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# LECTURES ON POETRY

Read in the **SCHOOLS** of

**NATURAL PHILOSOPHY**

At *OXFORD*,

By **JOSEPH TRAPP, A.M.**

Fellow of *Wadham-College*, and Reader of  
the POETICAL LECTURES lately founded  
in that University, by HENRY BIRKHEAD LL.D.  
sometime Fellow of *All-Souls-College*.

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With additional NOTES.

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### THE TRANSLATOR'S *Advertisement*.

The following Lectures, being frequently referred to by the Author of them in the Preface and Notes to his Translation of *Virgil*, were thought proper to be communicated to the World in *English*, that both Works might speak the same Language as well as Sentiment, and address themselves to the same Set of Readers. Whatever Reasons have been given for translating *Virgil*, and writing an *English* Comment on him, may be urged in behalf of these *English* Lectures, which as they are an Illustration of Poetry in general, so are they of *Virgil* in particular.

The Notes to this Edition were chiefly added as it went through the Press: In which though I sometimes differ from my ingenious Author, yet I hope not with greater Freedom than he has taken with others, and will pardon in me. I am well aware how easy it is to let some Mistakes slip in the Heat of Composition: And when these had once pass'd the Press, the Author, I suppose, was not very solicitous to re-examine minutely the subsequent Editions; satisfied with the Approbation he had received from that learned Body before whom his Lectures were first delivered. An Honour which I shall never wish to see diminish'd by any thing I can say, or any one

else: And shall now therefore with much greater Pleasure take this Opportunity of repeating the following Testimony of them from Mr. *Felton's Preface to his Dissertation on Reading the Classics* p. xxi, &c.

[Pg ii]

*What a polite Critic may do, if he pleases, and in how different an Aspect Criticism appears, when formed by Men of Parts and Fire, we may see in the three Volumes of Dr. Trapp's Prælectiones Poeticæ. A Work that cannot be enough commended, whether we consider the Curiousness of his Observations, the Justness of his Remarks, the Truth and Importance of his Rules, the Aptness and Beauty of his Examples, Force and Elegance of his Style, and the Penetration of his Wit and Judgment: A Piece in such Perfection of Beauty, that he gives the Rules with the same Spirit we find in the Examples; and maketh those Dissertations, which in heavy, formal Hands, would have looked crabbed, dull, and dry, shine in all the Graces, that Life, and Ease, and Vigour can adorn them with. We see how entertaining the severest Criticisms are in a Poet's Hand, and what Life and Spirit he can give to the dryest Part of his Subject, while he prescribes the Rules and fixes the Laws of Poetic Diction, weigheth the Importance of Words, and considers the several Ways of Expression peculiar to the Poets. And if Men of such Learning and such Parts would undertake this Province, I cannot help repeating it, we should see more and more into the Propriety, Strength, and Compass, and all the hidden Beauties of the Greek and Latin Tongues.*

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## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I have no Occasion to detain the Reader with a Preface in Praise of Poetry: What I thought proper to say on that Head, he will find comprised in the following *Introductory Oration*. I shall only just in a few Words lay before him the Purport of the following Sheets.

Being elected into the Professorship by that venerable Body the Convocation at *Oxford*, I thought it incumbent on me to discharge my Duty in it according to the best of my Abilities. The better to do so, I endeavour in the following Lectures to keep such a Medium in examining the Sentiments of the several Writers on Poetry that tho' I pay much Deference to their Authority, yet I don't slavishly adhere to their Decrees. For Books are to be consider'd as Helps to Learning, not Fetters to it; and it is just, in these sort of Studies especially, that every Man, after he has weigh'd the Opinion of others should be at Liberty to follow his own.

This Method I take to be the most entertaining and the most useful both to the Writer and the Reader. No one, I am persuaded, will suspect I pursued it for the sake of Ease; since it is much harder to *digest* than to *transcribe*. And, indeed, what can be a more arduous Task, than to unfold the Nature of Poetry in general, and its different Species; to explain the various Elegances of Style, and its no less various Defects; to explore the secret Turns of the Mind; to weigh the minutest *Momenta* of Wit; to separate in things of so great Delicacy, Truth from Falshood; to shew by what Springs they delight or ravish their Readers or Hearers?

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I thought proper just to say so much of the Difficulty of the present Work, not out of a Desire of gaining Praise, but Pardon; that if I have fallen into any Errors, I may meet with some Favour from the Learned. For to their Judgment I submit myself, and the Fortunes of this Book; always ready to receive more full Instruction, and to retract, not to defend the Mistakes of it.

But arduous and difficult as these Enquiries are, yet not therefore unpleasant; For it is not to be thought that all Discourses which deliver Rules and Precepts are dry and unentertaining; some are no less full of Delight than Advantage. Of which sort is the Subject before us, elegant in its Nature, and agreeable to the Taste of the most Polite; who are never better pleased than when they scrutinise into the Laws of just Writing and true Thought, and have the choicest Examples of each laid before them. The Mind is charmed with tracing out its own Operations; and while on so refined a Subject we read Authors of the same Sentiments with ourselves, we observe with secret Complacency, similar Ideas arise in our Minds; or if we dissent from a good Writer, we are ready to join in his Praise tho' not in his Opinion: For such an one, tho' he misses the Truth, yet deviates with Ingenuity, and is elegant even in his Mistakes.

The Difficulties then we are speaking of, are such that they don't deter the Admirers of Polite Literature, but invite them: Such as are not attended with Uncouthness of Thought or Asperity of Style; but are like the Labours of Lovers, who, to gain the Good-will of the Fair, go through the most arduous Tasks and sollicit Dangers.

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If the Reader will observe in the following Sheets some Errors slipt, some Defects either in Thought or Expression, he will at worst have no Reason to complain that I have too importunately loaded him. He will rather wonder perhaps, on the other Hand, how I durst pretend to treat of such Variety of Matter in so few Pages: An Accusation, to which I know not how to give a satisfactory Answer, and which I own I have often been ready to draw up against myself. I can only declare that this has been owing either to Chance, or to the Nature of my Subject, or to my own Inabilities, not to Indolence, for I have omitted nothing which after the most mature Deliberation I thought proper to be taken Notice of. In other respects I own I studied *Brevity* as much as possible, rejecting many things that offer'd, which I judged unentertaining, superfluous, and such as would give the Reader rather Pain than Pleasure; many likewise, which tho' proper Observations in themselves, yet had been abundantly taken Notice of by others; whose Writings I had no Inclination to make so free with, as to purloin.

And this, I hope, will not be imputed to me as an Imperfection: For *Brevity as such* (to use the Language of the Schoolmen) and considered in its own Nature, is by no means a Fault; but rather

an Excellence, if we keep clear of those Faults that often adhere to it. If we do Justice to our Subject and are at the same time perspicuous, we cannot be too concise; especially in those Works where we propose to *delight* the Reader, as well as *profit* him.

How far this has been effected in the following Sheets, must be left entirely to his Judgment. I am sure my Endeavour has been not to be wanting to both these Ends, and I might with more *Ease* to myself have wrote a *larger Book*. To treat of Elegance in an inelegant Manner is a mere Absurdity; and Conciseness is generally an Attendant of Elegance. Nothing I am sure can afford more Pleasure to the Understanding than an accurate Enquiry into the Subjects here treated of: Nothing greater Difficulty to a Writer, who is to act the Critic and Philosopher, rather than the Historian. Even Metaphysics do not more try the Mind than Poetry, when we search into the latent Sources of its Beauties and Allurements. But the Pleasure in the one is much greater than in the other: This has its *Thorns*; but such as grow on the *Rose*, tender and yielding, that heighten at once its *Sweetness* and its *Beauty*.

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One Thing I would desire the Reader to observe; that under each Head of Poetry, I have either wholly omitted every thing that is Historical, or but lightly touch'd upon it: Not because I think by any Means that Part of Learning contemptible; but partly because I find it more suitable to my Nature (such as it is) to search into Things than Facts; and partly because others, whose Erudition I very much reverence, and to whom I always refer my Reader, have already in this Respect, deserv'd well of the Learned. However, in one or two of my Dissertations I could not come at the *Nature* of the Subject I treated of without enquiring into the *History* of it: as in those upon the *Origin of Poetry in general*, upon *Epigram*, and *Satire*. But even in them to enter into a long Detail of Circumstances fetch'd from the Writings of the Ancients, wou'd be doing Nothing but what had been done before; which is the Thing I have throughout endeavour'd to avoid. My Aim has been not to be tedious; and for fear I should be so now, I shall add no more; but leave my Book to stand or fall by the Opinion of the Learned.

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**N. B.** *The several Passages cited from Virgil are printed in English from Dr. Trapp's Version. The other Poetical Translations without a Name, the Editor is to be accountable for, tho' he wishes he had as good a Title to the Excellence of two or three of them as he has to the Imperfections of the rest.*

The Notes added to this *English* Edition are distinguish'd thus \* or thus †; whereas those that were before in the *Latin* are referr'd to by Letters a, b, c, etc.

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### ***ERRATA.***

Pag. 3.	L. 31.	<i>for our World r. their Orbits.</i>
	4. L. 3.	<i>for this House r. that House.</i>
	19. L. antep.	<i>for consistent only with r. confined only to.</i>
	216. L. 16.	<i>dele Countryman.</i>
	248. L. 30.	<i>for adsunt r. adflent. And L. 32. for ipse r. ipsi.</i>
	317. L. 16.	<i>dele the</i>

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## **LECTURES ON POETRY, &c.**

## LECTURE I.

Altho', Gentlemen, I am sensible of the Obligation you have laid upon me, by making Choice of me to fill this Office, esteeming it an Honour to receive Commands, much more Favours from so venerable a Body; yet I must own myself under some Concern, when I consider that I enter into a Province unattempted by others, and wherein I have no Footsteps to guide me. For so it has happen'd, that tho' all other Sciences the World can boast of, have had their Instructors and Professors in this most flourishing University; POETRY alone, neglected, as it were, and overlook'd, has hitherto wanted Schools for her Reception. 'Twas much, indeed, that in the very Seat of the Muses that Art shou'd have found none, which the Muses esteem above all others, and claim as their peculiar Property: With You it has always been its Choice to live, and with You it always has liv'd; but has wanted, however, a fix'd Habitation, and (if I may speak more poetically) has wander'd here among other Sciences, as *Delos*, *Apollo's* native Place, did among the *Ægean* Islands, till that excellent Gentleman, whose Munificence I now commemorate, like another *Apollo*, fix'd its Situation, and honour'd it with an Establishment.

[Pg 2]

But to omit these imaginary Flights, and to represent Things without any Colouring, What Thanks are due to him, who has render'd himself a perpetual *Mæcenas*, not only to Poets, but to Poetry itself; who has bestow'd Honours upon that Art, which adds the greatest to whatever is meritorious; who has prescribed it Laws, and secured to it a Patrimony? But still without a Patrimony it had almost been, if the reverend and worthy Trustees<sup>[1]</sup> of the Muses Legacy had not to the Patron's Benevolence contributed no small Assistance of their own, and deserved little less Praise by receding from their Due, than the other, by his original Settlement. One of them<sup>[2]</sup>, especially, who, as he is himself no small Part of *our* University, and of *that* venerable Assembly, and has an Intercourse with *both*, makes use of it to promote Good-will and Friendship mutually between them. How near had the Poetical Revenues been lost, if they had not been in the Hands of Men therefore the most zealous for Learning and the University, because they were adorned with the *Insignia* of each? If these good Men reject our Praises, at least let them permit us to return our Thanks. To the Living, then, we gratefully pay the Tribute of Gratitude; to the Deceased, whose Gift they augmented, that of Glory.

[Pg 3]

He well knew that Poetry did not boast so much of her learned Poverty (noted even to a Proverb) as utterly to reject all Acquisitions. He knew, moreover, that it was no less capable of Rules than other Arts, and no less deserving of them; that it proceeded upon certain Principles, which were founded upon Truth and right Reason; that our Master *Aristotle*, who has accurately treated of the other Sciences, and whose Authority we follow in them all, had bestowed likewise some of his Pains on this, and has left upon no Subject greater Monuments, either of Extent of Genius, or of Care and Application.

They therefore lie under a great Mistake, that think Poetry suited only to the Theatre, and would have it banished from the Schools, as of too unbounded a Nature to submit to the Regulation of Precept. Rage, indeed, is its Property; but a Rage altogether divine; not deviating from Reason, but rendering it more ornamental and sublime. It may be said, likewise, to be a Fire; not like our consuming ones, but like those of the celestial Orbs above, that have not only the Qualities of Heat and Brightness, but maintaining one uniform Course, are carried round their Orbits at once with equal Swiftmess and Regularity.

We see, then, it is no Absurdity to have Rules prescribed to this Art. And what could have been thought of, of so delicate and refined a Nature, as the Office of prescribing them? What more worthy of an University to accept, or a Courtier to appoint? A Courtier, I say, for in the City he was an Ornament to the Court; as in the University he was to that House, which has always had the Credit of abounding, and we still have the Comfort of seeing it abound with Gentlemen of the most distinguish'd Wit, Birth, and good Manners. I am sure no Gift could have been more becoming a Friend of the Muses to bestow, and he was not only an Admirer, but an Intimate of them; not only a Lover of their Art, but a skilful Practitioner in it; nor could any one so properly make Poetry his Heir, as a Poet.

[Pg 4]

He knew, by Experience, that no Pleasure was equal to the reading ancient Poets, except that of imitating them. Happy they, that can partake of both; but the former ought to be the Employment of all, that desire to have any Taste for Letters, or Politeness. Some there are, however, to whom these Studies are disagreeable, and who endeavour to make them so to others: This is not owing to any Fault in Poetry, but in themselves. Formed as they are of coarse Materials, they have naturally a Disposition either slow and frozen, callous and unpolite, or harsh and morose; so, forsooth, whilst they would appear grave, as they are, they maliciously hate, or superciliously contemn these Exercises, as the great Disturbers of their Peace. They condemn what they know nothing of; and despise the Pleasure they want a Capacity to enjoy.

But if at least they pay any Deference to Antiquity (and with these Men nothing uses to be more sacred, looking upon every Thing with the greater Veneration, the more antient it is) they ought on this Account to allow the Art we are speaking of its due Honours. For not to urge that Poetry is coeval with the World itself, and that the Creator may be said in working up and finishing his beautiful Poem of the Universe, to have performed the Part of a Poet, no less than of a Geometrician<sup>[3]</sup>; it is well known, that those Books have had the greatest Sanction from Time, that have been dictated by God, or writ by Poets. Those, as it is fit, have the Precedence: But these follow at no very great Distance.

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Nay, why should we make this Difference between the sacred Writers and Poets, since the sacred Writers were most of them Poets; on both Accounts deservedly called *Vates* (*a Word expressing either Character*) and acted by no feigned Inspiration? That the Devils then, heretofore, usurping the Title of Gods, gave out their Oracles in Verse, was owing wholly to their imitating, in this, as well as in other Particulars, the true God, that so they might gain Honour and Reverence from their Votaries. If in the Poems of *Job*, and *David*, and the other sacred Authors, we observe the inexpressible Sublimity of their Words and Matter; their elegant, and more than human Descriptions; the happy Boldness of their Metaphors; their spiritual Ardour breathing Heaven, and winging the Souls of their Readers up to it, triumphing, as it were, by a royal Authority, over the narrow Rules of mortal Writers, it is impossible but we must in Transport own, that nothing is wanting in them, that might be expected from the Strength of Poetry heighten'd by the Energy of Inspiration.

If this, then, be the Case, who would not wonder at the Ignorance or Baseness of those, who rashly reproach an Art with Impiety, which has the Honour of being not only pleasing to God, but taught and dictated by him. 'Tis true, Poetry, as well as Religion, has, by Length of Time, been corrupted with Fables; but this is no more to be imputed to the one than the other; and we can only from hence complain, that by the Depravity of Mankind the best of Things are most liable to Corruption.

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Nor is it any more owing to the Art itself, that it is sometimes polluted by obscene Writers: To them alone the Infamy redounds: The Chastity of Poetry is violated like a Virgin's, and tho' it seems to be the Instrument of doing an Injury to Virtue, yet Virtue is not more a Sufferer than she is. She acts in her proper Sphere, when, with her native Purity, she discovers the true Attractives of Virtue, nor disguises Vice with false ones; when she inflames the Mind of Man with the Love of Goodness, recounts the Works of the Almighty, and sets forth all his Praises. Undoubtedly, as the divine and sister Sciences, Poetry and Music, owe their Origin to Heaven; they love to be employed about heavenly Things; thither they tend by their native Force, and, like Fire, seek those blessed Abodes from whence they first descended.

