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Using *The Spectator* to Stereotype the Country Tory:

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's Venerable Sir Roger de Coverley Character

The original *Spectator* essay magazine, not to be confused with the modern weekly of the same name, was one of the most well-known and popular English periodicals during the eighteenth century.² It continues to be an influential account, especially on politeness, consulted and cited by historians of contemporary manners, customs, etiquette, and fashion. Written by the moderate Whigs Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator* consisted of observations made by its fictional narrator, the ever-observant Mr. Spectator who was a member of the fictional Spectator club. Mr. Spectator portrayed himself as not belonging to any one class or occupation ('I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life³'), although he did admit to inheriting a small hereditary estate. Mr. Spectator compensated for his own class ambiguity by defining members of this club by their economic and social functions.⁴ The club featured stock characters such as the country squire, the lawyer, the merchant, the sentry, the fashionable gentleman bachelor, and the clergyman. With traditional characters inside and outside of the club, *The Spectator* delighted in demonstrating that men of different backgrounds and ideologies can cooperate in a pleasant and productive manner.⁵ This notion formed the core of Addison and Steele's agenda in

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² An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2012 Newcastle University Postgraduate Forum Conference. I am grateful for comments from the audience as well as input and suggestions from Helen Berry. This version has revised and extended a number of points from the original paper. An online version of Prof. Henry Morley's edition of *The Spectator* was used for this paper.

³ Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 1, 1 March 1711.

⁴ Charles A. Knight, 'The Spectator's Moral Economy', *Modern Philology*, 91, no. 2 (1993), 161-179 (p. 165).

⁵ Robert Clark, 'Looking Back at Mr. Spectator, Given Srebenica', *Media History* 14, no. 3 (2008), 373-388 (p. 378).

promoting a new form of politeness, which married informality and civility as the most agreeable form of interaction. *The Spectator*, like Steele's predecessor *The Tatler*, pursued the regulation of masculine conduct and identity by presenting positive and negative emulative models.⁶ Regardless of whether Mr. Spectator encountered these 'models' inside the Spectator club or in the streets, the idea was that every literate male in England could see a bit of himself in at least one of the characters in some mannerism or sentiment.

This purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, this paper engages with the historiographical debate of just how politically motivated *The Spectator* was with regard to its depiction of Sir Roger de Coverley, a fictional Tory character who was created to serve as a farcical squire stereotype by the Whig authors. More informatively, the second purpose of this paper is to examine Whig attitudes towards Tory squires and explore the political endeavour being performed in the farcical depiction of Sir Roger. Addison and Steele had to be careful to avoid blatant partisanship so as not to upset a portion of their estimated 60,000 readers, the smart society of eighteenth century England.⁷

Through the observations of Mr. Spectator, Addison and Steele attempted to usher in a complicated and subtle change in English society.⁸ The best of all the characters in the Spectator club for this function was also the most memorable and liked, Sir Roger de Coverley, the fictional stock-type of a Tory squire.⁹ Mr. Spectator wrote:

The first of our Society is a Gentleman of *Worcestershire*, of ancient Descent, a Baronet, his Name Sir Roger De Coverley. His great Grandfather was Inventor of that famous

⁶ Erin Mackie, 'The Perfect Gentleman', *Media History*, 14, no. 3 (2008), 353-372, (p. 354).

⁷ Robert Bucholz and Joseph Ward, *London: A Social and Cultural History, 1550-1750* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2012), p. 180.

⁸ Knight, 'The Spectator's Moral Economy', p.161.

⁹ Blair Worden, *Stuart England* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1986), p. 237.

