British Literature 1640-1789

Keywords
British Literature 1640–1789
Keywords in Literature and Culture

The books in this series present keywords for individual literary periods in an easily accessible reference format. More than a dictionary, each volume is written by a leading scholar and consists of an engaging collection of short essays, which consider the ways in which words both register and explore historical change. Indebted to the work of Raymond Williams, the series identifies and documents keywords as cultural analysis, taking the reader beyond semantic definition to uncover the uncertainties, disagreements, and confrontations evident in differing usages and conflicting connotations.

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British Literature 1640–1789: Keywords

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In most cases, I have referred quotations to the sources from which I took them. The most prominent among these are the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, Johnson’s *Dictionary*, and my own *British Literature 1640–1789 (Anthology)*. Materials were gathered, however, from many other sources. In some cases these are standard editions of important writers, many of which appear in the list of short titles and abbreviations. In other cases, I found materials in *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO)*, *Early English Books Online*, *Google Books*, *Archive*, *HathiTrust*, *Project Gutenberg*, *Electronic Enlightenment (EE)*, and other invaluable sites. I also sometimes consulted early printed books in the old-fashioned way. There are many references in the text to early editions, which I arrived at in a variety of ways; the method used to locate them is not always clear and not always simple. An electronic finding often led me to consult an actual book and that sometimes led me to search another database, and so on. No matter what my original source, I often ended up looking passages up in modern scholarly editions, when they were available. I consulted a number of these editions in *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (OSEO)*. The main object of my references is to enable readers to trace my findings to a stable text. I wish to thank the proprietors of the many electronic sources I used for providing in many instances the pathways to these sources and in many instances the texts themselves.
Short Titles and Abbreviations


ECCO—*Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, Gale Primary Sources, Cengage

ECF—*Eighteenth-Century Fiction* online (Chadwick-Healey), ProQuest LLC


Keywords—Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976

Short Titles and Abbreviations


NCF—Nineteenth-Century Fiction online (Chadwyck-Healey), ProQuest, LLC

OED—Oxford English Dictionary, online at www.oed.com


PL—John Milton, Paradise Lost, 1667; 2nd ed., 1674

Romanticism: Keywords—Frederick Burwick, Romanticism Keywords. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell, 2015


As dictionaries are commodious, they are likewise fallacious: he whose
works exhibit an apparent connexion and regular subordination cannot
easily conceal his ignorance, or favour his idleness; the completeness of one
part will show the deficiency of another: but the writer of a dictionary may
silently omit what he does not know; and his ignorance, if it happens to be
discovered, slips away from censure under the name of forgetfulness.

Samuel Johnson, Preface to Alexander Macbean’s Dictionary of
Ancient Geography (1773)

As part of the Wiley/Blackwell Keywords series, the present book is a kind of hom-
age to Raymond Williams’s Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society
(1976). It is also indebted to many of the same writers and works to which
Williams acknowledged a debt. Among these the most important for me are the
OED, the works of William Empson and, to a lesser degree, those of Owen Barfield,
whom I read at an early stage of my career and who declared trenchantly that the
meaning of words is the history of words.1 Williams acknowledged the tremen-
dous advantage anyone writing this sort of dictionary has because of the work of
Murray, Bradley, Onions, and the other editors of the OED, at the same time that
he expressed his awareness of its historical and other limitations. Dictionaries,
even one as great and scientific as the OED, are written by particular people at a
particular time, and their views are necessarily limited. Since the appearance of
Keywords the OED has undergone an important revision under the direction of
Robert Burchfield, and since then it has been in an ongoing state of revision. Some
articles bear a recent date, and others, we are carefully informed, have not been
revised since they were first published, sometime between 1884 and 1928, when
the dictionary came out in the fascicles so lovingly employed by Williams. This
process of revision, along with digitization, has made the database (the current
form of the OED is not a printed book) more useful, and my debt to it is even
greater than Raymond’s to his fascicles. I have many more other resources, how-
ever, to draw upon than Williams did. The searchable, electronic form of Johnson’s
Dictionary is of course a terrific resource for a dictionary of eighteenth-century
language. Even though much of Johnson’s work was incorporated into the OED,
his representation of English as he saw it from his perch in 1755 is invaluable. In
addition, I have had Eighteenth-Century Collections Online at my disposal, enabling
me to search through virtually the whole corpus of publication in England during
this period. For the earlier period, 1640–1700, I used Early English Books Online.
In addition, I have used the Chadwyck–Healy collections of eighteenth- and
nineteenth-century novels, the Burney collection of newspapers, the Electronic
Enlightenment, and occasionally other databases, such as the Middle English
Dictionary and Google Books, with its N-Gram facility.

