

## **'La Bagatelle' (1718-1719)**

a critical edition of Justus van Effen's journal

**Series:**

Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment

**Volume:**

2014:11

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**Publication Date:**

2014

**ISBN:**

978-0-7294-1149-3

The early eighteenth century was a vibrant period for European journalism. Already the author of several journals including the first spectator in French (*Le Misanthrope*), Justus van Effen attempted to capture the Regency spirit in France with *La Bagatelle*, also modelled on the English Spectator. Characterised by their overtly ironic tone, the *Bagatelliste's* comments range from witty observations on contemporary society or literary controversies to bolder and more subversive reflections on the principles of inheritance or religious orthodoxy. Produced as a twice-weekly quarter sheet, *La Bagatelle* included short works of poetry and prose; brevity and stealth were its tools and its defences.

In this first critical edition of *La Bagatelle*, James L. Schorr uncovers the sources of each periodical essay, and situates Van Effen's ironic commentaries in their social and cultural context. Tracing the influence of classical as well as contemporary English writers, Schorr also explores an evolution in the character of the *Bagatelliste* himself, from the seventeenth-century 'man of science' to the *philosophe* of the Enlightenment. Containing substantive textual commentary and variants from the 1718-19 and 1722-24 issues, Schorr's critical edition represents a major addition to our knowledge of early eighteenth-century French journalism and the intellectual climate in which it flourished.

Introduction: a *Spectator* for the Regency

i. *Discours ironiques*

ii. Text

*La Bagatelle, OU Discours ironiques où l'on prête des sophismes ingénieux au vice et à*

*l'extravagance pour en faire mieux sentir le ridicule*

Appendix

Selected bibliography

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Published with kind support from the Dr. C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute Foundation.

**Pages:**

352

**Price Sterling (£):**

65

French Studies

'En redonnant *La Bagatelle* aux lecteurs modernes, James L. Schorr complète un travail éditorial de remise de Van Effen sous les feux des projecteurs, commencé en 1986 avec la republication du *Misanthrope* (1711-12), et poursuivi en 2008 avec le *Journal historique, politique, critique et galant* (1719).'

Modern Language Review

'This valuable edition will help to increase knowledge of cross-cultural exchanges and journalism'.

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