Country-Dance which is call'd after him... He is a Gentleman that is very singular in his Behaviour, but his Singularities proceed from his good Sense...¹⁰

This singularity reflected his country attitude and unfashionable dress. Mr. Spectator goes on to note that Sir Roger still wore the coat and doublet that was in fashion over 30 years ago. In more than just fashion Sir Roger represented the English past. Sir Roger portrayed the antiquated country gentleman stereotype, allowing for *The Spectator* to deride him as a nostalgic relic and depict the Tory party as dated and out of fashion. Throughout the run of *The Spectator*, Sir Roger's politics, etiquette, and country manners were often, but not always, shown to be silly and humorous yet ultimately harmless due to Sir Roger's good nature. Addison and Steele undertook this mocking task in order to satirise the Tory party and promote Whiggish politeness, which was in the process of loosening social discourse and moving away from a civil interplay that was ceremonial and hierarchical in nature.¹¹ However, while examining Sir Roger's country mannerisms, political ideology, and relationship with the church, the two Whig writers eventually developed a fondness for the stereotyped antiquated Sir Roger de Coverley. Nonetheless, even as the authors struggled to keep their character from evolving into a nostalgic commemoration, Addison and Steele, using Sir Roger as a stereotype, subtly demeaned and archaized the Tory Party throughout *The Spectator*.

The Country Gentleman

Sir Roger's rural lifestyle contrasted with all other members of the club, in particular with the London merchant Sir Andrew Freeport. Despite their different living habits, Addison validated Sir Roger's membership in the club when he described the Spectator club as 'a select Body of Friends... very luckily compos'd of such Persons as are engag'd in different Ways of Life, and

¹⁰ Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, no. 2, 2 March 1711.

¹¹ For a historiographical overview of politeness see Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of The British Eighteenth Century,' *The Historical Journal*, 45, no. 4 (2002), 869-898 (p.873).

deputed as it were out of the most conspicuous Classes of Mankind.¹² As one of the old-fashioned landed elite, Sir Roger's country customs provided a good deal of amusement for Mr. Spectator and bemusement for Sir Andrew. Sir Roger's preference for his quiet country home set him apart from most of the contemporary landed elite. Absenteeism amongst the gentry had risen during the Interregnum and continued to rise in the 1670s and 1680s due to political upheaval and the increasingly attractive sociable London lifestyle.¹³ Unlike the other gentry, Sir Roger's stubborn preference for the country meant he could not seamlessly assimilate back and forth between his estate and London. During a month-long sabbatical in the countryside, Mr. Spectator commented with equal parts approval and chagrin on the Coverley estate and surrounding area, which was seemingly stuck in the seventeenth century and fostered the out-of-fashion and out-of-touch squire.

Addison and Steele often compared the city to the country as a tactic to highlight Sir Roger's outmoded behaviour. The hunting and exercise for health in the country, compared to the quackery in London, provides just one example. Mr. Spectator and Sir Roger went on a group foxhunt with the squire's prized hounds. After a day spent enjoying the spectacle of the old squire riding around with his hounds after a rabbit, Mr. Spectator remarked he 'shall prescribe the moderate Use of this Exercise to all my Country Friends, as the best kind of Physick for mending a bad Constitution, and preserving a good one.'¹⁴ Mr. Spectator does not admire the hunt, rather, he approves of the initiative to partake in what Sir Edward Peyton called 'the most commendable exercises' to promote bodily health.¹⁵ Hunting stood in contrast to the urban contemporary booming commercial medicine business, which ushered in what folklorist Eric

¹² Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 34, 9 April 1711.

¹³ James Rosenheim, 'Landownership, the Aristocracy and the Country Gentry', in *The Reigns of Charles II and James VII & II*, ed. by Lionel Glassey (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 152-170 (p. 152).

¹⁴ Eustace Budgell, *The Spectator*, no. 116, 13 July 1711.

¹⁵ J.T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999), p. 156.