With all these advantages I would seem to have little excuse for not pro-
ducing a better book than Williams’s. Unfortunately, this is not the case — I
have not produced a better book than Williams’s, and I do have excuses to offer,
apart from lack of talent. One thing I might plead is that the amount of evidence
now available for researching the meanings of words is overwhelming. There is
“too much to know,” to recall the title of Ann Blair’s book about the “information
crisis” of the sixteenth century. Williams did not have databases to search. His
book grew out of conversations about the changing meaning of the word culture
and a number of words that he saw as forming clusters related to that specific
keyword. He advanced his compilation of data slowly over twenty years by
putting slips culled from his reading into a shoebox (at least a metaphorical
shoebox). I could find more uses of the word culture in an hour than Williams
found in decades, but his collections had more integrity than such mechanized
culling produces, and they were therefore easier to assemble into a coherent
narrative. His articles of “historical semantics” emerged organically from the
data. My science might be purer, but it is in several senses less informed.

I became aware of the problem of information overload early on and reacted to
it by restricting my searches in various ways. I used all the resources at my
command in a scattershot way, but I focused my more intensive searches on the
OED, Johnson’s Dictionary, and my Wiley-Blackwell anthology of British
Literature 1640–1789 (4th ed., 2016). The OED was indispensable because it
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combines analysis with illustrative examples and therefore informed my searches. Johnson’s Dictionary also provides both analysis and illustration, and I had the added advantage in using it of knowing the book very well since it was the subject of my first book, Johnson’s Dictionary and the Language of Learning. Using my own anthology offered me a similar advantage. As I searched through its digital version, I naturally recognized the contexts in which the target words appeared. The great liability of searching electronic databases is that one usually doesn’t know the context and hence can often fail fully to appreciate the meanings of the words one is looking for. My anthology also offered me a way to limit my corpus, which was necessary especially for very frequently used words. There is a further benefit in this corpus being mainly composed of excellent pieces of writing. I am not conservative enough to believe that the best writing contains the most important usages of words, but I think artful work has a tendency to define and sometimes to redefine the keywords in a culture. Although I made many excursions outside my anthology, its 600,000 words became the focal point of my researches as I progressed. I should say too that I generally limited myself to the period 1640–1789, but I sometimes reached back to the early seventeenth century to snatch a definitive usage in the works of Francis Bacon, or forward to the nineteenth to adduce something informative from Wordsworth, Austen, or Keats.