Since Poetry, then, is so venerable, both for its Antiquity, and its Religion; they are no less to blame, who look upon it as a trifling Amusement, an Exercise for Boys only, or young Men. The Injustice of this Calumny is plain from hence, that a good Proficient in this kind of Writing must not only excel in Wit, Elegance, and Brightness; but must be endowed with the maturest Judgment, and furnished with all sorts of Literature. He must, in Truth, turn over the Annals of Time, and Monuments of History; he must trace the Situation of Countries, understand the different Manners of Nations; the Actions and Passions of Mankind in general, must explore the inmost Recesses of the Mind, and secret Avenues to them; survey the whole System of the Universe; in short, make himself Master of all Nature. Who cannot but see and admire the Learning of *Homer* and *Horace*; in *Virgil* especially, his almost universal Extent of Knowledge in both sorts of Philosophy, in History, Geography, and the chief of all Science, Mathematicks? In *Lucretius* we see how perfectly Natural Philosophy and Poetry agree; and how properly these Schools of ours are appropriated to both: Nor have the severest Philosophers Reason to complain, that the Company of the one reflects the least Dishonour on the other.

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This I am sure they have not, if we duly consider the Nature of this admirable Art; from whence it will appear to contain whatever is great or beautiful in Prose, and besides to be distinguished by its own proper Ornaments; which it abundantly displays, whilst it pleases our Ears, and ravishes our Souls with its Harmony; whilst it strongly imprints in our Minds the Images of the Things it represents; by a becoming Fiction sets off Truth to Advantage, and renders it more amiable; and by a decent Liberty keeps those Laws it seems to violate.

Another Reason of its Contempt, at least of the Abatement of its Esteem, is, that there are such Numbers of Writers, who give Offence to Men of Learning, by affecting the Title of *Poets*. This is a Fact we are very sensible of, and lament: I know not how it is, there's no sort of Learning to which more apply themselves, or fewer attain. Innumerable Pretenders there are, who, in spite of Genius and Nature, are daily troubling the World with their wretched Performances; who write Verse often, that scarce attempt to write any Thing else, and venture upon the most difficult of all Studies, that are unfit for any. This profane Mob of Poetasters are deservedly to be condemned, that arrogate to themselves the Credit of a Title, that no ways belongs to them; and which is due only to those who *are of elevated Genius, and Souls divine*. But so far is this from fixing any true Mark of Infamy on our Art, that it ought to redound to its Credit. For in this its native Excellence appears, that it is a Mistress, to whom all by natural Impulse, as it were, pay their Addresses, tho' there are so few, upon whom she bestows her Favours. Thus Wit, Wisdom, and Religion, have each those amiable Colours, in which all Mankind endeavour to appear.

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Nor need we wonder it meets with such Esteem, since it excels all other Sciences, by mixing so agreeably *Pleasure* with *Advantage*. For it is found experimentally true, that by reading the ancient Poets, but especially by imitating them, the Mind is polish'd, enlivened, and enlarged; is enriched with a Stock of various Erudition, as well sacred as profane; with such Plenty of lofty Ideas, and lively Expressions, as is no small Addition to the Eloquence of even Prose itself. This no one will deny, that pays any Deference to *Cicero's* Opinion or Authority; who ingenuously tells us he owes no small Assistance to the Poets, runs out largely in their Praises, and seems to give them the first Place among the Learned. "We are told, says he<sup>[4]</sup>, by Men of the greatest Learning, that the Science of all other Things depends upon Precepts and Art; but a Poet on Nature alone; that he is formed by the Force of Genius, and inspired, as it were, with somewhat of Divinity." This Topick he defends, and expatiates upon, with such Warmth, that Oratory seems never to

have shone out brighter, or to have been more pleased with its own Force, than when it was employed in the Praise of Poetry.

But farther, it ought by all Means to be encouraged, because it raises the Mind to Virtue and Honour, by delivering down the Examples of great Men to Immortality. It not only celebrates Heroes, but makes them; and by lively Copies produces new Originals. What, in short, is it else, but the utmost Effort of the Mind of Man, that tries all its Nerves, while it infuses into it a Tincture of universal Learning temper'd with the greatest Sweetness. For its Votaries it affects with no small Pleasure, which its infinite Variety abundantly supplies. Oratory, like a River with all its Pomp of Water, confines its Waves within its own Banks; but Poetry, like the Ocean, diffuses itself, by a Variety of Channels, into Rivers, Fountains, and the remotest Springs. What can be more delightful, than to take a Survey of Things, Places, and Persons; what more elegant, than to see them represented in beautiful Pictures? Who is not charm'd with the humorous Turns of Epigram, the Softness of Elegy, the bantering Wit of one sort of Satire, the Anger of the other, the Keeness and Poignancy of both? And yet still more the Ode affects us with its daring Colours, its lofty Conceptions, its Choice of Expression, its agreeable Variety of Numbers, and (what is the distinguishing Character of the Lyrics) that Luxuriancy of Thought, conducted with the severest Judgment, by which it now and then expatiates into new Matter, connects Things it seem'd to separate, and falls by Chance, as it were, into its first Subject. Who is there that does not with Pleasure survey an Epitome of the World in the Dramatic Poets? The Life, Humours, and Customs of Mankind represented in Comedy; in Tragedy the tumultuous Passions of the Great, the Turns of Fortune and wonderful Catastrophes, the Punishment of Villainy and Rewards of Virtue, and sometimes the Misfortunes of good Men? Who, I say, is not affected with Pleasure, whether he laughs or weeps with them? For such is the Force of Poetry, that it makes us pleased with our Tears, and from Sorrow extorts Satisfaction. But far beyond all this, is the Epic Poem, that farthest Extent of the human Soul, the utmost Bounds of Study, and the Pillars, beyond which the Labours of the Mind can never pass. So abundant is it, that, besides its own peculiar Excellence, than which nothing can be greater, it comprehends within its Sphere all other Kinds of Poetry whatever; and is in this Art what the Organ is in Music, which with various Pipes, inflated with the same Breath, charms us not only with its own Harmony, but represents that of every other Instrument.

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These are not Beauties only in Theory; we have Authors that have shone in each of these Branches of Poetry: Thus *Martial* pleases with his tart Facetiousness, *Catullus* with his sound Wit, tho' his Verse is sometimes a little harsh; *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*, with their Ease and Fluency in both. The Man that does not admire the Boldness of *Juvenal's* Spirit, the Richness of his poetic Vein, and his fearless Rage in Satire; may he never love, may he never know the genteel and courtly Turns, the pleasant Sneers, the severe, and yet inviting Precepts of Virtue, the Remarks on common Life made with the greatest Penetration, Judgment, and Wisdom, with which the Satires of *Horace*, and especially his Epistles, are replete. In this kind of Writing, as we prefer him before all others; so in Lyric Poetry he stands not only first, but alone. With Regard to Comedy, if there were nothing remaining but what *Terence* has left us, viz. that Chasteness of Style, that never-failing Fund of Wit and Judgment, that Humour clear of vulgar Jests, those beautiful Images of Mankind and Nature, that exquisite Artifice in working up Plots, and unfolding them; we should ever have Reason to praise the Art and the Poet. If Tragedy has receiv'd but small Ornaments from the *Latin* Writers, as far as they have come to our Hands; by the *Greeks* that Loss has been abundantly compensated. Witness the Thunder and Vigour of *Sophocles*, the Grandeur and sententious Gravity of *Euripides*, the Art of both, with which they command the Affections of their Readers, and call forth Pity or Terror at Pleasure.

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The Nature and Limits of this Discourse will not allow me even to touch upon the Characters of all the other *Greek* and *Latin* Writers that have excell'd in the several Species of Poetry. One, however, it would be unpardonable to omit, who as he is the greatest of all (not *Homer* himself excepted) may not improperly bring up the Rear of this shining Host, the immortal *Virgil*, I mean, beyond all Praises, in all Respects compleat. Who is not in Love with the plain and unaffected Beauty of his Eclogues, the finish'd and chaste Elegance of his *Georgics*, and in them the entertaining Descriptions with which they abound, with the Variety of their Expressions, the Usefulness of their Precepts in Husbandry, and their noble Excursions, upon every proper Occasion, into Subjects of a sublimer Nature? But the divine *Aeneid* who can turn over without Transport, without being lost, as it were, in a happy Mixture of Joy and Wonder? Who can help being astonish'd at that Fire of Imagination temper'd with so cool a Judgment, such Strength united with so much Beauty? To nothing this Work can with Justice be compar'd, unless to that, whose Duration will have the same Period, the great Machine of the Universe. For where shall we find, in any human Composition, so exact a Harmony between the several Parts, and so much Beauty in each of them; such an infinite Fecundity of Matter, without the least Exuberance of Style, or Crowding of Incidents? It would be an endless Attempt to recount the different Images of Heroes, and other Personages that appear up and down in it, the Variety of Manners, the Conflict of Passions, almost every Object of the Imagination beautifully described, all Nature unfolded, the great Events, the unexpected Revolutions, the Incentives to Virtue; in the several Speeches the most finish'd Eloquence; in the Thoughts and Expressions the sublimest Majesty; in short, the most consummate Art, by which all these Things are brought into one uniform Piece?

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After the mention of *Virgil* and those other great Names, Silence only should ensue; but that our Oration naturally addresses itself to him, to whose Indulgence this Liberty of speaking in the Praise of *Virgil*, and those other great Names, is owing; our most worthy Vice-chancellor<sup>[5]</sup>, I mean, who has brought to Light this Poetic Legacy, which had been buried, as it were, for many Years in Oblivion, and has at length placed it upon a Foundation that will make it perpetual. Such

Attainments, Sir, have you made in your Study of the publick Welfare! 'tis thus you make us sensible that none are so faithful and diligent Dispensers of others Bounty, as the Bountiful! I shall not enter into a Detail of the other Virtues, that make up your Character: My Business was to mention that only which relates to our present Function: Permit us, however, to wish you Length of Days in this World, that such Thanks may in Time be due to you, as may exceed the Power of Poetry itself to pay.

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## LECTURE II, and III.

### *Of the Nature and Origin of Poetry in general.*

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Before we enter upon the different Branches of the Art we propose to treat of, it may not be improper to clear our Way, by giving, as the Schoolmen speak, a general Idea of it, and laying before you a comprehensive View of whatever is common to all its Parts. None, that I know of, has given a just Definition of it; not *Aristotle* himself, tho' a perfect Master in *Definitions*: And yet there's nothing in the Subject repugnant to one. To be short, then, Poetry seems in general, *An Art of imitating or illustrating in metrical Numbers every Being in Nature, and every Object of the Imagination, for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind.*

*Vossius's* Definition<sup>[6]</sup> (I speak it with humble Deference to so great a Man) to me is by no means satisfactory, who makes Poetry consist in being *An Art of representing Actions in Metre*. This Definition falls too short, and is not comprehensive enough of the Nature of the Thing defined. For I would ask, is it not the Business of Poetry to represent every Thing that is capable of being represented? And are Actions the only Things capable of being represented? This, indeed, is expressly asserted by *Dacier*, the *French* Interpreter of *Aristotle*: But to any one that considers the Passage, it will abundantly appear, that this Opinion cannot be drawn from *Aristotle* by a just Interpretation of him. That great Philosopher, and Prince of Critics, says, that *Imitators imitate Actions*. Now, can any one, without violating all the Rules of Reasoning this Philosopher has taught, conclude from hence that Actions *alone* are capable of being imitated? He indeed says, or rather the *French* Version is made to say, that *ALL that imitate, imitate Actions*; but in his own Original he says no such Thing; the Word *ALL* is added by the Interpreter: His Words are<sup>[7]</sup>, μιμουσιν ὅτι μιμουμενοι πραξιωνιας, i. e. *Imitators imitate Actions*.

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But if the Version were true, the Conclusion drawn from it would, however, be false. For *All* Imitators may imitate Actions, and yet possibly not *Actions only*. But there's no need of many Words to prove *Aristotle's* Authority unjustly alledged for this Proposition; since he tells us himself, a little before the Passage above cited<sup>[8]</sup>, μιμουσιν και ηθη και παθη και πραξεις, i. e. *they imitate Manners, Passions, and Actions*. He thought therefore that not only Actions, but Manners and Affections, were capable of being imitated. It is certain, if by Imitation is meant that which impresses upon the Mind a true and genuine Representation of any Thing, it will be no less repugnant to common Sense than to *Aristotle's*, to affirm that nothing but Actions can be imitated. For, besides them, we see Passions, Things, Places, and Men are imitated, not only by Poets, but by Painters too. This *Horace*, the best Interpreter of *Aristotle*, sufficiently intimates, when he uses the Word *imitari* in the same Sense with *describere, pingere, or sculperre*:

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*Molles imitabitur ære capillos*<sup>[9]</sup>  
In Brass shall imitate the waving Hair.

Besides, *Vossius's* Definition is short in another Respect; as it makes the Object of Imitation too narrow, so it makes the Essence of Poetry consist *solely in Imitation*; whereas there are some Kinds of it that have little to do with Imitation, but much in Illustration; as we shall shew in the Sequel.

That Poetry is an *Art*, is sufficiently plain, and we have no Occasion to use many Words to prove it. It observes certain Laws and Rules, is brought to the Test of right Reason, and, lastly, it aims at some particular End. I cannot but wonder, therefore, why those that fix'd the Number of the Liberal Arts, as they are commonly reckon'd up, should have allowed no Place for Poetry and Oratory among them. They were thought, perhaps, reducible partly to Rhetorick, and partly to Grammar. But this, I think, they are not, with any Propriety. For, not to observe that Poetry and Oratory are in their Merit too good, and in their Extent too great to be included in other Sciences, the Business of Rhetorick is wholly to polish the Style of both of them; and, by the Way, as it is now-a-days managed, tends more, perhaps, to the Detriment and Corruption, than the Credit and Honour of either; but is fully and professedly concerned in neither. As to Grammar, they can no more be reduced to that, than all other Sciences whatever; for to all Sciences Words, whether written or spoken, are subservient. Well, then, *Vossius* and all agree that Poetry is an *Art*, tho' that great Man has not sufficiently shewn the peculiar Business of it.

The Definition we have given above, seems to be full, and every Way compleat, inasmuch as it comprehends the whole Nature of Poetry, is applicable only to Poetry, and all the Species of it;

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for all of them are always concern'd, either in Imitation, or Illustration, or both at once. Between these two there is some Difference; for he that beautifully imitates any Thing, always illustrates it; but not on the contrary; the Rule does not hold *vice versa*. Those Things that relate to Science, and Discipline, such as the Ideas of the Mind, Virtues, Vices, Manners, and the like, are *illustrated* by being explained; but no one will say, that by being explained they are *imitated*. But, as I said, it is an undoubted Maxim, that all Kinds of Poetry are employ'd one or other of these Ways, or both. In Descriptions of whatever Kind, in moving the Passions, in Panegyric, in Satire, in Heroics, in Ethics, the Poet either imitates or illustrates something, or does both; unless, perhaps, we ought to except the Writers of those short Sentences, that are mere *moral Sayings*; such as *Pythagoras*, *Phocylides*, and the like; who may be said, indeed, to write Verses, but not Poems: They want the Force, the Elegance, the Style, and peculiar Turn of Thought that discriminates Poets from other Writers. 'Tis plain, then, the Business of Poets is either Imitation or Illustration; and that, not only of Actions, but, as we presumed to lay down in our Definition, of every Being in Nature, or in the Imagination. The Object, then, of Poetry, must be enlarged, and those Bounds extended, that *Vossius* prescribed to it: For is there any Thing in the real or ideal World, not capable of being described or illustrated? any Thing which the capacious Stretch of Poetry will not comprehend?

And since it chiefly consists in Imitation, it may not be amiss, perhaps, to make a short Comparison between that and Painting. All Poetry will not admit of this Comparison, but such only as consists in Description; upon which whatever is in common between them, depends. Painting, as well as Poetry affects the Passions; That by Description alone, This by other adventitious Arts. I would here, however, particularly observe, that Poetry consists much more in Description, than is generally imagin'd. For, besides those longer and set Descriptions of Things, Places, and Persons, there are numberless others, unobserved by common Readers, contained in one Verse, sometimes in one Word, to which the whole Beauty of the Thought is owing; and which wonderfully affect us, for no other Reason but because they are Descriptions, that is, impress a lively Image of somewhat upon the Mind. To this it is, that metaphorical Expressions, when selected with Judgment, owe their Beauty, and their Elegance; every Metaphor being a short Description.