Maple refers to as the ‘Great Age of Quackery.’¹⁶ Evidence for Addison’s aversion to quackery can be found even earlier than *The Spectator*. Writing while on the Grand Tour he remarked of catching a fever: ‘...notwithstanding I made use of one of the Physicians of this place, who are as cheap as our English Farriers and generally as Ignorant.’¹⁷ The writers of *The Spectator* clearly approved of the old country maxim of seeking good health through exercise rather than the dubious offerings of London quacks. When describing a stay in the country after the original run of *The Spectator* Addison wrote, ‘I would willingly see the year turned before I come to London and have already found all the Effects of good Air and Exercise.’¹⁸

The traditional paternalistic attitude of Sir Roger when dealing with his tenants is another example of a country trait that the authors attempted to mock. Instead their efforts resulted in Sir Roger appearing sympathetic and commendable. Citing the transition away from paternalistic relief of the local poor, historian Blair Worden suggests that the new, younger landowners—who bought, were given, or inherited land in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—were much more hard-headed and ruthless than the previous generation.¹⁹ Unlike these new landowners, Sir Roger continued to observe traditional forms of country hospitality. Mr. Spectator informed the reader that, in addition to sending hog’s pudding to each poor family in the parish, Sir Roger always kept an open house and allowed his tenants to come and make merry for Christmas.²⁰ Sir Roger’s observance of country hospitality at Christmas lends credence to Robert Bucholz and Newton Key’s claim that it was a traditional expectation for a landlord to open his house on holidays during the early modern period.²¹ Nonetheless, the number of

¹⁶ Eric Maple, ‘The Great Age of Quackery,’ in *Alternative Medicine in Britain*, ed. by Mike Saks (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 57.

¹⁷ Joseph Addison. Letter to [William] Adams (December 1699), in *The Letters of Joseph Addison*, ed. by Walter Graham, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 15.

¹⁸ Joseph Addison. Letter to Ambrose Philips (2 November 1713), in Walter Graham (ed.) *The Letters of Joseph Addison* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 282.

¹⁹ Worden, *Stuart England*, p. 10.

²⁰ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 269, 8 January 1712.

²¹ Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485-1714: A Narrative History*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 27.

celebratory feasts and bonfires declined as more of the gentry emigrated to London for long periods of the year, leaving surrogates to watch over their country interests.²² For example, intermittent MP Sir Ralph Verney often provided country hospitality and abhorred going to court prior to the English Civil War, but by the time of his death he was spending up to nine months a year in London, including most Christmases.²³ In contrast to rural settings, the gentry were not expected to provide charity in town. Sir Roger, however, could not help but look at those beneath his station with pity even in London. Despite chiding a beggar for not finding work he still gave him six pence.²⁴ This Addison and Steele-approved spontaneous act of kindness differed with the merchant Sir Andrew Freeport's lack of charitable sensibilities. Sir Andrew maintained that a merchant should never give charity since it encouraged beggars.²⁵ In these opposing views of charity Freeport embodied the commercial values of London, and on the rise all over England, while Sir Roger those of paternalism that still persisted in the countryside, although this paternalism was on the decline.

While the healthy living and paternalistic communal relations demonstrated by Sir Roger are portrayed with subtle admiration, his dealings with the local church are highly satirised in no. 112.²⁶ The most obvious mockery of Sir Roger occurred when Addison and Steele detailed Sir Roger's relationship and commitment to high-church authority. The authority Sir Roger wielded in the country church near his estate is meant to depict Tory feudalism as a farce.²⁷ One of these feudal principles was the privilege of advowson, which gave large landowners control of the their local parish church and the ability to name the clergyman and clerks.²⁸ Mr. Spectator provided evidence of advowson when noting how Sir Roger promised to choose the next church clerk

²² Rosenheim, 'Landownership, the Aristocracy and the Country Gentry', p.158.

²³ Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of The Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), p. 22.

²⁴ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 269, 8 January 1712.

²⁵ Adam Rounce, 'Fame and Failure in *The Spectator*', *Media History* 14, no. 3 (2008), 309-322 (p.312).

²⁶ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 112, 9 July 1711.

²⁷ Adam Rounce, 'Fame and Failure in *The Spectator*', p.318.