Despite my reliance on dictionaries (and my love of them) in writing the articles on each word, I have been conscious of the drawbacks of lexicographical treatment. One such drawback is the structural tendency of dictionaries to favor etymological meanings. Etymology can of course be important in the meaning of words, but the assumption that all uses of a word recall its etymology is fallacious. Etymology is important in the writings, especially the lexicographical writings, of Samuel Johnson: as a rule, he arranged the various senses of words in his Dictionary according to their distance from an etymological meaning, especially when the root of the word is Latin, and in his writing he is often conscious of such meaning. For instance, the first sense of ardor in Johnson’s Dictionary is “heat,” even though he adduces no illustrations of this meaning in his illustrative quotations. Later, “figurative” usages draw on this etymological meaning; the OED bears this out in most, but not in all instances; the same is true for Johnson’s own writings. Johnson uses the etymology of ardor when he writes, “Against the instillations of this frigid opiate [exhaustion], the heart should be secured by all the considerations which once concurred to kindle the ardour of enterprise.” He is not so conscious of etymology when in the same essay, Rambler 207, he writes, “it is not easy to restrain our ardour.”
Many words get farther and more frequently distant from their etymologies than *ardor*. This is partly true because of the puzzling, durable, simple truth that words have multiple meanings. Opposite meanings might derive from a single root, and that demonstrates another way in which etymology is not always a key to meaning. The word *to cleave*, for example, can mean either to separate or to remain unseparated. Etymologically, it has something to do with an edge, but it is a stretch to say that this etymology is active in the two opposing meanings of the words: both when the Bible talks about a woman cleaving to a man or about a cloven foot. There are other cases in which etymology clearly is the source of ambiguity rather than clarity. The word *host*, which originally meant an enemy, can also mean a friend and benefactor. It further diminishes the value of etymology in meaning to consider that there have always been numerous false and folk etymologies to influence writers and thinkers. Plato’s *Cratylus* is the most famous demonstration of etymological thinking gone mad. One pervasive form of false etymology has long been the mistake that formal similarity between words is an indication of common origin, even across languages. This is simply false. There are combinations of sounds (or letters) that mean one thing in one language and another in another language. Many of the relations between words and meaning should be viewed as arbitrary and conventional, despite the temptation to find “natural” reasons for these associations.

Apart from their tendency to stress etymology, dictionaries have other problems as guides to meaning. One of these derives from their laudable attempt to divide meanings into several different senses. The fallacy here is that in many instances these separate meanings are active in single uses of a word. Much of the work that Empson did on ambiguity shows that this is true. In literary usage, as Empson understood better than anyone, ambiguity is almost always in play. A related problem is that a dictionary’s division of meanings into separate senses often robs usages of their figurative meanings. Dictionaries in effect translate or disrobe metaphors, robbing them of their allusions to other meanings. The related problems of sense division and metaphoric translation come up in the treatments below of *Reason* and *World*. To look ahead just a little, the point is illustrated by Andrew Marvell’s use of *world* in “Had we but world enough and time,/This coyness, Lady, would be no crime.” Dictionary definitions of *world* divide the senses of the word between those involving time (“the state or realm of human existence”) and those just meaning space (“the terraqueous globe”), but Marvell’s usage clearly involves both time and space, as his
invocations of the Ganges River and the Humber Estuary show. The metaphor of space for time is deeply ingrained in the word *world*, but it’s part of the work of a dictionary somehow to disentangle the two, despite the fact that real usage (and especially poetic usage) is against it.

Another problem for dictionaries, one that is particularly important for language in the eighteenth century, is irony. Johnson defines *wonder* as “admiration,” but he hardly honors this definition when he speaks derisively of Milton’s “wonder-working academy.” On this and many other occasions he uses *wonder* ironically, though he rarely uses *admiration* that way (see *Admiration and Wonder* below). Dictionaries can separate an ironic sense from other senses of the word, but this rarely explains their full effect. For example, the *OED* hives off the ironic sense of *expedient*: “In a depreciative sense, ‘useful’ or ‘politic’ as opposed to ‘just’ or ‘right.’” This is correct, but it fails to capture the full effect of the word in Swift’s *A Modest Proposal* where the projector, having explained his brilliant solution to the problem of starvation in Ireland, declares, “Do not speak to me of other expedients.” Since the publication of Swift’s work in 1729 the word has been tagged forever with a deep, abiding irony that no dictionary can fully record.

It is my hope that the present book can do a better job than a dictionary of explaining the meanings of keywords in the eighteenth century. The main advantage I have is that I can dwell on particular uses a bit longer than a dictionary, and I can therefore say more about the contexts in which the keywords occur. I think context is supremely important, and the relatively small consideration it gets is an inevitable flaw in some of the big-data projects mounted in the general area of digital humanities. The wonderful project at Stanford’s Literary Lab, for example, “The Emotions of London,” which uses big-data textual analysis to associate literary genre and location in London, inevitably misses when a writer is being satirical about the glories of a house in Belgravia. I may avoid that pitfall, but I hasten to add that there are many problems that I cannot avoid.

