grow and ripen by slow Degrees. Their Passion will not permit them to take or give Counsel; but precipitates and hurries them along, where others would tread softly and go step by step. (VI, no. 12)

What is more, such a conduct would be the source for their eventual discredit in the eyes of the people, because "their Rage leaves them without Disguise" and they appear as madmen who "Foam out their own Shame". In their fury "they shew their Enemies all their Strength, and all their Weakness; their Designs, and what they aim at" and

¹³ See Ewald 1967 and Ehrenpreis 1983. However, those scholars refer only to the period when Swift was the editor of the paper. Recently the aspect of *The Examiner's* 'eidolon' during Oldisworth's editorship has been sketched by Kozak 2016.

like Liquor upon the Fret, they turn up their Bottom to open view, and bring their foulest Dregs to the outside and surface; where every By-stander may plainly see, of what filthy Ingredients they are composed, and thereupon form a Judgement, what Purgations and Refinements are necessary to be applied. (VI, no. 12)

The obscene depiction of the Whigs' outburst of passion does not resemble the reasonable tone adopted by the Examiner. However, in seeming recognition of Queen Anne's failing health, there is a growing awareness of the Tories' inevitable fate, a singular occurrence that finally forces *The Examiner* to abandon its previously toned-down language.

Transmitting indirect information to readers with the intent of influencing their political views seemed a wholly conscious practice. In the 24 April 1712 issue *The Examiner*, commenting on the invectives published by his adversaries against him, concluded that the dissemination of the defamatory opinion would eventually turn against its author:

Yet, with all their Invectives, they seem to be but little acquainted with the true Art of raising Contempt; the Delicacy and Difficulty lies in causing your Adversary to be despised by others, not in the ill-bred terms, and despising Airs you your self give him; at that rate, Contempt will much sooner return upon the Contemner's Head. (II, no. 21)

In the case of *The Examiner*, one of the elements of the "true Art of raising Contempt" was to systematically reveal the destructive effects of the passions and to make readers associate them with the Whigs. The rhetorical strategy adopted by the paper was that of the "gutta cavat lapidem": the image emerging from its four-year-long assault on the Whigs was that of the irrational man torn apart by passions that ultimately drive him to destabilize the country in an attempt to regain political power. Moreover, in *The Examiner's* opinion, the destructive force of passions was debasing both the members of the Whig party and its supporters. In fact, the Whigs' authority was being eroded by their tendency to appeal to the passions above all else, whose devastating consequence was the transference of their emotive and tyrannising methods onto their erstwhile followers.

The paper finally 'revealed' the whiggish use of 'pathetic writing' as the manipulative tool employed to achieve its objectives. This process of revelation was further reinforced by juxtaposing the impassioned Whig against the reasonable Tory. The interpretation of *The Examiner's* message may be two-fold in that a stable person acting with common sense and impartiality of judgement (a Tory) would almost certainly have appeared more reliable in the role of politician when compared to a noisy, unstable, choleric individual driven by negative passions (a Whig). The effect of this message was strengthened by the fact that *The Examiner* repeated it in

the many essays it contained, thus succeeding in building up an image of rabble-rousing Whigs ready to subvert the Nation's political life. Another interpretation might be connected with the general understanding of the passions in the early eighteenth century. Whigs represented the uncontrolled passionate element in the body of the state while the 'practical' Tory government was presented as the guarantor of control over the whiggish passions through the very act and process of reason, which would eventually lead to a harmonised society.

In the broadest sense the rhetoric of passions formed an essential part of *The Examiner's* discourse highlighting the need for reason to rule over man's emotive and emotional sides: an argument entirely consistent with the wider, philosophically grounded discussion of the age concerning the passions and their place in the cultural, social and political world.

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