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But to return to our Comparison between Painting and Poetry. They both agree, in representing to the Mind Images of Things, and ought both of them to be govern'd by Nature and Probability. So near is their Affinity, that by a very natural and common Metaphor, Poetry is said to paint Things, Painting to describe them. Both give us *Draughts* of the Body, as well as the Soul; but with this Difference, that the former is chiefly expressed by Painting, the latter by Poetry. It cannot be denied, but that the Lines of a Face are much more strongly distinguish'd by Light and Shade, than by any Colouring of Words, tho' ever so elegant, or well chosen: Add, moreover, that the Attitudes, the various Positions and Gestures of the Body, the confused Rout and Tumult of a Battle, the Gloominess or Brightness of a Landscape, the Prospect of a Building, and the like, are represented to much greater Perfection by Painters, than Poets; tho', in these Particulars, Description approaches nearer to Painting than in Portraitures. The Reason of these Advantages of the Painter's over the Poet's Art, is obvious; for as the Things represented are the Objects of the Senses, to the Senses Painting exhibits the Images of them, as well as to the Imagination, and that according to the exactest Rules of Optics and Proportion: Whereas the Poet can only apply to the inward Faculties of the Soul, by the fainter Helps of Words and Sound, of Memory and Recollection. In Verse, indeed, we find these Things wonderfully described, and every Way agreeably to Nature; and tho' it is impossible for Words to represent them to the Mind, as graphically as Colours do to the Eyes; yet perhaps less Genius is required in the one than in the other. But the inward Springs and Movements of the Soul, the Actions, Passions, Manners, the distinguishing Tempers and Natures of Men, are drawn with much more Accuracy by the Poet, than the Painter. The one can imitate only so much of the Passions, as appears in the outward Man, in his Countenance, and Gesture; the other fetches them from the inmost Recesses of the Heart, describes them as they lurk there, without Disguise, in all their genuine Conflicts. The Representation we see of these, even in Painting (as far as Colours can represent them) is exquisite, even to Admiration; but, upon the whole, after a fair Comparison between the two Arts, Poetry excels Painting as much as the Soul does the Body, that being best represented by the former, as this is by the latter.

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Poetry, then, being a sort of *Imitation*, those that practise the Art are not called Ποιηται, *Makers*<sup>[10]</sup>, from *creating*; as if it was their peculiar Province to produce, out of nothing, new Matter for their Subject: So far is this from being true, that they propose always to copy Nature. But this Appellation is given them by way of Eminence, as their Thoughts are more exercised in *Invention*, and *forming* Ideas, than any other Writer's; as such Symmetry and Harmony is required in their Compositions; and such Artifice in their Fictions (for they not only adorn their Subject, but generally make it) and, lastly, such Management and Pains in working up the Machines of their Poem, and conducting the several Parts of it, so as to make them all conspire to one uniform Action. In this last Particular Poets remarkably excel other Writers, as all that are versed in them are sensible. But among those that are honoured with the Title of Poets, and are such, all have not an equal Claim to it. To the Epic and Dramatic Writers it is more peculiarly applicable; to the rest, only, as we term it, by Analogy. Their Business is *Invention*, as well as *Disposition*; the rest have little to do with the one, much less with the other. So that there are not only different Degrees of Poets, and subordinate Honours; but some who are called so only in an improper Sense: For who would mention *Martial* and *Virgil* under the same Predicament?

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We said above, that Poetry consisted of *metrical Numbers*: This is a necessary Part of the Definition, as being the very Essence of Poetry, properly so called; and tho', as we observed,



there may be Verses without a Poem, there can't be a Poem without Verses. I am obliged, therefore, once more to dissent from Monsieur *Dacier*; who, not, indeed, without the Authority of others, maintains<sup>[11]</sup>, that those fabulous Narratives in Prose, of *Lucian*, *Heliodorus*, and the like, among the Ancients, and of many others among the Moderns, that are held in so great Esteem, in *France*, particularly, and *Spain*, are Poems. I readily own some of them are truly elegant, and give us ample Testimonies of the Authors Wit and Judgment; nay, and except their want of Verse, are very little different from Epic Poems. But if even *Homer's Ilias*, or *Virgil's Aeneis*, were to be stript of their Metre, they would no longer be looked upon as Poems; if we may judge of the Nature of a Poem from the general Consent of Writers, who always take it for granted that Verse is an essential Property of it.

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Those who are of the other Opinion, think they are supported by no less Authority than *Aristotle's*; who asserts τ' εποποιαν to consist μονου τοις ψιλοις λογοις, η τοις μετροις. The foremention'd learned Writer insists, that ψιλοις λογοις can signify nothing else but plain Prose; that therefore *Aristotle* admitted some sort of Epic Poem without Metre. Others, that take the contrary Side, endeavour to shew, that by ψιλοις λογοις is to be understood a poetical Discourse, not without Metre, but without *Harmony* and *Rhythm*; by which *Aristotle* meant Music, and Measures which they used to dance to. So that, according to these Interpreters, the Particle η is not *disjunctive* in this Place, but *explanatory*. They that would see the Arguments in Defence of this Exposition, may consult *Vossius*<sup>[12]</sup>. But if we grant our Opponents what they desire, *viz.* that *Aristotle* meant only Prose by ψιλοις λογοις, as indeed it is most probable he did; yet it will not follow that he reckoned such fictitious Narratives, as we are now speaking of, or indeed any kind of Prose whatever, to be a Species of Poetry. To make this plain, we must enquire into the genuine Sense of the other Word εποποιια. Here the *French* Interpreter supposes, without any Hesitation, that it signifies nothing else but an Epic Poem, or the Art of making it. But *Vossius* proves, to a Demonstration, that it must have a larger Sense, so as to include the Epic Poem, and that kind of Fable without Metre, which is the Subject of our present Debate. The Meaning, then, of *Aristotle*, is this, that the εποποιια is the *Genus*, one Species of which is the *Epic* Poem; the other, the *Novel*, or Fable in Prose. Upon this View, then, we see, that granting ψιλοις λογοις, in *Aristotle*, to denote only Prose; yet it can't from thence be concluded, that these fictitious Narratives, or any kind of Prose, can be brought under the Head of Poetry. To the *Epopœia* they truly belong, and to nothing else.

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Metre, then, we'll conclude to be an essential Part of Poetry. Another Question arises, whether *Fiction* is likewise so. Some tell us, that no one should be entitled a Poet, but he that invents some Fable, and heightens it with the Decoration of Verse. To this Opinion I can by no means assent. The first Writers of Verses, no doubt, made them in Praise of somewhat that was real, and before them. For it is highly probable, that this Art, as most others, was in its Infancy employ'd about Things that were most obvious, and easy to the Learner. Now it is certainly more easy to describe a Subject that already exists, than to form a new one. *Vossius*<sup>[13]</sup> thinks, that Love was the first Occasion of Poetry. Which is not improbable, considering that this Affection is coeval with Mankind, is universal, and naturally productive of Poetry. True Love, then, or somewhat true, was the Poets first Theme; afterwards, by Length of Time, they rose to Things that were more difficult, and blended artful Devices and Truth together. So that Poetry was before Fiction; and even since they have been united, there have been many Poets, truly so called, who have had to do with Fiction. Those that exercise that Talent with Art, are Poets in a more peculiar Manner, and of a superior Genius. But if those only were to be honour'd with the Title, the Number of them would be very small. To all, therefore, it ought to extend, who, tho' they *invent* nothing, yet *illustrate* their Subject with Metre, animated with the Style and Spirit of Poetry.

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I cannot, therefore, sufficiently wonder that the great *Scaliger*<sup>[14]</sup> should assert, there was no Difference between Poetry and History, except in the *Diction*. 'Tis certain he could not mean Poetry in general; for there are many Sorts of it, which are so totally different from History, that they have scarce any Thing in common with it. Even the Epic Poem, tho' it consists much in Narration, yet is distinguish'd enough from History, by the subject Matter, by the Disposal of the Parts, and many other Criteria. *Scaliger's* Opinion may seem true in respect of one kind of Poetry only, such as that of *Lucan*, which is properly call'd an Historical Poem: Tho' this may be heighten'd with that poetic Rage and Fire, which, I presume, is somewhat more than *Diction*, and incompatible with History.

Tho' we generally use the Words *Poesis* and *Poetica*, *Poesy* and *Poetry*, indiscriminately; yet, if we would speak properly, they ought to be distinguish'd. By a *Poem* (a third Word, that often occurs in this sort of Dissertations) is meant the Work of the Poet; by *Poesy*, the actual Exercise; by *Poetry*, the Art or Habit.

And since Harmony and Sonorousness are so necessary a Part of Poetry, it may not be foreign to our Purpose to compare it with Music; especially as these two entertaining Arts are not only nearly allied in their Nature, but in Fact also, often united: This we see, especially in Odes and Songs, and the Entertainments of the Theatre; where Poesy and Music lend each other their friendly Aid, become joint Associates, and both conspire to captivate their Hearers. In this, also, they farther agree, that they have both the same Admirers. I speak of such as have made a Progress in Letters; for we often meet not only with Lovers of Music, but Masters in it, that, for want of Learning, have no Taste for the Pleasures of Poetry. But among those that are advanced in Literature, an Admirer of one of these Arts, loves the other also; and he that understands one, has a Knowledge in both, or desires and wishes for it. From hence it was, no doubt, that the Ancients made the same *Apollo* the Patron of Poetry and Music, and attributed to the Muses the divinest Melody, adorning them with the Ensigns of the Harp, and other musical Instruments.

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*Aristotle*, likewise, seems to have comprehended Music under Poetry; and tho' that may not be altogether so proper, since Music consists of Sound only, without Words, yet it is plain the Affinity between them is very great. Both charm the Ear with sonorous Measures; Music, indeed, in a higher Degree, but Poetry comes much nearer to it in this Respect, than Prose, how flowing or tuneable soever.

Both turn more particularly upon the Harmony of the Parts, and the proper Disposal of them; both suited to Men of the politest Taste, and both improve it. In short, so nearly are they the same, that the Word *Singing* is equally applied to both. But this Difference there is, that Poetry is much the more excellent in its kind; because the whole Circle of Learning enters into its Composition; it applies itself more particularly to the Soul, as the other to the Senses; and, lastly, the Advantages of it to Mankind are abundantly greater.

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From hence I am naturally led to enquire into the Use and End of Poetry, which is generally reckoned twofold, *viz.* to *instruct* and to *please*. So that we come now to the last Branch of our Definition, wherein we asserted, that Poetry was design'd *for the Pleasure and Improvement of Mankind*, according to that well known Saying of *Horace*,

*Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare Poetæ.*<sup>[15]</sup>

A Poet shou'd instruct, or please, or both.

*Roscom.*

It is agreed, then, by all, that this is the twofold End of Poetry; but which the principal, is still a Doubt. It may bear a Dispute, indeed, which is in *Fact* the principal; but which *ought* to be so, surely can be none: For in this, as in all other Arts, the Advantage ought to be considered before the Pleasure. Some, indeed, of our modern Writers, think otherwise; and boldly pronounce Pleasure to be the chief End of Poetry. It can't be denied, but this Opinion is perfectly consonant to their Writings; in which they not only principally consult their Reader's Pleasure, but in Opposition to their Advantage. Witness those lewd Poems with which this divine Art is polluted. But if we would consult Reason, we should allow that even in Verse what improves us, ought to be more regarded than what delights us. I own, the severest Wits, that lay down the most rigid Precepts of Virtue, ought to have a View to Pleasure in their Compositions; for it is the distinguishing Mark of the Poet from the Philosopher, that tho' Virtue is the Aim of both, yet the one presses it closer, indeed, but in a less engaging Manner. In the dry Method of a Teacher he defines his Subject, he explains his Terms, and then gives you Rules; the other cloaths his Precepts in Examples, and imperceptibly insinuates them under the beautiful Disguise of Narration. I own, likewise, that Readers are generally more sensible of the Pleasure they receive, than the Profit, even when it is less proposed by the Writers; for it is That makes the strongest Impression upon the Imagination: Nay, and I grant, that this is what Writers themselves ought to study. Yet notwithstanding all this, Profit may be the chief End of Poetry, and ought to be so; but for that very Reason Pleasure should be joined to it, and accompany it, as a Handmaid, to minister to its Occasions. When Children are allured with the sweeten'd Draught, or gilded Pill, they, as the Physician intended, consider nothing but the Beauty of the one, or the Taste of the other: But it is well known, this was not the *chief* Intent of the Physician in his Prescription.

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This Rule relates principally to the more perfect and sublimer Kinds of Poetry, and especially the Epic and Dramatic. For we don't pretend that Epigram, Elegy, Songs, and the like, conduce much to the Improvement of Virtue. It is enough, if these Writings keep within the Bounds of Chastity, and give no Offence to Good-manners. Poets sometimes write, not so much to move others Passions, as to indulge their own. And as Pleasure is the chief, or, perhaps, the only *Effect* of this sort of Levities, so it may very innocently be proposed by Authors as the chief *End* of them. Tho' even from these lesser Flights one Advantage arises, that they improve the Wit, and polish the style, both of the Writer and the Reader; a Circumstance that may be observed in Favour of all Kinds of Poetry.

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If it be asked, What are those inward Sensations of Pleasure with which Poetry affects us, or from whence it is Mankind are so highly delighted with that Way of Writing; I answer, this may in some Measure be collected from what has been already said, and farther, from what we shall have Occasion to say hereafter under the subject Matter of Poetry. At present let the following Considerations suffice: It is obvious enough why Harmony of Verse should please us, since that's a Pleasure that arises from a proper Disposition of Sounds, which make their Way directly to the Senses. But still we feel a much higher, from the Images of Things beautifully painted, and strongly impressed upon the Mind. As we are naturally desirous of Truth, we are glad to find our Ideas confirmed by those of others; for from thence we conclude ours are just, and agreeable to Nature. This Assimilation of Ideas is still more pleasant, when it arises from some sudden unforeseen Impression; for all Impressions upon the Mind, whether of Joy or Grief, are more affecting, the swifter they are made, and the more unexpected; the slower they are, the more languid. This is confirmed no less by Experience, than Reason. Since the Impressions, then, of Poetry, are of the vehement kind, it is no Wonder so much Pleasure should attend them, especially when the Ideas we speak of are heighten'd with all the Elegance of Expression. This Pleasure is likewise in some Measure to be attributed to the natural Love of Mankind for Imitation, the Reason of which we shall attempt to give in its proper Place. From these Principles we may account for the Pleasure that arises from Description, as well as that from Fiction.

The Pleasure we receive from the Variety of Thought, and sudden Transitions in Poetry, seems owing to our natural Love of Novelty; for so imperfect is the Happiness of us Mortals, that every Thing by Constancy grows nauseous and insipid to us.

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With Regard to the Passions, why some of them should give us greater Pleasure, the more they are put in Motion, is plain; but how Delight should flow from Pity, Terror, and even Sorrow itself, seems truly wonderful, and difficult to account for. And, indeed, to do Justice to this Question, we ought to know the secret Springs of the Soul, and to lay open the Foundations of human Happiness and Misery: Which, because it will require a distinct Dissertation, we shall pass by, at present; reserving it for a more full Enquiry, when we come to treat more particularly of the Nature of Tragedy.

We have already, in a few Words, shewn, wherein the Advantages of Poetry consist; no one can be a Stranger to them: This Art will receive no less Honour, if we look back into its Antiquity. If it took its Rise from Love, (the Opinion, which, in Conformity with *Vossius*, we have above proposed as most probable) yet to Religion it owes its Increase and Progress; and it may be question'd, which of the two is its true Parent. *Dacier* calls it the Offspring of Religion; and it is certain, in the earliest Ages of the World it was usual to sing Hymns to the Honour of God upon the solemn Festivals; upon those especially, when after the In-gathering of Harvest they offer'd up to him the First-fruits, and prais'd him for the Blessings they were now in Possession of. In Course of Time, Poetry, which had hitherto depended wholly upon Nature, and knew not the Name of Art, by the Corruption of Mankind grew itself corrupted. To bring it back to its Purity, it was the Care of the wiser Part of Men to lay it under certain Laws and Regulations. From hence arose the *Art* of Poetry. \ It is a great Dispute among the Learned, what Nation produced the first Poets. The *Greeks*, who to their own refined Taste ascribe the Origin of all Learning and Arts, laid Claim, likewise, to this, and instanced in *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and *Musæus*, as the first Poets. But *Vossius*<sup>[16]</sup> proves it very probable that this Triumvirate of Poetry never existed; and that they are not proper, but common Names, derived from the old *Phœnician* Language. Be that as it will, (for I am little disposed to engage in so minute a Controversy) I agree with the same *Vossius*, that Shepherds (I may add, or Husbandmen) found out the Use of Poetry; and that they lived in *Greece*, near those celebrated Mountains and Springs, *Helicon*, *Parnassus*, *Aganippe*, *Hippocrene*, *Pirene*, and the like, that were therefore sacred to the Muses and *Apollo*. But still it does not appear, that Poetry owes its first Original to the *Greeks*, (for, as the forementioned learned Author goes on<sup>[17]</sup>) "if we examine this Matter by the Scripture, we shall find the People of God, the first Inhabitants of the Earth, from whom all Nations are descended, have the best Title to this Honour. Poetry flourished among the *Israelites*, not only before the *Trojan War*, but before the coming of *Cadmus* into *Bœotia*, who first taught the *Greeks* the Use of Letters. And tho' we were utterly ignorant of what is mentioned concerning the *Hebrew* Poetry, yet the Antiquity of Music would teach us that the Original of Verse must be owing to the Oriental Nations; for little Doubt is to be made but Singing begun in the very Infancy of the World. This is farther confirmed, from what we read of *Jubal*, the seventh from *Adam*, who is styled the Father of such as handle the Harp and Organ. Antiently, then, Musicians and Poets were the same."