Perhaps the most obvious point of criticism of this book will be the selection of keywords. I cannot say, as Raymond Williams could, that this book began with one keyword (his was *culture*) and gradually grew outward in clusters of related words. The growth of this book has been less organic, although there were certainly some obvious choices to be made, such as *sensibility, reason, and man*. In treating the most obvious words I thought of others that should be included, but I was also sometimes prompted by a passage that I happened to
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read in an eighteenth-century work or in an article on such a work. An article by John Sitter, for example, prompted me to include the word system, and thinking about Josh Scodel’s work on the Lucretian element in seventeenth-century poetry prompted me to include the word atom. I was also influenced by the words that Raymond Williams chose and by those included in the other books in this series, particularly the volumes on Romanticism and Modernism. I am nevertheless open to the charge of arbitrariness, not to mention ignorance. I may hope, like the lexicographer in the epigraph to this introduction, “to slip away from censure under the name of forgetfulness,” but I would in fact be happy to have the deficiencies of this study pointed out. Williams had his publisher insert blank pages in Keywords so that readers could add words of their own to his collection. Ideally, that will be possible here, and if possible I would beg my publisher for wide, untrimmed margins as well.

Finally, I feel some responsibility to declare whether or not I have been able to reach any conclusions or generalizations about English usage in the period under consideration. There are books better organized to answer this question than this one, but there are two points to which I often return in the treatment of these keywords. The first is that in the usages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many words tended to shed allegorical senses and become less figurative. This is true, for example of the word fortune, which not only departs from heavy allusion to the goddess Fortuna but also comes more and more to mean mere money. That is rather a drastic fall to earth, but the pattern is repeated less dramatically in many other histories of usage in this period. The second general point about eighteenth-century language that is obvious here is that this language is very often ironic. From the moment that Satan occupies his “bad eminence” and pursues his “grand enterprise” in Paradise Lost (1667) the floodgates of irony seem open, and practically no word seems immune from irony. Political words like patriot are easy prey, but expedient, life, domestic, and genius, for example, would seem to be less likely, although they too are twisted to ironic meanings. Swift is a conspicuous leader in this linguistic fashion. In fact, if I were to judge solely on the basis of frequency of reference in this book, I would have to say that (except for Johnson’s Dictionary) Swift’s Tale of a Tub is the key work of the eighteenth century. Philosophical works such as Locke’s and Hume’s, if I had searched them more thoroughly, might outstrip Swift’s Tub, but in the corpus as I explored it Swift’s usages are highly conspicuous, and a principal feature of his usages is irony. What this testifies to is not, however, the depravity of language in the eighteenth
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century; the prevalence of irony in language does not mean that we cannot trust it. It means instead that we should examine eighteenth-century language closely, read it critically, and above all be conscious of the variety of tone it commands. Despite the attempts of writers like Thomas Sprat, Locke, and Johnson to pin language down and make it less ambiguous, the net effect of usage in the eighteenth century was to make the language more expansive, more various, and more fun than ever. That fun is what I most hope these entries reflect.

Notes

1. This expresses Barfield’s view in Poetic Diction (1928) and History in English Words (2nd ed. 1933).
2. Another example is populate, which used to mean to ravage, devastate or depopulate, but now means the opposite. C.f. let, meaning to hinder or allow; and sanction, meaning to endorse or to condemn.
Address

After sense and sensibility, address may be the most important word in Jane Austen’s first major novel. The word appears at least 17 times, and in many cases it is used as a noun meaning, according to Johnson’s sense 3: “Manner of addressing another; as we say, a man of an happy or a pleasing address; a man of an awkward address.” In Austen and in many earlier writers address applies both to language and the inarticulate forms of communication that might now be called body language, gesture, posture, or stance. Fashions in body language undoubtedly change through time, and so does the verbal language we use to describe them. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries the postal meaning of address, which Johnson called “chiefly mercantile,” has helped to drive out Johnson’s sense 3, but as usual the linguistic shift reflects broader cultural changes. We do not now have a word that entirely takes the place of address as an essential personal quality. Style is too broad; aura too spiritual; manner is close but almost as antique; no word quite suits, and it is tempting to conclude that the quality itself has somehow disappeared.