²⁸ Bucholz and Key, *Early Modern England*, p. 21.

based on merit once the old incumbent died. While a choice based on merit is an admirable enough notion, Mr. Spectator could not suppress a hint of bemusement over Sir Roger's complete authority in the church writing that, 'As Sir Roger is Landlord to the whole Congregation, he keeps them in very good Order, and will suffer no body to sleep in it besides himself...' ²⁹ The squire routinely caused disruptions such as lengthening the verses of psalms, standing while others were kneeling so as to note any absences and interrupting the sermon to tell people not to disturb the congregation with fidgeting or making noise. Mr. Spectator opined that the worthiness of his character made these behavioural oddities seem like foils rather than blemishes of his good qualities. He also noted that none of the other parishioners were polite or educated enough to recognise the ridiculousness of Sir Roger's behaviour in and authority over the church. These observations of Sir Roger's love of the high-Anglican church in the countryside are essential to the authors' original purpose for creating the character, to mock the seemingly backwards rural Tory.

Addison and Steele also examined the Tory relationship with the church when they portrayed Sir Roger's visits to London. Sir Roger's dealings in London often gave him a platform to defend the high-church and uniformity. Sir Roger sends a book to Sir Andrew about which Mr. Spectator writes:

Sir Andrew opening the Book, found it to be a Collection of Acts of Parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some Passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own Hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three Points, which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the Club. ³⁰

²⁹ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 112, 9 July 1711.

³⁰ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 517, 23 October 1712.

At one point during his visits to London, Sir Roger ‘launched out into the Praise of the late Act of Parliament for securing the Church of England...’³¹ This act was the 1711 Occasional Conformity Act that prevented Catholics and Nonconformists from receiving communion in the Anglican Church in order to be eligible for public offices. Sir Roger believed that this act immediately secured the Anglican Church because he had observed a dissenter partaking of his plum-porridge during the Christmas feast at the Coverley estate. Addison and Steele’s writing often attempted to take the sting out of extremist high-church Tory views.³² With the first of the high-church Sacheverell Riots (1710) in very recent memory, this satirical basis of evidence for the security of the Anglican Church, along with Sir Roger’s earlier dealings with the country church, poignantly supported the idea that high-church Toryism was farcical.

The Hierarchical Ceremonialist and Formal Conversationalist

Sir Roger de Coverley’s country mannerisms also indicated that he was an antiquated character from the previous era. Mr. Spectator explained, ‘By Manners I do not mean Morals, by Behaviour and Good-breeding as they show themselves in Town and in the Country.’³³ During this age of politeness a loosening of the social discourse occurred from what might be described as ceremonial hierarchical civility to a new form of polite discourse, promoted in *The Spectator*. Addison described those of good breeding and fashion as embracing informal simplicity in conversation and manners.³⁴ This shift towards easy behaviour had yet to reach the countryside. While admitting that this formality of ceremony and conversation originated in the city before migrating to the countryside, an exasperated Mr. Spectator admits the rural politeness at the

³¹ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 269, 8 January 1712.

³² Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* [e-book] (Oxford UP, 2006), p. 56.

³³ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 119, 17 July 1711.

³⁴ Markku Peltonen, ‘Politeness and Whiggism, 1638-1732,’ *Historical Journal*, 48, no. 2 (2005), 391-414 (p.397).

Coverley estate to be troublesome for him, asserting: 'If we look on the People of Mode in the Country, we find in them the Manners of the last Age.'³⁵

In conversation, those in the country still adhered to the mode of the previous age, with frequent indications of deference and submission. The new urban form of conversation, central to the new urban form of politeness at the beginning of the eighteenth century, called for men to speak their minds freely but in a civil manner.³⁶ *The Spectator* provided evidence for this conversational politeness when the diverse members of the Spectator club were together and still able to express differing opinions with civility. Describing this older form of conversation in the countryside, Mr. Spectator wrote that, 'Conversation, like the *Romish* Religion, was so encumbered with Show and Ceremony, that it stood in need of Reformation to Retrench its Superfluities, and restore it to its natural good Sense and Beauty'.³⁷ This form of conversation was consistent with the previous age of formality and stiffness. Addison had another gentle dig at Sir Roger's manner of speaking when he noted the squire's custom of saying 'good morrow' or 'good night' to everyone he passed, a custom that gained him favour amongst his neighbours in the countryside. When he said good night to a stranger on a passing boat while being ferried across the Thames the man loudly wondered 'what queer old put' was in the opposite boat.³⁸ This interaction embodies the London-versus-country opposition as well as new-versus-old manners. In the countryside, it was possible to know everyone while neighbourliness in London was less emphasised due to the fluidity of living situations.