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But to examine still farther into the Origin of Poetry, (for what we have hitherto said relates only to the *Subject*, and the *Authors*, not to the immediate *Occasion* of it:) Now this seems to be owing to the Love implanted in Mankind of *Imitation* and *Harmony*. *Vossius* very undeservedly ascribes it to the three following Causes, *viz. Nature*, an *Attempt* to write Verse, and a *finish'd Skill*. By *Nature* he understands not only the εὐφροσύνη, or Happiness of Parts, but the ὄρεσις, the Impetus, usually styled the Poetic Fire. I am very sensible of the Advantage of these, and of their Necessity to constitute a good Poet; but much doubt whether they are to be reckoned (what he and I both speak of) the efficient Causes of Poetry. No one can *excel* in Poetry, without a Genius peculiarly turn'd for it; but the Question is, what *general* Reason can be assign'd, that gives all Men, even those that have no Talent for it, as well as those that have, a natural Inclination to it. As to the poetic Fire, it may be reckoned a Concomitant of Poetry, but not the Cause of it. No more can an Attempt to write Verses, which is rather the Thing itself in its first State of Imperfection; much less can the Perfection of any Thing be the Cause of its being perfected; that's absurd, and a mere Contradiction in Terms.

The Reason, then, of the Thing in Question, must be fetch'd from the Love of Imitation and Harmony. To this Principle it is owing, that among the most barbarous Part of Mankind we meet with Attempts in Painting, Music, and Poetry. For it is a great Mistake to think that these Arts are consistent only with such refin'd Nations as are Mistresses of all other Arts: No, they are Things of an universal Nature, and agreeable, as it were, to all Mankind, from the very Composition of their Being. Only with this Difference, that in those Parts of the World where Learning and Manners are cultivated, these Arts are nurtur'd, and rise in Perfection; but where the People are rude, and unpolished, they suffer in the common Calamity of the Place. But still, even there, the Seeds shoot forth; witness those barbarous, uncouth Songs, the mean Instruments of Music, and imperfect Sketches in Painting, which are found, according to the Relation of Travellers, among the *Indians*, and almost Savage People of the North.

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This Fondness of Mankind for imitating, proceeds, probably, from nothing else but their Desire of *Knowledge* and *Power*. To produce something out of nothing, is the peculiar Property of the Almighty: As Man, therefore, cannot create, it is his Ambition to approach as near to the Exercise of that Power, as his Nature will allow him; and that can be only by imitating Things already made.

His Passion for Harmony is no Wonder; because whatever we call beautiful arises from a just Proportion, and proper Arrangement of its Parts. It is this composes the whole Frame of the Universe; and the more perfect every Individual of it is, the greater Share of Harmony it possesses.

So much for the Original and Cause of Poetry. Of its Antiquity, in Comparison of Prose, I need

say but very little, since that seems, beyond all Doubt, to have been prior to it, in Point of Time, tho' behind it in Dignity. Some, indeed, have asserted, that Poetry was the ancients, out of a Zeal, I suppose, to its Honour, which needs no false Supports: But this Opinion is by no means credible. 'Tis certain, all Learners proceed, as Nature directs them, from the plainest and easiest Things, to those that are more compounded and difficult: For Men to speak Verse before Prose, is the same as if they should pretend to run, or dance, before they could stand, or walk. It is a very weak Argument, with which *Strabo* (as *Vossius* cites it) endeavours to maintain the contrary Opinion. To prove Verse the ancientest Way of Writing, he observes, that Prose is styled *Oratio Pedestris*, [as if we should say creeping Prose.] "Now Speech was carried, before it ventured to walk. *Vossius* artfully replies, that it was called *Pedestris*, not because Men against Nature condescended to it, but because they mounted above it, as it were, and left it upon the Earth: For Prose seems to creep, when compared with the Loftiness of Poetry. Now, to retort the Argument, there's no Doubt but Men walk'd first, before they ventured on Horseback." If any one would see more of this, he may consult *Vossius*. That Poetry, as an Art, flourish'd before Oratory, or that the celebrated Professors of the one are not so ancient as those of the other, is clear from History; but that Men spoke Verse before Prose, is past all Credit, or Probability.

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If any Question should arise about the Prevalence of Nature and Art in Poetry, I cannot answer it better than in the Words of *Horace*<sup>[18]</sup>:

*Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,  
Quæsitum est; Ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium; alterius sic  
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.*

Some think, that Poets may be form'd by Art,  
Others maintain, that Nature makes them so.  
I neither see what Art without a Vein,  
Nor Wit without the Help of Art can do;  
But mutually they need each other's Aid.  
*Roscom.*

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But if this is the Case, whence comes that Saying so common in every one's Mouth, *That a Man must be born, not made a Poet*; whereas, in *Horace's* Judgment, a Man is both born and made so? In answer to this, No more to be sure is intended by the Proverb, than that Strength of Genius enters more into the Composition of a Poet, than the Refinements of Art; tho' both are necessary to the forming him a great one. Writings that betray a true poetic Spirit, how unpolish'd soever they are, extort from us Praise and Admiration; but those that are cold and lifeless, tho' form'd upon the most scrupulous Observation of the Laws of Poetry, are neglected, or condemn'd. The Sloth or Inaccuracy of the one, demands our Censure; but the stupid Rigidness, and labour'd Dulness of the other, provokes at once our Rage, our Hate, and Disdain. It is of little Consequence that *Horace* seems to put these upon the Foot of Equality. A Poet that lays down general Rules in Verse, and in so short a Compass, cannot be supposed to enter minutely into every Distinction. Besides, the Saying above may be true in this Respect; that Poetry *especially*, and beyond all other Sciences, requires a Fecundity of Nature; and besides such a *peculiar* Turn of Wit, as is *seldom* found, and *few* are blest with.

And this is partly the Reason, why Poets were said to be *inspired*; partly, I say, for the chief Reason is probably owing to that Fire, or more than, human Impulse, called by the *Greeks* ἐνθουσιασμις, which distinguishes them from other Writers. That this was no real Inspiration in the ancient Poets, (except in those sacred ones that communicated God's Will to Mankind) nor is now so in the Moderns, I suppose needs no Proof; but it is certain, however, that not only the Poets said it was, but the Heathens, also, thought it divine. Hence arose that more than common Reverence, the Populace paid to them. Hence the Title given of them of *sacred*, and *divine*. Hence that solemn Invocation of the Muses and *Apollo*, and sometimes other Deities, with which the Poets, and the Poets only, introduce their Works.

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I have no Inclination to spend my Time in examining into the Fables which have long since become an Appendage to Poetry, nor to search out the hidden Meaning of them: I leave that Task to those whom we call the Mythologists; let them, if they please, explain the Allegory of the two Tops of *Parnassus*, of the Number Nine among the Muses, the Mystery of the Wings of *Pegasus*, and of the Fountains rising at the Stroke of his Hoof. These, I would only observe, are the Stains of Poetry, contracted from the Corruption of Heathenism, which infected Religion no less with its trifling Puerilities; and it is but just that we, upon whom the clearer Light of Truth has shone, should at length learn to despise such ridiculous Tales, which, by Repetition, are now grown nauseous; and to refine Poetry, as well as true Religion, from the Dross and Alloy of Falshood.

There are some other Things, of less Moment, which I shall pass over with barely mentioning. Poets had anciently Crowns of Laurel and Ivy, to denote by those Ever-greens the Immortality they gain to themselves, and confer on others. Mountains, Groves, and Springs, were sacred to the Muses, because Poets naturally fly from the Noise and Tumult of the City, to the peaceful Solitude of the Country; that so, disengaged from Care and Interruption, they may dedicate the utmost Efforts of Nature to their beloved Profession: Besides,

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*Carmina secessum scribentis, & otia quærunt*<sup>[19]</sup>:

Leisure and green Retreats the Poets court.

Because Verse flows naturally there, and the Fancy is strangely awaken'd into Poetry with the Pleasures of Solitude around it.

Lastly, Another Question may possibly be ask'd, and deservedly too, (for it is a Matter of some Importance to know) how far Poetry and Oratory agree, and wherein they differ. To give a direct Answer to this, we say, that Eloquence is common to both; Eloquence, therefore, ought to be consider'd as twofold; that of Oratory, and that of Poetry. Those Things that come under the Title of Eloquence in general, relate to both Arts; such as, Topicks of Praise, whether of Persons, Facts, or Things; Topicks of Exhortation, Congratulation, Consolation, and the like, with which the Orator, as well as the Poet, excites Anger, Love, Pity, and all other Passions. Both observe alike a proper Decorum of Manners, according to Age, Fortune, and Condition of Life. Ardent Expressions, and lively Thoughts, are the Embellishments of both. In both the Diction is elevated, or familiar, grave, florid, or strong, as Occasion serves. For all these Things, as I said before, are Branches of Eloquence in general, are drawn from the same Heads of Invention, and illustrated by Examples fetch'd from Orators or Poets. So that it is impossible almost for him that treats of one of these Arts, not to mention some Things that are in common to both. However, the Difference between them is very great; and Poetry has several other Characteristics besides that of Metre; a Style, for instance, peculiar to itself, Fiction, copious Descriptions, poetic Fire, and (to add no more) a certain Licence, denied to Orators, in the due Exercise of which the Poet's Art is chiefly conspicuous. These are all worthy an accurate and distinct Consideration, and such an one hereafter, perhaps, they may come under.

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The technical Measure of Verses, and the different Sorts of them, I leave to the Grammarians, whose Business it is to scan Syllables, to weigh Dactyls and Spondees, Trochees and Iambics; to teach the Difference between Heroic, Elegiac, Alcaic, Sapphic, Anapæstic Verse, and many others, with which the fruitful Field of Poetry abounds: Not that these Things are to be despised: but only as they are more proper to be taught in the School, than the University. It is not my Business to dwell upon so barren a Soil, or to trifle my Time about the External of Poetry; but to enter into the Spirit of it, and make Things, not Words, the Subject of my Enquiries.

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## LECTURE IV, V, VI, VII.

### *Of the Style of Poetry.*

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My present Design being to give some Account of the Thought and Diction peculiar to Poets, I must first premise, that there are many Things relating to this Subject, which Words can scarce come up to, and are much better conceived than expressed. Every one will be satisfied of this, that considers of how delicate a Nature Poetry is; how variously it diversifies both Words and Things, by such Bounds as have a very close Connection, upon which, however, the Beauty of the Thought and Diction often turns<sup>[20]</sup>. These, tho' clearly enough distinguished in the Mind; yet, such is the Weakness of Words, can never be explained in Writing. A true Judgment, duly exercised in reading the best Poets, and in making proper Reflections upon them, is the only Means of arriving at this Part of Knowledge. The outer Lines of it, which afford proper Matter for a Dissertation, I shall endeavour to represent to you, as well as I can.

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But I would here, likewise, farther observe, that Writing and Thinking are (at least ought to be) so nearly allied, that it is impossible for any one, in treating of *Style*, not to mention some Things that relate to *Thought* likewise. This, therefore, will be my Case. At present, however, I shall confine my self *chiefly* to the former, reserving the latter for another intire Dissertation.

By *Style* I understand a Method of Writing peculiar to every Writer, Art, or Science; or that which distinguishes Writings and Writers from one another. The Beauty of it consists in such a proper Choice of Words, and in so apt a Connexion of them, as may express the Conceptions of the Mind clearly, and at the same Time clothed with a becoming Dignity. The *Style* of Poetry is extremely various; because every Species of this divine Art has a Diction proper to itself; we shall just touch upon the several Kinds in this Dissertation, as we shall treat more fully, perhaps, of each, when we come to examine them separately. Our chief Business, at present, is, to speak of the *Style* of Poetry in *general*, and shew wherein the Difference consists between that and Prose.

Now this is so great, that the Poets use many Phrases, even with the greatest Elegance, which a Prose Writer could not, without the Imputation of false *Latin*, or the Guilt of Solecism. Instances of such Expressions, reducible to no certain Rule, are very frequent. To mention only a few: Adjectives and Participles that describe the Situation or Part of the Body, very elegantly require the following Noun to be put in the accusative Case, in Imitation of the *Greek* Construction; v.g. *Stratus membra sub arbuto; Ære caput refulgens; saucius ora; Lacerum crudeliter ora*, and the like<sup>[21]</sup>.

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Adjectives of the Neuter Gender, and singular Number, and sometimes of the plural, are used adverbially. So, *Triste micans; Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo, dulce loquentem; Cometa ferule rubens; torva tuentem, &c.*

Many Adjectives govern a Genitive, in a Manner altogether poetical. *Irritus incepti; non modicus voti; melior dextræ; Pubes læta laborum; egregius linguæ; Prævus togæ, inglorius ausi; anhelus laboris; integer vitæ scelerisque purus; lassus maris & viarum, militiæque; seri studiorum; fortunatus laborum; fessi rerum; trepidi rerum;* and numberless others of the same Sort. Often, likewise, and with no less Elegance, they govern an Infinitive: *Orpheus blandus ducere quercus; superare pugnis nobilis; celer sequi; vultus nimium lubricus aspici; durus componere versus; Adria facilis moveri; fortis tractare serpentes; doctus Phœbi dicere laudes; cantare periti;* and the like.

Adjectives, and their Substantives, denoting Number and Multitude, are used in the singular Number: As, *Populus frequens; multa rosa; innumera avis; quam multo repetet Græcia milite; licet illi plurima manet lacrima.*

To mention but one Observation more: Some Adjectives, which in common Prose agree with their Substantives, are turned into the Neuter Gender and plural Number, and the Substantives into the Genitive Case: As, *Ultima mundi; ardua montis; cuncta terrarum; prospera rerum; dura rerum; aspera ponti; acuta belli; strata viarum; opaca locorum;* and many more to the like Purpose.

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It would be endless, to produce all the Examples that come under these Rules; they abound in every Page almost of the best Poets, especially the *Lyric*: For the *Lyrics* chiefly delight in the true poetic Style, as may be collected from the Examples I have here produced, most of them from the Odes of *Horace*. But there are, besides, various poetical Expressions, which tho' not reducible to any particular Class, yet occur up and down in Reading, and are worthy of treasuring up in the Memory. Such are frequent in *Virgil*:

---*dederatque comam diffundere ventis*<sup>[22]</sup>.

And giv'n the Winds,  
To wanton in her Tresses.

*Ut cum carceribus sese effudère quadrigæ,  
Addunt se in spatia, & frustra retinacula tendens  
Fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas*<sup>[23]</sup>.

As when the Racers from the Barriers start,  
Oft whirling round the Goal, the Charioteer  
Vainly attempts to check the flying Steeds.  
Himself is born away, the dusty Car  
Swift smoaks along, nor bounding hears the Reins.

And many in *Juvenal*:

*Sic laudamus equum, facilis cui plurima palma  
Fervet, & exultat rauco victoria Circo:  
Nobilis hic, quocunque venit de gramine, cujus  
Clara fuga ante alios, & primus in æquore pulvis*<sup>[24]</sup>.

We commend a Horse  
(Without Regard of Pasture, or of Breed)  
For his undaunted Mettle, and his Speed;

Who wins most Plates, with greatest Ease, and first  
Prints with his Hoofs his Conquest on the Dust.  
*G. Stephens.*

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But especially in the Prince of the Lyric Poets:

<sup>[25]</sup> — *amat  
Janua limen.*

In rusty Silence mourns your Gate.  
*Oldsworth.*

<sup>[26]</sup> — *& ademptus Hector  
Tradidit fessis leviora tolli  
Pergama Graiis.*

<sup>[27]</sup> *Qua pinus ingens, albaque populus,  
Umbram hospitalem consociare amant  
Ramis, & obliquo laborat  
Lympha fugax trepidare rivo.*

There where the Poplar and the stately Pine  
Meet in a Shade, and closely twine,  
To form the Bow'r with thick entangled Bows,  
And where the limpid Stream in curling Murmurs flows.

[28] *Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa  
Perfusus liquidis urget odoribus,  
Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?  
Cui flavam religas comam,  
Simplex munditiis?*

Beneath the rosy Bow'r,  
Chloë, what am'rous Boy  
Sweet as the dewy Flow'r  
Now tastes your Lips,  
(Delusive Joy!)  
Now leaning on your Breast,  
Urges to be supremely blest?  
For whom do you prepare  
(Neat Negligence of Dress!)  
The Tresses of your golden Hair? &c.

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[29] *Vivet extento Proculeius ævo,  
Notus in fratres animi paterni;  
Illum aget, penna metuente solvi,  
Fama superstes.*

When Fame of *Proculeius* sings,  
She mounts on everlasting Wings;  
His free and gen'rous Actions prove  
A Father's in a Brother's Love.

Oldsworth.

[30] *Brachia, & vultum, teretesque suras,  
Integer laudo; fuge suspicari,  
Cujus octavum trepidavit ætas  
Claudere lustrum.*

Her Face, her Neck, her Breast, her Arms,  
I praise, not taken with her Charms;  
Suspicious Thoughts remove;  
Let almost forty feeble Years  
Secure thy Mind from jealous Fears,  
And tell that *Horace* is too old for Love.

Oldsworth.