In Sense and Sensibility, Austen introduces Edward Ferrars, the future husband of her hero Elinor with the no-nonsense description, “Edward Ferrars was not
recommended to their good opinion by any peculiar graces of person or address” (p.18). This suggests a character of some honesty, despite being bland, because address is an element of style and in many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usages an aspect of seduction, oratory, and self-display. In Elinor’s account Colonel Brandon rises only slightly higher than Edward on the address thermometer: “a sensible man, well-bred, well-informed, of gentle address, and I believe possessing an amiable heart” (p.61). This is not enough for Marianne and Willoughby who are in this scene being witty at Brandon’s expense, characterizing him as bland, grave, and unimaginative. His “gentle address” and “amiable heart” are not attractive to spritely Marianne. Amiability and gentle address may be admirable and worthy qualities, but they do not win the heart.

Associations of address with seduction are deeply engrained in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature, although they have faded now. Johnson provides the relevant definition (sense 2) simply as “Courtship.” The OED is more explicit (2a): “A courteous personal approach directed towards another person, esp. an approach of an amorous nature; an advance.” Satan’s seduction of Eve is a very active address:

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
In Serpent, Inmate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way, not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tower’d
Fold above fold a surging Maze, his Head
Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes

(PL, IX.494–500)

This phallic courtier succeeds, of course, and one sign of his profound success is that when Eve returns to Adam her approach is also an address, as it never was before:

To him she hasted, in her face excuse
Came Prologue, and Apology to prompt,
Which with bland words at will she thus addressed.
Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?

(PL, IX.853–856)

The meaning of address here is mainly the one germane to formal speech, but Satan had employed that sense too in his seduction: “As when of old some
Orator renowned ... to some great cause addressed/Stood in himself collected” (670–673). Satan’s alternation between oratory and seduction is linked by the word *address*, and the two senses of the word are obviously connected too. There is a suggestion that seduction and more public kinds of address which are likewise aimed at persuasion have at least formal similarities. Are there likewise similarities between the relationship of a lover to his object and that of a subject to his king, his parliament, or other official body? Is it that in both of these relationships the same lack of intimacy is implied and the same wish to bridge that gap, temporarily, animates the speaker and stimulates the addressee? The twenty-first century still has addresses to kings and parliaments, but it’s not clear that addresses are still a part of intimate private life, at least in name.

The *OED* provides three separate sub-senses for addresses to objects of affection, God, and King, respectively (2b and 2c), though the examples of addresses to kings include addresses to other royal persons. Still, if a verb is defined partly by the objects it takes, something interesting is happening here. The poetic equivalence between God and one’s object of sexual desire is evident in the work of Donne and several other metaphysical poets. If Donne can implore God to


take me to you, imprison me, for I,
except you enthral me, never shall be free,
nor ever chaste, except you ravish me,

we should not be surprised that addresses to lovers and lords have some equivalence. The problem is that many addresses to objects of desire are false, whereas, presumably, addresses to God are sincere. He can’t be fooled, after all, but women, the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggests, often can. Mrs. Fitzpatrick advises Tom Jones, for example, to curry favor with Sophia Western in this way: “she advised him to make sham addresses to the older lady [Sophia’s aunt], in order to procure an easy Access to the Younger, informing him at the time of the Success which Mr. Fitzpatrick had formerly owed to the very same Strategem” (*Tom Jones*, pp.867–868).² In Sheridan’s *School for Scandal*, the perfidious brother “with the appearance of being sentimental ... has brought Sir Peter to favour his addresses to Maria, while poor [sincere] Charles has no friend in the house” (*Anthology*, p.1091). Satan falsely addresses Eve, and the libertine undoes the innocent again in Delarivier Manley’s *New Atalantis*: “So artful, so amorous, so submissive was his Address,
so violent his Assurances, he told her, that he must have died without the Happiness” (Anthology, p.555). This is no more sincere than Beauplaisir’s approach to Fantomina in Haywood’s novella about the society girl who decides to see how it feels to be seen as a prostitute: “He addressed her first with the usual Salutations of her pretended Profession, as, ‘Are you engaged, Madam?’” (Anthology, p.773). With characteristic suggestions of the mechanical operation of the spirit, Swift finds the reason for address: “The main point of Skill and Address is to furnish Employment for this Redundancy of Vapour, and prudently to adjust the seasons of it” (Anthology, p.513). It’s all about testosterone, a modern mechanist might say.