The ceremonial behaviour that ruled the countryside also shined through in Sir Roger's manners. Paul Langford suggests that the beginning of the eighteenth century saw a social adjustment

³⁵ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 119, 17 July 1711.

³⁶ Peltonen, 'Politeness and Whiggism', p.398.

³⁷ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 119, 17 July 1711.

³⁸ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 383, 20 May 1712.

towards the softening of manners amongst the aristocratic families of England.³⁹ Sir Roger's manners, however, remained just as formal as ever. In no. 119 Mr. Spectator remarked that by the time Sir Roger was done with all the ceremony of dining, which featured drinking healths and seating guests according to rank, his dinner was almost cold. On the drinking of healths, in his famous instructive letters to his son, the 4th Earl of Chesterfield advised:

Drinking of healths is now grown out of fashion, and is deemed unpolite in good company. Custom once had rendered it universal, but the improved manners of this age now render it as absurd and vulgar. What can be more rude or ridiculous than to interrupt persons at their dinner with an unnecessary compliment?⁴⁰

The evidence provided by Mr. Spectator and the 4th Earl of Chesterfield reinforces Lawrence E. Klein's argument that in an age where politeness placed less emphasis on hierarchy, giving merit an agreeable form allowed it to be more generally appreciated.⁴¹ Even the honest and straightforward Will Wimble, a country friend of Sir Roger, will not walk in front of the socially superior Mr. Spectator. Humorously, when Mr. Spectator gestured for him to do away with the ceremony, Wimble replied that he would not so as to ensure that Mr. Spectator did not believe those in the country had no manners. The irony of this passage derives from the fact that Wimble's attempt to prove the civility of country folk actually demonstrated the impoliteness of the countryside due to their subscription to formal ceremony.

³⁹ Paul Langford, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Sixth Series), 12 (2002), 311-331, (p.314).

⁴⁰ Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, *Chesterfield's Advice to His Son, On Men and Manners* (London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1836), p. 45.

⁴¹ Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of', p. 873.

This hierarchical ceremony originated in the court where strict civility gradually became frozen as rules and etiquette.⁴² The idea that Sir Roger and the country were frozen in a previous era demonstrates why Sir Roger de Coverley received such satirical yet partial treatment. He had the ability to represent both the positives and negatives of England's past, as evidenced by his paternalistic charity and derided etiquette. Nicholas Cooper explains that medieval codes of courtliness were replaced by civility, which was then replaced by politeness.⁴³ Addison and Steele alluded to this change when they joked that a country squire will bow to you more times in half an hour than a courtier would in a week.⁴⁴ This statement recalled a time in not-too-distant history when the court had been the great cultural centre of the realm and it was the barbarous country that did not bow or recognise ceremony.

The Tory Squire

In addition to his country values and ceremonial etiquette, the politics of Sir Roger de Coverley reflected antiquated country interests. As with Sir Roger's Tory commitment to the high-church, Addison and Steele found some mileage for mockery in the realm of Sir Roger's Tory politics. The Tory party counted the majority of the conservative country gentry, such as Sir Roger, amongst its most loyal constituents.⁴⁵ Even though the time of 'Whig Supremacy' (1715-1760) in politics was still to come, the Tory party represented the conservative past within *The Spectator* because of the Tories' traditional values of commitment to high church, landed interest, and monarchy. Sir Roger demonstrated his commitment to the monarchy when he inquired about Sir Andrew Freeport one night in the club. After Sir Roger referred to Sir Andrew as his 'old Antagonist' Mr. Spectator wrote, 'He asked me with a kind Smile, whether Sir Andrew had not

⁴² Nicholas Cooper, 'Rank, Manners and Display: The Gentlemanly House, 1500-1750', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, 12 (2002), 291-310 (p. 310).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁴⁴ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 119, 17 July 1711.