I shall omit any more Examples; tho' what I have hitherto laid before you, I dare say, have brought their own Reward with them, as they are true Specimens of poetic Elegance, and abundantly illustrate what I had to say upon this Head. To alledge all that relate to it, would be only to transcribe the greatest Part of the best Poets. And as the Beauty of the poetic Style chiefly consists in its own Peculiarities, those that would thoroughly understand it, must endeavour, with Diligence and Application, to make it familiar to them.

Nor is the Style of Poetry distinct from Oratory in *Greek* and *Latin* only; the same Difference runs thro' all Tongues, both modern and ancient, *English* as well as foreign. To this is owing that Difficulty, which the Learners of a new Language complain of much more in reading the Poets, than the Prose Writers. The Reason why the former use such a Variety of Style so remote from that of the latter, seems to be owing to this; that as Poetry requires a peculiar Way of Thinking, it affects, likewise, a peculiar Manner of Writing and Speaking, that so it may be set off at as great a Distance from Prose as possible. Besides, as it is confined within the strict Rules of Measure, it is but just to allow it a greater Liberty of Diction, and so compensate, in some Degree, that Inconvenience with this Advantage.

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The Expressions I have hitherto produced are purely poetical, which, beautiful as they are in Verse, if once resolved into Prose, become flat and insipid; you would acknowledge them, indeed, to be poetical Materials, but rudely scattered, and disjointed; and, as *Horace* describes it,

—*Invenias disjecti membra Poetæ*<sup>[31]</sup>.

Dissected Fragments of a Poet's Limbs.

Other Phrases there are, which tho' not merely poetical, yet are much more suitable to Verse than Prose: They may well enough be used sparingly, and with Caution, by an Orator, or an Historian; but if they occur frequently, they are Blemishes in his Composition, and mere Affectation. Of this Stamp are, *Campus pinguis sanguine*; the Field now sated with Blood: *Vela vento turgida*; the turgid Sails: *Duces sordidi pulvere honesto*, or *non indecora*; with honourable Dust besmeared; and the like.

But tho' the Expressions above, that are purely poetical, or that are chiefly so, conduce much to the Beauty of a Poem, yet good Verse may be made of those only that are common to all Kinds of Writing. For Proof of this one Example shall suffice, from the Odes of *Horace*:

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*Sæpius ventis agitur ingens*<sup>[32]</sup>  
*Pinus, & celsæ graviore casu*  
*Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos*  
*Fulmina montes.*

Storms often vex the stately Oak,  
High Mountains feel the Thunder's Stroke;  
And lofty Tow'rs, when Winds prevail,  
Are ruin'd with the greater Fall.

*Creech.*

In these Verses, tho' truly beautiful, there is not so much as one Phrase, not one Word, but what might with Propriety be used in Prose. It is observable, however, that even these, and the like Expressions, when transposed, and taken out of Metre, lose all their Elegance: For tho' every Word, considered in itself, is agreeable to either Style, yet there is somewhat so distinguishing in the poetical, as throws a Beauty upon Words, which, out of Metre, would appear insipid, or absurd; and yet, tho' we are sensible of the Thing, it is impossible to assign a Reason for it.

Another Peculiarity there is in the Style of Poetry, that a Thing is often express'd, not by Name, but by some concomitant Circumstance, or Adjunct belonging to it; by which Means the Mind is led on to an entire Conception of it, by pleasing Intervals, as it were, and a successive Gradation of Thought. Thus *Virgil*,

[33] *Depresso incipiat jam tum mihi taurus aratro*  
*Ingemere, & sulco attritus splendescere vomer.*

Ev'n then my Steers and Plough,  
In the deep Furrows shall begin to groan.  
*Trapp.*

Again,

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[34] *—prunis lapidosa rubescere corna.*

And on the Plumbs the stony Cornel grew.

And in the same Book,

[35] *Impositos duris crepitare incudibus enses.*

Nor the Spatt'ring of the Steel,  
On Anvils form'd, and hammer'd into Swords.

These, perhaps, and the like, might be reduced to the Head of Descriptions; but they are very short and imperfect ones, and, if I may so speak, are from their very Imperfection the more perfect. The Mind of Man does not love to have every Thing too minutely laid before it; it pleases itself in having Room for Exercise, and to walk alone, as it were, without leading.

There are many other Things, which Poets chuse to express paraphrastically, and in short Descriptions, rather than in simple Terms. Every Body is acquainted with the usual little Images they give us (the larger ones I have at present nothing to do with) of the Morning, Night, Noon, and Evening; as

[36] *Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit.*

Mean while Aurora rising from the Sea.

[37] *Vertitur interea cœlum, & ruit Oceano nox.*

Mean while the Hemisphere rolls round, and Night  
Swift rushes from the Sea.

[38] *Nunc etiam pecudes umbras & frigora captant,*  
*Nunc virides etiam occultant spineta lacertas.*

Our Cattle now the cooling Shades enjoy,  
Now the green Lizards lurk in prickly Brakes.

[39] *Et jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant,*  
*Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.*

And now the Village Tops at Distance smoke.  
And lofty Shades from lofty Mountains fall.

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So of Winter, Summer, Spring, and Autumn; as,

[40] *Vere novo, gelidus canis cum montibus humor*



*Liquitur, & Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit.*

With Spring's first Op'ning, when dissolving Snows  
From hoary Mountains run, and *Zephyr* slacks  
The crumbling Glebe.

[41] —*Jam venit Æstas*  
*Torrída, jam læto turgent in palmite gemmæ.*

Now scorching Summer comes,  
And in the fruitful Tendrils swells the Gems.

Numberless other Descriptions there are of this Sort, which we admire in Poetry, and yet in Prose we should laugh at.

'Tis usual, likewise, in Poetry, (which is another Peculiarity) to denote Men, Places, Rivers, Mountains, by various Names taken from any of their Adjuncts. This is so well known, that I have no need, out of the Multitude of Examples, to produce any. 'Tis no less common to put Particulars for Generals; thus *Virgil*:

[42] —*Vestro si munere tellus*  
*Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista,*  
*Poculaque inventis Acheloïa miscuit uvis.*

If the Earth  
By your Indulgence chang'd *Chaonian* Mast  
For Corn, and from the new discolour'd Grape  
With *Acheloian* Bev'rage mingled Wine.

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And in another Place,

[43] —*Quot Ionii veniant ad littora fluctus,*

How many Waves roll to th' *Ionian* Shore.

So *Horace*,

[44] —*Tristitiam & metus*  
*Tradam protervis in mare Creticum*  
*Portare ventis.*—

To *Cretan* Seas I give my Cares,  
The Sport of wanton Winds.

Again,

[45] —*Nec mare Caspium*  
*Vexant inæquales procellæ.*

Nor ruffling Storms still toss the *Caspian* Floods.

And a little after,

[46] —*Aut Aquilonibus*  
*Querceta Gargani laborant.*

Nor the bleak North torments th' *Appulian* Woods.  
*Creech.*

Not a little elegant is this Manner of Writing, since, by an agreeable Variety of Particulars, it continually represents to the Mind somewhat new, and sets before it fresh Entertainment; whereas Generals, being always the same, grow cold and lifeless, by their too frequent Repetition.

Tho' Oratory may seem to be more adapted to express our Conceptions, as being not confined by the Fetters of Metre; yet Poetry, it is certain, makes a stronger Impression upon the Mind, and conveys a livelier Image to the Imagination, and that at once with such Elegance and Brevity, as the Force of Prose can never come up to. In Proof of this, I might produce Multitudes of Examples; but none more full than that of *Horace*,

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[47] ——*enitescis*  
*Pulchrior multo, juvenumque prodis*  
*Publica cura.*

And still shine out more bright and fair,  
The publick Grief, and publick Care.  
*Oldsworth.*

A Passage, this, entirely poetical, and not only beautiful in itself, but more proper to convey an Idea of the Thing intended, than all that the Power of Oratory can furnish.

To the Style of Poetry *Descriptions* likewise are almost peculiar. 'Tis true, they occur frequently in Prose; but then they are used either with Impropriety, or with Caution; or the Writings themselves are of a Kind that borders near upon Poetry, and therefore borrows *Descriptions* from it. Historians, indeed, describe Things, Places, and Persons; but not so much for the Sake of Ornament, as Necessity; that the Series of their Narration may appear clear and perspicuous to their Readers. Orators likewise attempt *Descriptions*, when they have Occasion for them to work upon the Passions. But neither the one nor the other affect them as a Decoration to their Writings, which Poets generally do very successfully, making use of these sort of Colourings, either of general Things or Particulars, in Miniature or at full Length, as Occasion serves, not only with a Design to move the Passions, but to please the Fancy. Great Judgment is required in the due Exercise of this Art, and a puerile Wit never betrays itself more apparently, than by forcing in *Descriptions*, out of mere Ostentation, that have no Connection with the Subject, and are consequently a Burden to it. But nothing is more beautiful, when a proper Choice is made of them; nothing more agreeable to the Nature of Poetry; few Things more peculiar to it. A Prose Writer does not only on Purpose use fewer *Descriptions* than the Poet, but in Reality is less capable of them. The very Essence of Poetry consists chiefly in Imitation; and such a Power it has in placing Things before the Eye of the Reader, as Prose entirely wants; and can be conceived only, not expressed<sup>[48]</sup>. An Historian might record the Omens and Prodigies that attended the Death of *Julius Cæsar*; but it is impossible he should come up to that admirable Description of them *Virgil* has left us. He might recount, for instance, the surprizing Eruption of Mount *Ætna*; but could never find out Words to represent it in so lively Colours as these,

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[49] — *Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros  
Vidimus undantem, ruptis fornacibus, Ætnam,  
Flammarumque globos, liquefactaque volvere saxa?*

How oft have we beheld  
Loud thund'ring *Ætna* from Vulcano's burst,  
Deluge with liquid Fire Cyclopean Fields,  
And toss huge Balls of Flame, and molten Stones?

Were an Historian to relate the Circumstance, in the Fourth Book of *Virgil's Æneis*, he would tell us at once, that *Dido* had struggled long with a secret Passion for *Æneas*; but no Expressions out of Verse, could fix in the Mind so strong a Sense of that inward Disease with which she labour'd, as those wonderful Lines at the Beginning of the Narrative:

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[50] *At Regina, gravi jamdudum saucia cura,  
Vulnus alit venis, & cæco carpitur igni.*

But with consuming Care the restless Queen,  
Already bleeding, nourishes a Wound.

And what follows, all the Efforts of Prose can never equal: That, particularly, which the Poet subjoins, after he had described her sacrificing to the Gods, and consulting the Oracle:

[51] *Heu! vatum ignaræ mentes! quid vota furentem,  
Quid delubra juvant? est mollis flamma medullas  
Interea, & tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.*

Wretched the Ignorance  
Of Augurs! what, alas! do Vows or Shrines  
Avail, to heal her Frenzy? A soft Flame  
Feeds on her Vitals, and a living Wound  
Silent, uneven, bleeds inward in her Breast.

The whole Description is wonderful, and sufficiently testifies the Power of Poetry, beyond that of Prose. I beg Leave, however, to add one or two Instances more. The Poet describing the Queen just dying for Love, adds,

[52] *Nunc eadem, labente die, convivia quærit;  
Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores  
Exposcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.*

At Ev'ning she renews  
Her Banquets; fondly begs again to hear  
The Trojan Wars; again, while he relates,  
She listens fix'd, and hangs upon the Sound.

And a few Lines after:

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[53] *Sola domo mœret vacua, stratisque relictis  
Incubat; illum absens absentem auditque videtque;  
Aut gremio Ascanium, genitoris imagine capta,*

*Detinet, infandum si fallere possit amorem.*

Lonely she pines within the empty Court,  
Lies on the Couch which just before she left;  
Him absent, absent still, she hears and sees.  
Sometimes his Father's Image all her Soul  
Possessing, young *Ascanius* on her Lap  
She long detains; if possible, to cheat,  
With that Amusement, her unbounded Love.

Among the other fatal Predictions of the unhappy Queen's Death, an Historian might mention the foreboding Noise of the Scritch-Owl; but would fall infinitely short of the inexpressible Elegance with which it is described in the two following Lines:

[54] *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo  
Sæpe queri, & longas in fletum ducere voces.*

And on her Palace-Top  
The lonely Owl, with oft repeated Scream,  
Complains, and spins into a dismal Length  
Her baleful Shrieks.

I have produced, perhaps, already, too many Examples; but I cannot forbear adding one more, which exceeds Admiration itself: It is the Description of *Tityos*, in the Sixth *Æneid*, suffering Punishment in the Shades below.

[55] *Necnon & Tityon, terræ omniparentis alumnum,  
Cernere erat: per tota novem cui jugera corpus  
Porrigitur; rostroque immanis vultur obunco  
Immortale jecur tundens, fœcundaque pœnis  
Viscera, rimaturque epulis, habitatque sub alto  
Pectore; nec fibris requies datur ulla renatis.*

There *Tityus*, Son of the all-bearing Earth,  
One might behold: Whose Body's monstrous Bulk  
Lies stretch'd o'er nine whole Acres; and a huge  
Portentous Vulture, with her hooky Beak  
Pouncing his everlasting Liver, thrives  
Upon his Entrails, fruitful of their Pains;  
Rummages for her Meals, inhabits deep  
Beneath his Breast; nor do the Fibres find  
The least Relief from Torment still renew'd.

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From the whole, I suppose it abundantly plain, that there is an Energy in the poetic Style, as it is much more adapted to copying Nature, than Oratory is, with all its Rhetoric.

'Tis farther to be observed, that figurative Expressions are far more frequent in Poetry, than Prose, as they are far more suitable to it; because it consists much more in the Embellishments of Style, in the Liveliness of Description, and impressing the Images of Things upon the Imagination. For tho' it rejects all false Colouring, and too great Affectation of Pomp, yet from the very Nature of it we may judge it takes in more real Ornaments than Prose. As to *Tropes* or *Figures*, as they are usually called, many of them are never used in Oratory, some but seldom, and very sparingly; others, again, agree naturally with it, particularly, the *Irony*, *Metonymy*, *Synechdoche*, and *Metaphor*. Tho' the last of these, for the Reason before alledg'd, is more the Property of Poetry. Some of the Figures are so familiar, and natural, that they are every Day used in common Speech, even by the Vulgar, of which Sort we may reckon those above, and some others. Metaphors never fail of being beautiful, when applied with mature Judgment, and a lively Wit; that is, when they are drawn from Nature, connect Ideas that have a due Relation to each other, and are not too much wrested to a foreign Sense. But nothing is more insipid, more ridiculous, or absurd, when these Rules are transgress'd in the Choice of them; which is the Case, very often, of our modern Writers, to their eternal Disgrace.

**Fifth  
Lecture.**

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Nothing can shew more the Elegance of Metaphors, and their Agreement with Nature, than those that are taken from Men and living Creatures, and applied to Trees and Plants. For as these have a sort of Life ascrib'd to them (call'd the vegetative) and are really endued with it; the Transition is easy to Creatures of a higher Rank, that are endued with it in a more proper Sense. Hence we hear so often, not only among the Poets, but in Prose, and even in common Conversation, of Trees and Plants being *alive* or *dead*, *healthy* or *sickly*. Nay, often human Passions and Affections are attributed to them: Plants, in particular (to omit other Instances) are often said to *love* or *hate* this Soil or that. So *Virgil*, speaking of them,

[56] *Sponte sua quæ se tollunt in luminis auras,  
Infœcunda quidem, sed læta, & fortia, surgunt.*

Those which unbidden spring to upper Air,  
Steril, indeed, but strong and healthy rise.

And afterwards,

[57] *Exuerint silvestrem animum, cultuque frequenti,  
In quascunqve voces artes, haud tarda sequentur.*

Will in Time unlearn  
Their salvage Temper, and not slow obey  
With frequent Culture, what your Art commands.

Again, in the same Book,

[58] *Inque novos soles audent se gramina tuto  
Credere, nec metuit surgentes pampinus Austros.*

To new Suns the Herbs  
Dare trust themselves; nor aught the tender Vine  
From rising *Auster* fears.

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There are many other Metaphors of different Kinds, which tho' they may seem, as indeed they are, a little of the boldest, yet are agreeable to Nature, and true Elegance. As that of *Virgil*,

[59] *Insequitur nimbus peditum;*

A Storm of Foot succeeds.

And in another Place,

[60] —*It toto turbida cælo  
Tempestas telorum, & ferreus ingruit imber.*

An Iron Tempest, and a Storm of Darts  
Hovers aloft, and blackens all the Sky.

These lofty Metaphors, however, are to be used with great Judgment, for fear they should seem too far fetch'd, and the Style more swelling than weighty.