When the word *address* is used with less aggression and more sincerity, which is possible, it is often accompanied by the reflexive pronoun. The verb, in effect, takes a middle voice. When Samson Occom turns to admonish his fellow Native Americans about the dangers of alcohol in his sermon on the execution of one of them, he says, “I shall now address myself to the Indians, my brethren and kindred according to the flesh” (Anthology, p.979). There is nothing false or insinuating about this. When Johnson in his apologetic *Life of Richard Savage* portrays his subject’s plea for leniency, he writes, “Mr. Savage addressed himself to the Court in the following terms” (Anthology, p.770). The reporting seems impartial at first glance, but the presence of the reflexive pronoun makes Savage more modest and honest than he would have seemed without it. Like every locution in the eighteenth century this one can be used ironically. Jane Collier in her ironic manners book starts one section with the apparently sincere and modest remark, “I address myself, therefore, in this chapter, only to those who take young women into their houses, as new subjects of their power” (Anthology, p.925). She is only being helpful, after all, her language suggests. It may be also that the reflexive, middle use of the verb was felt to be more appropriate for women, whose address, as a personal quality, gets much, much less attention than that of men. More research is needed on this point.

**Notes**

Admiration and Wonder

There is a famous moment in Boswell’s Life of Johnson when, in 1769, Boswell and Goldsmith, united for once, are prodding “the big man” to write more. Johnson puts them off:

“No man is obliged to do as much as he can do. A man is to have part of his life to himself. ... Now, Sir, the good I can do by my conversation bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings, that the practice of a physician, retired to a small town, does to his practice in a great city.”

Boswell presses him from another angle: “But I wonder, Sir, you have not more pleasure in writing than in not writing.” Johnson then puts an end to the discussion by seeing the remark as a reflection on its speaker: “Sir, you may wonder” (Life of SJ, II.15). Boswell is perpetually wondering in the very modern sense of the word, meaning he is asking or thinking about a question. To a greater degree than Boswell, Johnson is in touch with a more profound meaning of the word: in this sense it is very closely related to admiration and connected with astonishment and amazement, two words Johnson uses in his definition of wonder along with admiration. In effect, Boswell makes a journalistic query in modern language and Johnson leaves him gaping in old-fashioned, stupid wonder.

Wonder, like so many Anglo-Saxon words, made its way downward on the semantic ladder in the eighteenth century, whereas the Latin word admiration retained most, though not all, of its dignity. At the beginning of the century the words were still semantically joined at the hip. Johnson defines admiration as “Wonder” and wonder as “Admiration.” His account of wonder is the richer and more various of the two, embracing a number of congeners, including “wonder-working,” which he applied with ironic effect in his description of Milton’s grammar school: “This wonder-working academy” (Johnson, Works, XXI.119).

In its highest sense, Admiration keeps its distance from irony. Addison uses it in its most exalted sense in an important passage of one of his essays on Paradise Lost. He also uses the word wonderful twice in this passage, and it is demonstrably lower, being applied to phenomena or events (or perhaps our momentary reactions to them) rather than to “the most pleasing passion that can arise in the mind”:

The next Method of reconciling Miracles with Credibility, is by a happy Invention of the Poet; as in particular, when he introduces Agents of a superior Nature, who are capable of effecting what is wonderful, and what is not to be met with in the
ordinary course of things. Ulysses’s Ship being turned into a Rock, and Aeneas’s fleet into a Shoal of Water Nymphs; though they are very surprizing Accidents, are nevertheless probable, when we are told that they were the Gods who thus transformed them. It is this kind of Machinery which fills the poems both of Homer and Virgil with such Circumstances as are wonderful, but not impossible, and so frequently produce in the Reader the most pleasing passion that can rise in the Mind of Man, which is Admiration. (Spectator 315, III.144–45)

In the illustrative quotations offered in Johnson’s Dictionary the aesthetic uses of admiration can be traced back to Dryden and they find a parallel in Bishop Tillotson’s description of the religious feeling we get “when we discover a great deal in an object, which we understand to be excellent; and yet we see, we know not how much more beyond that, which our understandings cannot fully reach and comprehend.” Tillotson, like Atterbury and some other eighteenth-century Anglicans had a nice way of refining religion for the drawing room: substituting admiration for wonder facilitated their efforts.