⁴⁵ Bucholz and Key, *Early Modern England*, p. 359.

taken Advantage of his Absence, to vent among them some of his Republican Doctrine.⁴⁶ Addison and Steele used such comments to demonstrate that Sir Andrew acted as a foil character for Sir Roger. Sir Andrew played the role of a Whig merchant in favour of moneyed interest and parliamentary government while Sir Roger that of the Tory squire who favoured landed interest and passive obedience. Sir Roger's trip to Westminster Abbey with Mr. Spectator revealed more of his political sympathies. After taking a tour with a historian, Mr. Spectator remarked on the respect Sir Roger showed the monarchy. Upon seeing a vandalised statue of a king (the head was stolen) Sir Roger remarked, 'Some Whig I'll warrant you, you ought to lock your Kings better; they will carry off the Body too, if you don't take care.'⁴⁷ This is an obvious reference to the beheading of King Charles I as well as the Whiggish dislike of absolute monarchy.

Furthermore, the landed interest had traditionally been married to the Tory party and Mr. Spectator believed party politics to be most extreme in the rural areas. Evidence for Tory landed interest came from Sir Roger when he admitted that for his own financial sake he leaned hardest to the Tory side when at his estate. On the way to London with Sir Roger, Mr. Spectator marvelled that Sir Roger would choose a far inferior inn with a Tory owner over a more comfortable Whig inn. The moderate Mr. Spectator did not make a fuss at the time but later wrote:

It gives me a serious Concern to see such a Spirit of Dissention in the Country; not only as it destroys Virtue and Common Sense, and renders us in a Manner Barbarians towards one another, but as it perpetuates our Animosities, widens our Breaches, and transmits our present Passions and Prejudices to our Posterity.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 269, 8 January 1712.

⁴⁷ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 329, 18 March 1712.

⁴⁸ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 126, 25 July 1711.

It was thus the narrow-mindedness of the Tory party, with its country mentality and accusations of Whig corruption in office, which caused dissent in England.⁴⁹ The conservative values of the Tory party, consisting of high-church and commitment to monarchy and landed interests looked antiquated when compared with the more forward-looking values of Whigs. During the decades following the writing of *The Spectator*, religious toleration gradually replaced strict conformity while trade, industry and commerce were becoming more important to England than agriculture. Like the rest of the Tory party, Sir Roger de Coverley stubbornly resisted this change.

A Period of Transition: The Harmless and Endangered Nostalgic

The publication of *The Spectator* occurred during a great period of transition in ideas about gender as well as politics and religion. The sociability and refinement of early modern politeness saw the shift from a hardy and athletic manliness to something more eloquent and delicate, as detailed by Philip Carter in his work on masculinity and politeness.⁵⁰ Men were expected to become more involved in the private sphere and not just leave it to women. Sir Roger de Coverley's nostalgic 'rustic hunter' image harkened back to a time before the stereotypical areas of influence for men (state) and women (private) began to blur.

Sir Roger's bachelorhood also caused problems during this transitional period of masculine image. The late-Stuart period was relatively tolerant to non-marriage. The gentry and nobility, however, especially those with distinguished family names, were expected to produce male heirs to continue legitimate bloodlines and secure property inheritance.⁵¹ Despite this increasing tolerance, many bachelors were still stigmatised. Amanda Vickery argues that men such as Sir Roger, a perpetual bachelor, were seen as not realising their full masculinity and acting as sponges on society because they evaded their share of domestic government and did not father

⁴⁹ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 293.

⁵⁰ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Essex: Pearson Education, 2001), p. 105.

⁵¹ Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. by Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp.158-183 (p.166).

legitimate children.⁵² Unlike libertines or rakes, whose sexual promiscuity and illegitimate children plagued society, Sir Roger's freely chosen celibacy and lack of offspring, legitimate or otherwise, meant he was less of a parasite than Vickery suggests. While admitting that her book concentrates on married men, Elizabeth Foyster nonetheless writes, '...in the seventeenth century the key to male power in the household was thought to be sexual control of women as well as the self.'⁵³ Sir Roger was not able to fit these parameters because '...he keeps himself a Bachelor by reason of being crossed in Love by a perverse beautiful Widow of the next County to him.'⁵⁴ He was able to control his 'self' by remaining celibate and he did not need a woman to dominate sexually. Instead, Sir Roger's power in the household came from the fondness his servants showed him due to his genuine concern for their wellbeing.