As I am now upon the Subject of Figures, I can't help making a Remark or two on those Books of Rhetorick that are usually read in Schools. They contain, indeed, many Things of Use, and worthy of Observation: But surely there's no Necessity that an Art designed for the Refinement of the Minds of Youth, should be treated of in so rough a Method, so full of dry, logical Definitions, as must be hard for Boys to understand, and much harder to remember. Nor is there any Need of all those Sub-divisions of Figures, one under another, which, when Boys have once made themselves Masters of, before they have Judgment enough to use them, they think their Business is to adorn their little Performances with these sort of Flowers, as they call them, and fling them in, at any Rate, without any Regard to Propriety: Their Style, by being thus overcharged, as it were, instead of appearing with fresh Vigour, abounds only with disagreeable Excrescencies. A Knowledge of these Things will be much better arrived at by Experience, than Precept: And every one that is conversant with the best Authors, that reads them with Understanding, and true Relish, cannot but be acquainted with all the Figures of Speech, and the Art of using them, tho' he never heard so much as their Names, or their Definitions.

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It is common with all Sorts of Writers to express the same Thing by different Modes of Speech, and such Variety is often reckoned a Proof of their Elegance. Now Poets have in this Particular a greater Liberty allow'd them, than any other Writers, for the Reason I have often mention'd, because their Works consist more in Ornament and Decoration. But the Exercise of this Liberty ought to be conducted with great Judgment and Caution; lest, by an ill Use of it, the Style grow too luxuriant. The just Medium, and the vicious Extreme, cannot be better learnt than by making a Comparison between *Virgil* and *Ovid*. Both of them, you'll see, express the same Thought different Ways; the one never fails of Beauty, the other falsly aims at it. *Ovid* tells you the very same Thing, in many Words, and sometimes with very little Difference between them: *Virgil* illustrates one Thing in *general*, by distinguishing its several Species or Adjuncts, and his Description of each is perfectly new. A few Examples, out of many, will make this plain. Says *Ovid*,

[61] *Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque littora ponto.*

For all was Sea, nor had the Sea a Shore. *Sandys*.

And in another Place,

[62] *O! ego quantum egi! quam vasta potentia nostra est!*

What Feats I've wrought! how mighty is my Pow'r!

And in the next Verse almost,

[63] —*Sic est mea magna potestas.*

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—So mighty is my Pow'r.

In the Sixth Book *Niobe* magnifying her own Happiness, and extolling herself above Measure, boasts thus,

[64] *Sum felix; quis enim negat hoc? felixque manebo;  
Hoc quoque quis dubitat? tutam me copia fecit.  
Major sum quam cui possit Fortuna nocere; &c.  
Excessere metum bona jam mea, &c.*

Thrice happy I, for who can that contest?  
Or who deny that I shall long be blest?  
By Plenty crown'd I dread no Change of Fate,  
Despise both Fortune's Friendship, and her Hate.  
My Bliss is plac'd above the Reach of Fear, &c.

But to omit other Instances, only take a View of *Narcissus* in the same Poet, desperately in Love with himself:

[65] *Cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse;  
Se cupit imprudens, & qui probat ipse probatur.  
Dumque petit, petitur; pariterque accendit & ardet: &c.  
Atque oculos idem qui decipit, incitat, error.*

By his own Flames consum'd the Lover lies,  
And gives himself the Wound by which he dies.  
*Addison.*

And afterwards, as if all he had done was nothing, he only changes the Person, and brings in *Narcissus* himself speaking thus:

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[66] *Ille ego sum, sensi; nec me mea fallit imago;  
Uror amore mei, flammæ moveoque, feroque;  
Quid faciam? rogem? ane rogem? quid deinde rogabo?  
Quod cupio mecum est; inopem me copia fecit.*

Ah! wretched me, I now begin, too late,  
To find out all the long perplex'd Deceit:  
It is myself I love, myself I see,  
The gay Delusion is a Part of me.  
I kindle up the Fires by which I burn,  
And my own Beauties from the Well return.  
Whom shou'd I court? how utter my Complaint?  
Enjoyment but produces my Restraint, }  
And too much Plenty makes me die for Want, }  
*Addison.*

Very justly may the last Words, with some small Alteration, be applied to *Ovid* himself, in whom a Fecundity of Words occasioned a Barrenness of Sense. How far is this from him, *qui nil molitur inepte*, who ne'er attempts a Thought in vain? *Virgil*, I mean, much better entitled, in my Opinion, to that Character, than he for whom *Horace* design'd it. With how much greater Propriety does that divine Poet express the same Thing in different Ways, where he describes the Manner of Grafting and Inoculating?

[67] *Et sæpe alterius ramos impune videmus  
Vertere in alterius; mutatamque insita mala  
Ferre pyrum, & prunis lapidosa rubescere corna.*

Oft too we see one Tree's ingrafted Sprays  
Change to another's, nor repent that Change.  
The Pear's hard Trunk with alien Apples bend:  
And on the Plumb's the stony Cornel grew.

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[68] *Inseritur vero ex foetu nucis arbutus horrida;  
Et steriles platani malos gessere valentes,  
Castaneæ fagos; ornusque incanuit albo  
Flore pyri, glandemque sues fregere sub ulmis.*

But with a Filberd's Twig the prickly Arbutus  
Is grafted: Oft the barren Plane has borne  
The ruddiest Apples: Chesnuts bloom'd on Beech,  
The wild Ash blossom'd with the Flow'rs of Pears,  
Snow-white; and Swine crack'd Acorns under Elms.

By this Comparison of *Ovid* and *Virgil*, how tedious seem the Trifles, and how nauseous the Repetitions of the former; how various the Description, how diffusive, and yet how chaste the

Elegance of the latter? The one with wonderful Art represents, as I said, the same Thing, or the same Thought, by different Species or Adjuncts; the other gives you the same Thing ten Times over, under the very same Species, by changing the Words only; from which superabundant Luxuriance, as his Style must needs want Nerves, so must his Readers Patience. I would not, however, condemn it throughout; he has many Passages that are worthy of Praise, and some, of *Virgil* himself. Of this Sort is that Description of the Fate of *Niobe's* Children:

[69] *E quibus Ismenos, qui matris sarcina quondam  
Prima suæ fuerat, certum dum flectit in orbem  
Quadrupedis cursus, spumantiaque ora coercet;  
Hei mihi! conclamat: medioque in pectore fixa  
Tela gerit, frœnisque manu moriente remissis,  
In latus à dextro paulatim defluit armo.*

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Of these *Ismenos*, who by Birth had been  
The first fair Issue of the fruitful Queen,  
Just as he drew the Rein, to guide his Horse  
Around the Compass of the circling Course,  
Sigh'd deeply, and the Pangs of Smart express'd,  
While the Shaft stuck engorg'd within his Breast:  
And the Reins dropping from his dying Hand,  
Gently he fell upon the yielding Sand.

*Croxall.*

But in many Places, it must be own'd, he is guilty of that Luxuriance I just now mention'd; I cannot, therefore, sufficiently wonder at their Ignorance, who presume to compare him to *Virgil*. But of this, perhaps, I shall have a more convenient Opportunity hereafter; when I make a farther Comparison between some other Authors. I beg Leave, at present, as I have cited a remarkable Place out of *Virgil's Georgics*, to present you with one or two more, that are no less deserving your Attention: I am sure, nothing can shew the Force and Elegance of the poetic Style, more than what that Model of Perfection has left us, even upon the plainest, and most ignoble Subject. Among his Precepts of Agriculture, he gives you these, in the following Words:

[70] *Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros,  
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.  
Sive inde occultas vires & pabula terræ  
Pinguia concipiunt; sive illis omne per ignem  
Excoquitur vitium, atque exudat inutilis humor:  
Seu plures calor ille vias, & cæca relaxat  
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua sucrus in herbas;  
Seu durat magis, & venas astringit hiantes, &c.*

Oft too it has been painful found, to burn  
The barren Fields with Stubble's crackling Flames.  
Whether from thence they secret Strength receive,  
And richer Nutriment: Or by the Fire  
All latent Mischief, and redundant Juice,  
Oozing sweats off; or whether the same Heat  
Opens the hidden Pores, that new Supplies  
Of Moisture may refresh the recent Blades:  
Or hardens more, and with astringent Force  
Closes the gaping Veins: &c.

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Nothing can exceed the Beauty of this Passage, unless that where he describes the various Methods of Grafting and Inoculating:

[71] *Nec modus inserere, atque oculos imponere simplex;  
Nam qua se medio trudent de cortice gemmæ,  
Et tenues rumpunt tunicas, augustus in ipso  
Fit nodo sinus; huc aliena ex arbore germen  
Includunt, udoque docent inolescere libro.  
Aut rursus enodes trunci reseantur, & alte  
Finditur in solidum cuneis via: deinde feraces  
Plantæ immittuntur; nec longum tempus, & ingens  
Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbor,  
Miraturque novas frondes, & non sua poma.*

Nor single is the Manner to ingraft,  
Or to inoculate. For where the Gems  
Bud from the middle Bark, and gently burst  
The filmy Coats; ev'n in the Knot is made  
A small Incision: From an alien Tree  
An Eye is here enclos'd, and taught to grow  
Congenial, blending with the humid Rind.  
Or else into the knotless solid Trunk

They force a Cleft with Wedges; then insert  
The fertile Sprigs: Nor long the Time; to Heav'n  
The Tree with loaden Branches shoots away,  
Admires new Leaves, and Apples not her own.

I hope I shall deserve your Pardon for producing these Examples; they are of no ordinary Nature, for that very Reason because their Subject is so. I know very well, how absurd it would be to repeat to you, upon this Head, all the beautiful Passages that occur in the best Poets: What else would this be, but to transcribe the greatest Part of them? But I thought it not improper to give you these Specimens from the *Georgics*, that you might view in them the Force of Poetry and *Virgil*, who was able to throw such a Splendor upon so mean Materials, and make them at once the Pleasure and Envy of Posterity.

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To shun the Repetition of the same Words, as much as possible, is a Precept not only applicable to Poets, but to all other Writers; because the same Sounds tire the Ears of the Reader. Here those Figures of Elegance, the *Epizeuxis* and *Anadiplosis*, are manifestly excepted. Some, however, out of a Detestation of this Fault, fall into a greater; and in their Zeal for Variety, by wresting Words from their natural Signification, are guilty of the very worst Fault in Writing, Obscurity. The best Writers never run into this Extreme, but chuse rather to repeat the same Words, than use others in an improper Sense, as may be seen very frequently in *Virgil*. It is probable, indeed, a Desire of Elegance first brought in a Diversity of Words; for if Convenience only were considered, each Conception of the Mind would have but a single Word appropriated to it: Whereas now, in learning a new Language, to our great Trouble we find many Words affixed to one Idea, or many Ideas to one Word. Nor is Disagreeableness of Sound to be avoided only in the Repetition of the same Words, but often (for the Rule does not always hold) in using different Words of the same Termination. As these in *Juvenal*:

—*tarda per densa cadavera prorâ.*

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'Tis certain, in poetical Compositions we ought to have great Regard to Harmony, and to endeavour to captivate the Ear, as well as please the Imagination of our Readers. For tho' nothing is more contemptible than *versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ, poor shallow Verse, mere bubbling Trifles*, that have no other Recommendation but Sound; yet they err, on the other Hand, who have a View only to the Sense, and none to the Musick that should echo to it. This was the Case of many of our Countrymen, of *Couley*, particularly, and others of the last Age; who, studious only for the Beauty of Thought, neglected, or did not rightly understand the Melody of Verse: Till at length our *Dryden* arose, who added to *English* Poetry what it only wanted, Numbers, Harmony, and Accuracy; by which Means, if we are not too partial in our Judgment of ourselves, it now bears the Laurel from all the Nations in *Europe*.

The best Poets among the Antients were solicitous about the Disposal of their Words, as well as the Choice of them. It is an Elegance, which, tho' often unobserved, pleases the Mind insensibly. And yet any one, with the least Attention, will perceive, that there's not a little Difference, whether the same Word is placed in one Part of a Verse, or another. How much, for Instance; would that of *Virgil*

*Admonet in somnis, & turbida terret imago*

suffer in the Change, if it were read,

—*& imago turbida terret!*

Various Examples there are, of this Sort, which it would be needless to alledge. But I would here observe, that the Harmony of Verse does not only consist in its being free from all Asperity, and flowing gently with one stedly Course: Some Asperity is often necessary; a Poem may labour for the Want of, and offend the Ears even with its Smoothness. Many, therefore, much wrong their Judgment, who prefer *Ovid*, *Claudian*, and others, to *Virgil*, on this Account; because, forsooth, they find less Roughness in their Verse: Whereas the very Want of this is their Defect; and *Virgil* does not more excel them in Versification, than in every other Requisite of a good Poet. He is generally harmonious, full, and fluent; and if he does not always keep one even Tenor, this is not owing to any Inability, but, as we observed before, in another Particular, the Effect of his Choice. He knew it would be more grateful to his Reader to change, now and then, the usual Smoothness of Style, and mix with it somewhat of an agreeable Harshness. His Periods, likewise, he concludes very variously; generally, indeed, where the Verse ends, but often in different Parts of it, with this Foot or that, as the Sound requires. In the Conduct of this Variety, of as small a Moment as it may seem, there's no little Labour, nor less Elegance. It is rarely aimed at by *Ovid*, *Claudian*, *Statius*, and the rest, who fall short of *Virgil* in that boasted Sweetness of Verse, whenever his Subject demands it of him. It is a great Mistake to think *Ovid*'s Negligence is a Matter of Merit, and that his Verses flow with the more Ease, for his Want of Care in their Composition; because, as it is urged, they are not so much the Effect of Study, as of Nature. Every Excellence in Writing must proceed from both; the more a Poem is laboured, the more natural it shall often seem; and its Stiffness may be owing to Neglect. To illustrate what I have said of *Virgil*, by one Example, out of many: In which of the above-mentioned Poets shall we find any Lines, I will not say that exceed in Harmony and Softness his Description of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*, but come near it? The whole is sweet; but nothing can be more so than the following Part of it.

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[72] *Illa quidem Stygia nabat jam frigida cymba:  
Septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine menses,  
Rupe sub aëria, deserti ad Strymonis undam,  
Flevisse, & gelidis hæc evolvisse sub antris,  
Mulcentem tigres, & agentem carmine quercus.  
Qualis populea mœrens Philomela sub umbra  
Amissos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator,  
Observans, nido implumes detraxit; at illa  
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen  
Integrat, & mœstis late loca questibus implet.*

She, shiv'ring, in the *Stygian* Sculler sail'd:  
He, sev'n whole Months, 'tis said, beneath a bleak  
Aerial Cliff, on *Strymon's* Desart Bank,  
Wept lonesome; and in freezing Caves revolv'd  
This mournful Tale; while crouding Oaks admir'd  
His Lays, and Tygers soften'd at the Sound.

As when, complaining in melodious Groans,  
Sweet *Philomel* beneath a Poplar Shade,  
Mourns her lost Young; which some rough Village Hind  
Observing, from their Nest, unfledg'd, has stole:  
She weeps all Night; and perch'd upon a Bough,  
With plaintive Notes repeated fills the Grove.

In reading these, and the like Passages, how naturally may we apply to the Poet, what he does to his *Daphnis*?

[73] *Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,  
Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per æstum  
Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.*

Such, heav'nly Poet, is thy Verse to me,  
As Slumbers to the Weary on the Grass;  
Such as fresh purling Rills, in Summer's Heat,  
To thirsty Travellers.

And again,

[74] *Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri,  
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam littora, nec quæ  
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.*

For neither does the Breeze  
Of whisp'ring *Zephyr*, when it rises fresh,  
Bless me so much: Nor Waves that beat the Shore;  
Nor Rivers, which thro' stony Vallies glide.

Whether it was from Chance, or Design, that these Verses, by their very Sound, represent the Thing they describe, is not worth enquiring. It is certain, some Words are so naturally formed for this Purpose, and Poetry for the proper Disposal of them, that this Felicity can't well be avoided; and 'tis to Chance alone we are often indebted for these beautiful Echo's. Sometimes, however, they are the undoubted Effect of Art. Whence soever they proceed, they frequently occur, and are an ample Proof of the Force and Elegance of the poetic Style. That of *Virgil* is well known, where we see the Ox knock'd down, and hear the Noise of his sudden Fall, and lumpish Weight,

[75] *Sternitur, exanimisque tremens procumbit humi bos.*

Down falls the Beast  
Dead, trembling, to the Ground.

In the same Book, in the Description of the Naval Course, we have the following Lines:

[76] *Ille inter navemque Gyæ scopulosque sonantes  
Radit iter lævum interior, subitusque priorem  
Præterit, & metis tenet æquora tuta relictis.*

He betwixt *Gyas*, and the sounding Rocks,  
Interior, skims the Left Hand Way, and swift  
Outstrips his Rival, and beyond the Goal  
Smooth shoots along, and gains the safer Seas.

What could better express the swift Motion with which the Ship brush'd by its Rival, and sail'd away clear of the Shelves, into the open Sea. In the last Verse, particularly, the Words seem with their Briskness to protrude one another, and skim away to the Goal. In another Part of the Description the same Image is thus represented:



[77] *Agmine remorum celeri, ventisque vocatis,  
Prona petit maria, & pelago decurrit aperto.*

With his rowing Crowd,  
And all the Winds invited to his Sails,  
Gains the prone Deep, and swiftly shoots away  
Upon the Ocean.