In his note on Addison’s use of admiration in Spectator 315, Donald F. Bond says Addison was “clearly thinking of astonishment and the marvelous,” but he identifies, in passing, the lower meaning of admiration, which has to do with character or one’s feelings about another person. In the sense pertaining to character admiration is usually high praise today, but it shows a distinct falling off from its earlier meaning in aesthetics, both semantically and in register in the eighteenth century. In Spectator 504 Steele shows how low admiration can fall when he derides “Shallow Fops, who are govern’d by the Eye, and admire every thing that struts in Vogue” (IV.289). Charlotte Lennox refers to such fops in Henrietta: “Miss Woodby was uttering as many pretty absurdities, which she had heard admired coming from the mouths of beauties, without reflecting that she herself was no beauty” (OED, 2a). This is not as low as wonder can fall (Johnson’s “You may wonder” is lower), but it is quite a distance from the elevation of mind that it expresses in Addison’s essay on Paradise Lost.

Addison’s superior sense of admiration is present in Milton, but Milton himself uses wonder more often to express astonishment and surprise. It appears that the word had not yet fallen very far nor its synonym risen very high. Satan “Looks down with wonder at the sudden view/ Of all this World at once” (PL, III.542–543). When he sees Eve in the Garden of Eden, he uses the lower sense of the word but he does so in way that keeps it connected to its higher sense: “Much he the place admired, the person more” (PL, IX.444). On the
other hand, if you are inclined (as I am) to find irony in Milton’s depictions of Satan, you may find that his use of *admire* here links him to the debased fops in Steele and Lennox. The passage provides a crux through the ambiguity of the word *admire*, which is lost in the more fully ironic usages of Lennox and Steele. To find such a crux for *wonder*, I think one would have to go back further, perhaps to Shakespeare and the “wonder-wounded hearers” of Laertes’ lament for Ophelia (Hamlet, V.i. 257). Moreover by 1770 Goldsmith could count on the ironic sense of the word predominating when he described people in The Deserted Village marveling at the achievements of the local schoolmaster: “And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,/That one small head could carry all he knew” (215–216). *Admiration* goes a different way, eventually becoming even graver in its aesthetic sense by being associated in Burke with the sublime and therefore related to feelings of terror. Its social sense is sometimes low enough to become a synonym for the exclamation mark — “note of admiration” (*OED*, 5), but this does not seem generally to depress the higher, aesthetic and religious meaning of the word. Moreover, after Milton the social and aesthetic senses seem less connected to each other than they were earlier.

**Advancement**

The concept at stake in the usage of *advancement* is progress, in its predominantly nineteenth-century and modern senses. In the eighteenth century the meanings of *advancement* overlap with those of the word *progress* (see *OED*, sense 2, and Johnson’s Dictionary, senses 2 and 3), but the element of gradualness is usually present in *progress*, whereas *advancement* means going forward in unspecified and perhaps sudden ways. The idea of important social and intellectual advance or advancement (the two words are sometimes interchangeable) carries echoes of a social meaning even in its highest usages. Advancement in society, which can come suddenly due to preferment by a superior, lingers in phrases describing the advance of abstractions such as knowledge, learning, or science. Sir Francis Bacon’s Advancement of Learning (1605) echoes throughout the next two hundred years, but as it does so, its meaning becomes more and more abstract. That his full title is *The Proficience and Advancement of Learning* is often forgotten. *Proficience* or *proficiency* in Bacon’s time could mean progress or advancement (*OED*, 2), but that meaning has become obsolete. The eighteenth century elevated *advancement* as it depressed or, at least, confined *proficiency*. Human beings achieve proficiency or advance in society; knowledge and science