Sir Roger's death was reported a little over a month before the original run of *The Spectator* ended.⁵⁵ According to Eustace Budgell, a sometimes contributor to *The Spectator*, Addison, who authored the overwhelming majority of *Spectators* containing Sir Roger, admitted that he would rather kill off Sir Roger than allow Steele, or any other periodicals that might style themselves as successors of *The Spectator*, to tamper with the character.⁵⁶ This reinforces Adam Rounce's assertion that, despite being light-heartedly satirised as a symbol of a past way of life, Sir Roger was an admirable pastoral character with a nostalgic appeal.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Sir Roger de Coverley served as both the lovable outdated Tory and, more importantly, also the epitome of those Addison and Steele did not want governing the nation. During the *The Spectator's* run, the Whigs had yet to take full control of the government. Throughout this article it has been argued that, even though Addison and the reading public developed affection for Sir Roger, his creation and depiction were politically motivated. While the 'Whig Supremacy' (1715-1760) of government

⁵² Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London: Yale UP, 2009), p. 77.

⁵³ Elizabeth Foyer, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Essex: Pearson Education, 1999), p. 4.

⁵⁴ Steele, *The Spectator*, no. 2, 2 March 1711.

⁵⁵ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 517, 23 October 1712.

⁵⁶ Phyllis Freeman, 'Who was Sir Roger de Coverley?', *Quarterly Review*, 285, no. 574 (1947), 592-604 (p.592).

⁵⁷ Rounce, 'Fame and Failure', p.309.

would not occur until three years after *The Spectator's* original run and one year after Addison revived the periodical for another six month run, edited compilations, providing subtle negative campaigning against the Tory party, could readily be had. When placed side-by-side and viewed as stereotypes, Sir Andrew Freeport, the successful, efficient, and modern merchant, appears to be a much more attractive government official than Sir Roger, the outdated and folksy squire.

The Whig politics of Addison and Steele are covert throughout *The Spectator* but emerge in Sir Roger's often satirical depiction and in the dichotomy between Sir Roger (Tory decline) and Sir Andrew Freeport (Whig ascendancy).⁵⁸ Sir Roger's appeal stemmed from the consistent rustic countryside, which provided an antidote to the tumultuous city.⁵⁹ The antidote was available for those, mainly the elite, who wished to recall a time when the value of country property and income far out-weighted the commercial interests and real estate in London. Part of the struggle for Addison and Steele, undoubtedly, was to navigate the popularity of this nostalgic character while not negating the original purpose in creating him, which was to satirise a stubborn, declining Tory squirearchy.⁶⁰ Regardless of his popularity, Sir Roger was still a farcical character meant to demonstrate a negative stereotype and mock Tories. Throughout *The Spectator*, Addison and Steele attempted to use reason and moderation to educate the literate in a time of high-church Toryism and party politics.⁶¹ Crucially, *The Spectator* promoted, explicated, and recorded the loosening of social discourse and transition into the age of politeness. In the pages of *The Spectator* we see the rise in importance of the Whig merchant and decline of the Tory squire. Addison and Steele contribute to our general historical understanding because they acted as both reporters and commentators on early eighteenth century London culture such as fashion, politics, theatre, and manners. Despite both the authors' and readers' growing fondness and the

⁵⁸ Lawrence Klein, 'Property and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Moralists: The Case of *The Spectator*', in *Early Modern Concepts of Property*, ed. by John Brewer and Susan Staves (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 221-233 (p.224).

⁵⁹ Rounce, 'Fame and Failure', p.317.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p.344.

fact that Sir Roger's good qualities were often highlighted, there is no doubt that the sting was taken out of landed Tory ideology when represented by the endearing but archaic and eccentric Sir Roger de Coverley.

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