After this, follows that beautiful Comparison of the sailing of this Ship, and the Flight of the Dove, the Swiftmess and Evenness of which is thus most admirably express'd:

[78] —*Mox aëre lapsa quieto  
Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.*

Then smoothly gliding thro' the quiet Air,  
Skims the thin Way, nor moves her nimble Wings.

On the other Hand, how clearly do we see the dishonourable Tardiness with which the inglorious Ship drags on, after she had bulged upon the Rock?

[79] *Cum savo à scepulo multa vix arte revulsus,  
Amisissis remis, atque ordine debilis uno,  
Irrisam, sine honore, ratem Sergestus agebat.*

When with much Art and Pain,  
Torn from the cruel Rock his Oars half lost,  
And one Side maim'd, *Sergestus* tugg'd along  
His slow dishonour'd Skiff.

Can any Thing move slower than the Verse, or with greater Art? But what deserves all Admiration, or rather what exceeds it, is, the same Poet's Description of the Giants Attempt against Heaven, by heaping Mountain upon Mountain.

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[80] *Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum.*

Thrice they assay'd on *Pelion* to heave  
*Ossa*; on *Ossa* still more high to roll  
Woody *Olympus*.

How the Verse labours! *Conati imponere—Pelio Ossam*—Without any Elision of the Vowels, it moves on with Difficulty, and totters, as it were, with an unweildy Load, to represent to us the stupendous Image of the straining of the Giants. In the Words, *atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum*, there seems to be a Redundancy of Syllables, and we see in them the enormous Superstructure rise higher and higher, by one Layer of Mountains heaped upon another.

Since, then, it is the Nature of Poetry to express the Things it describes by the very Sound of the Verse; how little Share of the Spirit of it have they, who, by an unnatural Constraint, smother their Thoughts with Words that are dumb to the Sense? And yet this is a Fault many are guilty of; who will set before you a rapid Torrent in the slow Length of an *Alexandrine*; rural Pleasures, in Words that represent the Clangor of a Trumpet; the Din of War, with the soft and easy Strain of Elegy; the Triumphs of Love, with the rough and unpolish'd Address of a Clown; and debase this divine Art with a thousand such Contradictions. A Lover of *Virgil*, that reads him with Discernment, will never fall into these, and the like Enormities; for which Reason, 'tis from him I produced the several Examples that have illustrated each Part of this Dissertation. No one can have Reason to complain of their Number; for nothing else could have so display'd the hidden Charms of Poetry. Let me recommend it, therefore, to my young Audience, who are fired with the Love of so engaging an Art, to make him the Bent of all their Care and Application; let *Virgil* be often in your Hand, and never out of your Thoughts,

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*Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

Read him by Day, and meditate by Night.  
*Pope.*

It is a common Opinion, that those mutilated Verses that occur up and down in the *Æneis*, were left so by the Author out of Design, and to add a certain Beauty to his Style. I am rather inclined to think them the Marks of an imperfect Work, and that they would have been fill'd up by the Author, if he had put his last Hand to that divine Performance. It is an agreed Point, that the *Georgics* are more correct than the *Æneis*; now in them we don't find any of these Mutilations, and in the *Æneis* one that leaves the Sense imperfect. In a Place or two, indeed, some seeming Reason may be assign'd for this sudden breaking off; *viz.* to represent more naturally the Thing in Description. As in this:

**Sixth  
Lecture.**

[81] *Italiam non sponte sequor—*

Tho' even here, I would observe by the Way, the unalterable Resolution of *Aeneas*, and his abrupt leaving the Queen, might have been express'd as well, if his Speech had ended where it does now, and the Verse been continued on afterwards. It is certain, no good Account can be given of most of these *Hiatus's*; and therefore it is very difficult to find out the Elegance of them. There may be a Grace, possibly, in some seeming Defects; as in those false Quantities, which *Virgil* sometimes, but sparingly admits, to awaken in his Reader an Attention to the Rules of Poetry, by so becoming a Violation of them. But tho' a Lisp, a Mole, or a slight Cast of the Eye, may add new Beauties to the Beautiful, Lameness and Deformity never can.

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But whatever is the Determination concerning *Virgil* (for I would not be too peremptory in mine) modern Writers, and especially those of our own Country, take, undoubtedly, too great a Liberty in imitating him, who purposely leave many half Lines, both in their *English* and *Latin* Poems. This is often but an Indulgence of their Sloth; sometimes of their Want of Words, or of Wit; they leave part of a Verse, because they know not how to finish it; and sometimes, perhaps, it is owing to an Affectation of Elegance. To me, I must confess, these Gaps, in Reading, are always offensive; not to say absurd and ridiculous. But so it is, they receive a Sanction, it seems, from the Authority of *Virgil*. Allowing he left some designedly, it does not follow our Writers have a Pretence to the same Liberty. They shall have it in abundance, if they'll attempt another *Aeneis*. In the mean Time, I would have them consider a little the Difference between a Poetical Essay, and an Epic Poem; or if that be their Attempt, the Difference, still, between theirs and *Virgil's*.

Nor are they guilty of less Presumption, who, under the sacred Name of *Virgil*, arrogantly transgress the Laws of Quantity. In the Course of a long Work, that requires the greatest Nicety and Conduct, such a Liberty, when used with Caution and Modesty, is not only excuseable, but elegant: But what is this to our little poetical Businesses? In vain is *Virgil* here alledg'd, of all Authorities the greatest, or *Cæsura*, of all Figures the usefullest! 'Tis true, that immortal Poet uses this License sometimes, not only in the *Aeneis*, but in the *Georgics*, and even in the *Eclogues*: The Prince of Poets, and the great Arbitrer of Verse, might claim a discretionary Power of suspending the Laws of it, as he saw Occasion; but for us to invade his Prerogative, under Pretence of imitating his Example, is the same as if a Subject should usurp the Authority of a King, and justify himself by that very Authority. We are not, however, totally debarr'd this Liberty; nor yet indulg'd it in the same Degree with *Virgil*; much less ought we to extend it beyond him.

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Scarce any Thing is of greater Difficulty, or Moment, in the poetic Style, than the true Use of Epithets. Nothing loads a Poem, or tires the Reader more, than too great a Redundancy of them. Now they are always redundant, unless their Substantives receive from them either new Ideas, or some Illustration and Ornament too of their own. And yet with the Observation of these Rules, it is possible they may be redundant, that is, a Poem may be clogg'd with too many of them. I shall lay before you some Examples of both Kinds of Epithets; and shall take Care to make Choice of such as may not only illustrate the Point before us, but many other Beauties of the poetic Style.

Of the former Sort of Epithets, that add new and distinct Ideas to their Substantives, the following Verses will furnish many. In *Virgil's* most admirable Description of the Plague raging among the Cattle, in the third Book of the *Georgics*, we have these Lines:

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[82] *Sæpe in honore Deum medio stans hostia ad aram,—  
Inter cunctantes cecidit moribunda ministros.*

Oft standing at the Altar, and with Wreaths,  
And woolly Fillets bound, the Victim Bull,  
In the mid Honour of the Gods, fell dead  
Between the ling'ring Sacrificer's Hands.

And a few Lines after:

[83] *Labitur infelix studiorum, atque immemor herbæ  
Victor equus.—*

Unhappy of his Toils, the Victor Steed  
Sinks, and forgets his Food.

Again:

[84] *Tum vero ardentis oculi, atque attractus ab alto  
Spiritus, interdum gemitu gravis; imaque longo  
Iliā singultu tendunt; it naribus ater  
Sanguis, & obsessas fauces premit aspera lingua.*

His Eyes are all inflam'd; from his deep Breast  
His Breath with Labour heaves; long Sobs and Groans  
Distend his Entrails: From his Nostrils drops  
Black rosy Gore, and to his Jaws his Tongue  
Clotted with Filth, and Putrefaction, cleaves.

Afterwards:

[85] *Ecce! autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus  
Concidit, & mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem,  
Extremosque ciet gemitus: it tristis arator,  
Mœrentem abjungens fraterna morte juvencum,  
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.*

Smoking beneath the Plough the sturdy Steer  
Falls down, and spues a Flood of Gore and Foam,  
And groans his last: The pensive Hind unyokes  
His mourning Fellow Lab'rer, and amidst  
Th' unfinish'd Furrow leaves the sticking Share.

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In the foremention'd Description of the Fate of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*:

[86] *Illa, quis & me, inquit, miseram, & te perdidit, Orpheu?  
Quis tantus furor? en! iterum crudelia retro  
Fata vocant, conditque natantia lumina somnus.  
Jamque vale; feror ingenti circumdata nocte,  
Invalidasque tibi tendens, heu! non tua, palmas.*

She; Who, my *Orpheus*, who  
Has Me unfortunate and Thee undone?  
What Fury This? Again the cruel Fates  
Remand me back; Sleep seals my swimming Eyes.  
And now Farewel: With Darkness round enclos'd  
I flit away; and vainly stretch to Thee  
(Ah! now no longer Thine) these helpless Hands.

In these Examples there are only two Epithets, *viz. ater* and *duro*, the second Sort of which I shall speak of presently. But the rest, you may observe, as in *cunctantes ministros, equus infelix studiorum, ardentis oculi, aspera lingua, defixa aratra, &c.* add a new Idea, quite distinct from the general Nature of the Substantive, and rising from the special Adjuncts and Circumstances of the Thing described.

The second Sort of Epithets are those, that are not so distant from the general Nature of the Substantives, and yet not perfectly coincident with it; but bring with them Light and Ornament, tho' not new Ideas. As in the abovemention'd Description of *Virgil*:

[87] — *Timidi damæ, cervique fugaces,  
Nunc interque canes, & circum tecta vagantur.*

Now the tim'rous Hinds and Deer  
Among the Dogs, and round the Houses, rove.

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And in the first *Æneid*:

[88] *Nimborum in patriam, loca fœta furentibus Austris,  
Æoliam venit; hic vasto rex Æolus antro  
Luctantes ventos, tempestatesque sonoras  
Imperio premit.—*

The Goddess to *Æolia* comes,  
The Land of Storms, where struggling Gusts of Air  
Engender: Here, in his capacious Cave,  
Great *Æolus* with absolute Command  
Controls, imprisons, and confines in Chains,  
The noisy Tempests, and reluctant Winds.

In *timidi damæ, cervi fugaces*, and *tempestates sonoras*, the Epithets we see are of near Affinity with the Substantives; for they express some Adjuncts, or Properties, which are always inherent in them. Therefore are of a different Kind from *tristis arator, natantia lumina, invalidas palmas*, and the rest above cited, that exhibit Ideas totally distinct from the universal Nature of the Subject, and agree with it only *pro hic & nunc*, as the Schoolmen speak. The Epithets of this distinct Kind entertain the Mind with a more agreeable Variety; but those of the other require, perhaps, more Care and Judgment in the proper Choice of them: For tho' they border upon the general Nature of their Substantives, expressing, as we said, some of their inherent Qualities; yet, we likewise observed, they don't perfectly coincide with them, but express an Idea somewhat different, and yet not totally so. These Expressions, for Instance, the *fearful Deer*, and the *loud Tempests*, are not like those Absurdities we shall have Occasion hereafter to expose; such as *burning Fire, cold Ice*, which are but other Words for *hot Heat*, and *cold Cold*; but represent to us some *special*, and less *essential* Adjuncts of their Substantives; and therefore are not to be indiscriminately used upon every Occasion, but then only, when they are agreeable to the Nature of the Subject. For Instance, because *Virgil* has said, the *fearful Deer*, and *flitting Stags*, it by no means follows that these Epithets are always applicable, whenever *Stags* or *Deer* shall happen to

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be mention'd. In the Place he used them, they were proper, because the Wonder of what he was describing turn'd wholly upon the Circumstance they describe, *viz.* that the Plague, which was common to all the Beasts, brought them all to such an Equality and Unanimity, that even those that were by Nature *fearful*, and formed for *Flight*, associated with such as lived upon Rapine and Slaughter. So, again, because the same Author has *Luctantes ventos, tempestatesque sonoras*, we are not to conclude we may use the same Epithets, with the same Words, at any Time. He made Choice of them to remind his Reader of the Difficulty of *Æolus's* Province to restrain the Impetuosity of the boisterous Winds.

Upon this Occasion, I cannot but think, the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, and other Books of that Stamp, no small Prejudice to Learners. Here Boys meet with Heaps of undistinguish'd Epithets, and synonymous Words, before they are come to Maturity of Judgment to make a proper Choice of them; and consequently blindly pick out such as the *Hiatus* of the Verse requires, with little Regard to Sense, and less to Propriety and Elegance. By relying upon these Helps, they give themselves up to Sloth, their Ideas are confounded, and their Judgments corrupted. The Patrons of these sort of Books have nothing to urge in their Defence, but that by facilitating the Scholar's Pains, they allure him to that Study, which he would otherwise have declined, on account of its Difficulty. But, before these Helps were thought of, Poetry was in as flourishing a Condition as in our Time; and it seems much more adviseable for the Boys to receive all proper Assistances from their Master, or School-fellows, than from these *Fasciculi*. To banish them from the Schools, would only have this Consequence; that it would put the Youth upon reading the best Poets, in order to whet their Imagination, and ripen their Judgment. If these Books are to any allowable, let them be indulged, not to Boys, but to confirm'd Poets, who have Judgment enough to select proper Words out of them. But to these such childish Helps are contemptible. All Things, therefore, consider'd, it would be no Disadvantage to Poetry, if the *Gradus ad Parnassum, Flores Poetarum, Elegantiæ Poeticæ*, and the other *Thesaurus's* of this Nature, were committed to the Flames, or for ever buried in Oblivion. But to return:

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There are other Epithets, of so *general* a Nature, that in all *poetical Descriptions* they are *always* applicable to their Substantives, and yet are different from those I just now mention'd, that *perfectly coincide* with them. As in *Virgil*:

[89] *Jamque rubescebat radiis mare, & æthere ab alto  
Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis.*

And now the Ocean redden'd with the Rays;  
And in her rosy Car the blushing Morn  
Shone from the Sky.

And in *Ovid*:

[90] —*Ecce! vigil nitido patefecit ab ortu  
Purpureas Aurora fores, & plena rosarum  
Atria.*—

Soon as the Morn, in orient Purple drest,  
Unbarr'd the Portals of the roseate East.

*Pope, Odys. IV. 411.*

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The Epithets, *lutea, roseis, vigil, purpureas, &c.* may always be used, in the Description of a bright Morning: And the same Thing may be observ'd of general Descriptions of the Night, the four Seasons of the Year, and the like.

There are others, again, of a middle Kind between the two Sorts of Epithets I have above laid down; which tho' they do not add to their Subjects *distinct Ideas*, yet are *much farther off* from the general Nature of them, than these I have here mention'd. Of this Sort are the following in the foremention'd Description of the Plague among the Cattle.

[91] *Hinc læti vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,  
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt.*

In ev'ry Pasture, on the verdant Grass,  
The Calves all die, and render their sweet Souls  
Before the plenteous Racks.

And again:

[92] *Non umbræ aliorum nemorum, non mollia possunt  
Prata movere animum; non qui per saxa volutus  
Purior electro campum petit amnis.*

No Shades of Groves, no grassy Meads can move  
His Soul; nor Streams, which rolling o'er the Stones,  
Purer than Crystal, glide along the Fields.

In general it is true, but not always, that Herbs are *joyful*, Meadows *soft*, Rivers *pure*, and the Breath of Calves sweet.

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These are the general Rules, and such as are rarely or never to be transgress'd, in the Choice of Epithets: But to insert them only to fill up a Verse, when they are entirely idle and useless, and the Description is neither advanced, heightened, or illustrated by them, is the greatest Fault almost a Writer can be guilty of. From hence the Style is *barren* and *jejune*; the Sense *relax'd* and *enervated*. And yet this Fault, great as it is, not only Boys, but some even of the Ancients, and many of our modern Writers, run into. *Buchanan*, in his Paraphrastical Version of the Psalms, has these Verses:

[93] *Dum procul à patria, mœsti, Babylonis in oris,  
Fluminis ad liquidas forte sedemus aquas.*

Two Lines after he goes on thus:

*Flevimus, & gemitus luctantia verba repressit,  
Inque sinus liquidæ decidit imber aquæ.*

We had no Occasion to be reminded *once*, much less *twice* in the Compass of five Verses, that *Water* was *liquid*; 'tis a Circumstance that served as little for the Information of the Reader, as for the Illustration of what the Poet was describing. *Ovid* is often guilty this Way; as in the following Verse:

[94] *Equæ sagittifera prompsit duo tela pharetra.*

Two fatal Shafts  
Forth from his *Arrow-bearing* Quiver drew.

To produce more Instances, would be needless: One small Scruple, I confess, arises to me upon this Head, from observing that *Horace* and *Virgil* seem to use some few of these redundant Epithets; and 'twas for this Reason I said above, the Rule I had laid down ought *rarely* or *never* to be violated. But whatever we determine concerning those great Authorities (for I know not how to impeach them) it is certain they very sparingly allow themselves this Liberty; and the Writers, perhaps, of that Age, paid so great a Veneration to *Homer*, that they sometimes affected even to imitate his Faults. Notwithstanding, therefore, this Exception, (and what Rule is without one?) I may venture to affirm, that the Laws I proposed, in relation to Epithets, ought punctually to be observed. It is farther to be noted, that the Words *meus*, *tuus*, and *suus*, (which are not properly Epithets) are often brought into a Verse out of Idleness, only to fill it up, and make it flat and languid. Thus *Ovid*, in the Story of *Phaeton*,

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[95] — *Balænarumque prementem  
Ægæona suis immania terga lacertis.*

*Himself Ægæon* with his Hand *does* guide  
A Whale's enormous Bulk.

[96] *Tum pater ora sui sacro medicamine nati  
Contigit.—*

Then o'er his *own* Son's Face a Tincture pours.

And afterwards:

[97] *Vixque suis humeris candentem sustinet axem.*

In the pentameter Verse these Pronouns, it is well known, are remarkably serviceable to constitute the last Foot; but it is one of the poorest Expedients that can be thought of!

I said that *Homer's* Faults were, perhaps, studiously imitated by the best Writers; for if *Homer* may at this Time of Day be criticized upon, it would be hard to assign a Reason for the Frequency of his Epithets, many of which are insignificant and superfluous, or to shew wherein consists the Elegance of these sort of Expressions, and innumerable others of the like Nature, that occur up and down in him<sup>[98]</sup>.

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— — θοή παρά νηί μελαιτη.  
θίν' ἐφ' ἀλός πολιής, ἔρώων ἐπί ὄνοπα πόντου.

Sad retiring to the sounding Shore,  
O'er the wild Margin of the Deep he hung.  
*Pope.*

— λευχώλενο; Ἡρη, white arm'd *Juno*  
— βώτις πότνια Ἡρη, her full-ey'd Majesty.

These are Difficulties I only propose, not presuming to assert any Thing against the ancientest, and almost the Prince of Poets.

On the other Hand, they are under no less an Error, that will admit only of *very few Epithets*,

and arrogantly banish the Use of them. It is certain, they are not only wonderfully adapted to Description, but so peculiarly to Poetry, that the Beauty of its Style chiefly consists in them. They exhibit to the Mind Ideas of *Qualities in the Concrete*, (as the Logicians speak) which strike the Imagination no less than those that are express'd in the *Abstract*. 'Tis plain, from what appears above, that the Writings of the best Poets are full of them, and particularly *Virgil's*. But tho' the Examples already alleg'd might seem sufficient, yet I beg Leave to add a very remarkable one, where every Substantive has its proper Epithet, to heighten and adorn the Sense. The Passage I mean is at the Beginning of the celebrated Description of the Infernal Shades:

[99] *Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus orci,  
Luctus, & ultrices posuere cubilia  
Curæ; Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,  
Et Metus, & malesuada Fames, & turpis Egestas,  
(Terribiles visu formæ!) Letumque, Laborque,  
Tum consanguineus leti Sopor, & mala mentis*

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*Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum;  
Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, & Discordia demens,  
Vipereos crines vittis innexa cruentis.  
In medio ramos annosaque brachia pandit  
Ulmus opaca, ingens; quam sedem somnia vulgo  
Vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus hærent.*

Just in the Entrance and first Jaws of Hell,  
Grief and revengeful Cares their Couches plac'd;  
And pale Diseases, querulous old Age,  
Fear, ill-persuading Hunger, and foul Want;  
(Forms dreadful to behold) and Death, and Pain;  
And Sleep akin to Death; the Mind's false Joys;  
The Furies Iron Bed; and Discord wild,  
Her vip'rous Locks with bloody Fillets bound.  
Full in the midst a tall and dusky Elm  
Displays its Boughs, and aged Limbs: This Seat  
(Such is the Fame) fantastick Dreams possess,  
And stick beneath the Leaves.—

We meet with but few Lines of this Poet free from Epithets; many have two, and some three: Nay, sometimes 'tis the Height of Elegance to join more to the same Substantive, without a Conjunction between: As,

[100] *Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens.—*

An Eyeless Monster, hideous, vast deform!

[101] *—Loricam ex ære rigentem,  
Sanguineam, ingentem.—*

The Corslet stiff with Brass,  
Sanguine, immense.

A Style, therefore, destitute of Epithets, will gain no more Admirers, than a Body made up of nothing but Nerves and Bones: And as the Beauty of this consists in not being too much emaciated, nor yet over-charged with Flesh; so does that of the other in a just Proportion of these sort of Adjuncts, when they are neither wanting, nor too much abound. Verbs and Substantives I suppose to be in Style, what Bones and Nerves are in a Body; because they contain more Strength, tho' not more Beauty than Epithets; which therefore, whenever Emphasis and Energy is required, are totally omitted. Thus *Virgil*:

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[102] *Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, & te quoque dignum  
Finge Deo.—*

Dare to scorn Wealth, brave Guest; presume thyself  
Worthy to emulate a God.

And again:

[103] *Est hic, est animus lucis contemptor, & istum  
Qui vita bene credit emi, quo tendis, honorem.*

Here too, here dwells a Soul that with Contempt  
Regards this vital Air, and thinks with Life  
That Fame well bought, to which thy Soul aspires.

And at the Conclusion of that admirable Description of *Æneas's* Shield made by *Vulcan*, thus the divine Poet closes his eighth Book:

[104] *Talia per clypeum Vulcani, dona parentis,  
Miratur, rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet,  
Attollens humero famamque & fata nepotum.*

Such Figures on the broad *Vulcanian* Shield,  
His Mother's Gift, the Hero pleas'd admires  
In Ignorance; and on his Shoulder high  
Upheaves the Fame and Fortune of his Race.

The last Verse is express'd with all the Strength and Weight imaginable, because without one Epithet. The Reason of this Effect seems to be, that Ideas in the *Concrete* are no more than Adjuncts of those in the *Abstract*; now that which supports, must needs be stronger than what is supported. To the same Purpose, when this is our Aim, all synonymous Expressions must be avoided; for the shorter and closer the Style, the stronger; but the Matter of it, by being spread among a Variety of Words, is thinned, and, consequently, weakened. The Poet, no doubt, is indulg'd much more in Epithets and Synonyma's, than the Orator; his Province consisting more peculiarly in Colouring, Description and Decoration. But both of them ought to take Care that these musical and bewitching Elegances are not too redundant; for a Style, whether in Prose or Verse, cannot be attended with a greater Fault than a verbose Luxuriance.

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Some, thro' Ignorance of what an *Epithet* is, may be apt in their Reading to make a wrong Enumeration of them; for all *Adjectives* and *Participles* do not (as many think) come under this Appellation, but those only which are annex'd to Substantives, by way of *Ornament* and *Illustration*; not such as make up the essential Part of the Description. In the following Lines of *Virgil*,

[105] *Diverso interea miscentur mœnia luctu;  
Et magis atque magis (quanquam secreta parentis  
Anchisæ domus, arboribusque obtecta recessit)  
Clarescunt sonitus, armorumque ingruit horror.*

Mean while, with Cries confus'd the Walls resound:  
And tho' my Father's Palace, fenc'd with Trees,  
Stood from the Hurry of the town retir'd;  
The Noise grows loud, and th' undistinguish'd Din  
Of clashing Arms rolls near.

there is not an Epithet; neither *diverso*, *secreta*, or *obtecta*, comes under that Denomination, but are Adjectives or Participles of the other Kind.

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We come now to enumerate the different Kinds of Style made use of by Poets, and to shew briefly wherein they consist, and to what sort of Verse and Subject each is suitable. To begin, then, with that which is first in Dignity, and therefore ought to be so in Place; the *sublime*, I mean, whose Property it is to express lofty Ideas in no vulgar Strain, but with Words sonorous, pompous, and majestic. This Style is, in the first Place, proper for the Epic Poem; in the next, to some sort of Odes; after that, to Tragedy; then to the severer kind of Satire; and, in short, to all Poems of less Note, that partake of the Heroic, or the Buskin. There are others that make Excursions into it, such as the *Georgics*, and all of the Didactic, or Philosophical Kind, whenever they digress into a more noble Field of Matter, to which their Subject sometimes naturally leads them. But to Comedy, the lower kind of Satire, and Pastoral, it is never agreeable; to Elegy very seldom. In behalf of the first of these, that Place of *Terence* will be urged, which *Horace* seems to have had in his View, when he says,

**Seventh  
Lecture.**

[106] *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit.*

Yet Comedy sometimes may raise her Voice.  
*Rosc.*

But this Rage of *Chremes*, which *Horace* mentions, is not, perhaps, so much an Instance of a Comic Sublime, as of a borrowed Tragic Fury. In relation to Pastoral, if *Virgil's* fourth Eclogue be objected, I answer, that the Poet himself confesses he leaves his proper Subject for a more lofty one, and begins his Poem with a sort of an Apology for it:

*Sicelides Musæ, paulo majora canamus;  
Non omnes arbusta juvant, humilesque myricæ.*

*Sicilian* Muses, raise a loftier Strain;  
Not all in Groves and lowly Shrubs delight.

Not that I suppose Pastoral totally to reject the Sublime, as I shall have Occasion to shew more fully hereafter.

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For the present, I suppose, it will suffice to produce one or two Instances, out of innumerable, of the Style we are upon. In the second *Æneid*, *Venus*, shewing her Son what Gods were united for the Destruction of *Troy*, gives us this Specimen of it:

[107] *Non tibi Tyndaridis facies invisæ Lacænæ,*

*Culpatusve Paris; Divûm inclementia, Divûm,  
Has evertit opes, sternitque à culmine Trojam.*

'Tis not *Tyndarian Helen's* hated Form,  
Nor much blam'd *Paris*; Heav'n, inclement Heav'n  
O'erturns this Realm, and levels tow'ring *Troy*.

And a little after:

[108] *Hic ubi disjectas moles, avulsaque saxis  
Saxa vides, mistoque undantem pulvere fumum;  
Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti  
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à sedibus urbem  
Eruit; hic Juno Scæas sævissima portas  
Prima tenet, sociumque furens à navibus agmen  
Ferro accincta vocat.  
Jam summas arces Tritonia (respice) Pallas  
Insedit, nimbo effulgens, & Gorgone sæva.  
Ipse Pater Danais animos, viresque secundas  
Sufficit, ipse Deos in Dardana suscitât arma.*

Here, where you see that Rubbish, Heaps confus'd,  
Stones wrench'd from Stones, and thick redounding Smoke  
Blended with Clouds of Dust; great *Neptune* shakes  
The Walls, and with his massy Trident heaves  
The City from its deep Foundations. There  
Relentless *Juno*, girt with Steel, has seiz'd  
The *Scæan* Gates; and raging from their Ships  
Calls her confed'rate Forces.  
Next (that Way bend thy Eyes) the lofty Tow'rs  
*Tritonian Pallas* has possess'd; there sits,  
With her dire *Gorgon*. In a beamy Cloud,  
Effulgent *Jove* himself the *Grecian* Troops  
With Courage, and new Strength supplies; himself  
Excites the Gods against the *Dardan* Arms.

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Again, a few Lines after:

[109] *Dixerat; & spissis noctis se condidit umbris.  
Apparent diræ facies, inimicaque Trojæ  
Numina magna Deum.*

She said; and in th'involving Shades retir'd:  
The direful Shapes appear, and Foes to *Troy*,  
Forms of the awful Gods.

And in the last Book, the Poet thus introduces *Æneas* going to engage with *Turnus*:

[110] *At pater Æneas, audito nomine Turni,  
Deserit & muros, & summas deserit arces;  
Præcipitatque moras omnes, opera omnia rumpit,  
Lætitia exultans, horrendumque intonat armis.*

But Prince *Æneas*, hearing *Turnus's* Name,  
Forsakes the Walls, forsakes the lofty Tow'rs,  
Breaks all Delay, all other Toil; with Joy  
Exults; and thunders terrible in Arms.

Instances of this Style fill every Page, almost, of the *Æneis*; and in the Odes of *Horace* are very frequent;

[111] *Justum & tenacem propositi virum,  
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
Non vultus instantis Tyranni,  
Mente quatit solida; neque Auster  
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,  
Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus:  
Si fractus illabatur orbis,  
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.*

The Man whose Principles are true,  
In Heart resolv'd to act aright,  
Nor impious Faction's madding Crew,  
Nor frowning Tyrant can affright;  
Unshaken, like a Tow'r he stands, and braves  
The Impotence of great or little Slaves.

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The Elements may war around,  
Fierce Winds may rave, huge Billows roll,  
*Jove's* Lightning flash, his Thunder sound,  
And shock the World—but not his Soul:  
He Nature's Wreck can view, without Surprise,  
Amidst the shining Ruin of the Skies.

*T. Hare.*

*v. g. Claudian*, tho' his Style is frequently too swelling, and borders upon the Bombast, yet often hits upon the true Sublime: Thus in the celebrated Description of the Victory which the Emperor *Theodosius* gained, by the Advantage of the Winds:

[112] *Te propter, gelidis Aquilo de monte procellis  
Obruit adversas acies, revolutaque tela  
Vertit in autores, & turbine reppulit hastas.  
O! nimium dilecte Deo; cui fundit ab antris  
Æolus armatas hyemes, cui militat æther,  
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

For thee the friendly North in social Show'rs,  
Wide o'er the hostile Troops his Fury pours.  
To their launch'd Jav'lins points a backward Road,  
And Storms retort the missive Deaths they vow'd.  
Great *Jove* for thee, thou Heav'n's peculiar Care!  
Sends forth his wing'd Militia of the Air.  
Confed'rate Seasons round thy Standards join,  
And mustering Winds attend thy Trumpet's Sign.

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Between the Sublime of *Virgil* and *Claudian* there's a manifest Difference; the Ideas of the latter are not so just, nor the Diction so pure: He can only be said to be less faulty, when he writes best.

'Tis a remarkable Property of this Style, to be bold and figurative; to abound, especially, with Metaphors and Hyperboles; the Use of which requires great Care and Judgment. It is distinguish'd, on the one Hand, from the turgid, rumbling Bombast, which is much affected by those who are possess'd with a false Spirit of Poetry, and no true Judgment to direct it; and consists either of empty sounding Words, or unnatural Sentences, or absurd Metaphors, or rash Hyperbole's. There are innumerable Examples of it in *Claudian*; *v. g.*

[113] *Sol, qui flammigeris mundum complexus habenis,  
Volvis inexhausto redeuntia secula motu,  
Sparge diem meliore coma; crinemque repexi  
Blandius elato surgant temone jugales,  
Efflantes roseum frænis spumantibus ignem.*

Light of the Spheres, that with unwearied Ray  
On flaming Harness roll'st the golden Day,  
Undrain'd and sprightly seest fresh Seasons born,  
With softer Tresses shed this fatal Morn.  
Let thy hot Coursers spring with sleeker Manes,  
And rosy Fires breath o'er the foaming Reins.

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In another Place:

[114] —*compage soluta  
Fulgidus umbrosa miscebitur axis Averno.*

Dissolv'd the Fabrick of the World,  
The Sun's bright Axis in *Avernus* hurl'd.

And again:

[115] —*Clypeus nos protegat idem,  
Unaque pro gemino desudet cardine virtus.*

One Shield shall us protect,  
And for its double Charge one Safeguard sweat.

So *Statius*, in the very Beginning of his *Sylvæ*:

[116] *Quæ super imposito moles geminata Colosso  
Stat Latium complexa forum, &c.*

This Mass, on which the great Colossus rides,  
The Forum with a wide Embrace bestrides.

To omit others, thus *Casimire*:

[117] —*Currite candidis*  
*Horæ quadrigis.*

With snowy Steeds, ye nimble Hours, fly.

In another Place:

[118] *Anni nubibus insident,*  
*Incertis equitant lustra Favoniis,*  
*Cæco secula turbine.*

Years ride on Clouds,  
About uncertain Zephyrs Lustrums play,  
And on black Whirlwinds Ages die away.

There are many other Instances of this kind in the same Poet; who seems to have been peculiarly delighted with this hard and unnatural Way of Writing.

The *Sublime*, on the other Hand, is distinguished from the *Humble*; which has its Elegance as it is used in its proper Place. It is proper, when we would describe, in a familiar and easy Manner, the common Concerns of Life; and agrees more especially with Comedy, the lower kind of Satire, and Epistles; and, as Occasion serves, may be admitted in all Sorts of Poems. Instances of it are very numerous:

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[119] *Qui, fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem*  
*Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit, illa*  
*Contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentes?*

Whence comes, my Lord, this gen'ral Discontent?  
Why do all loath the State that Chance hath sent,  
Or their own Choice procur'd? But fondly bless  
Their Neighbours Lots, and praise what they possess.  
*Creech.*

[120] *Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camæna,*  
*Spectatum satis, & donatum jam rude quæris,*  
*Mæcenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo.*  
*Non eadem est ætas, non mens, &c.*

My Lord, *Mæcenas*, whom I gladly chuse,  
The first, and the last Subject of my Muse;  
Tho' I have fought enough, and well before,  
And now dismiss, have Leave to fight no more;  
You strive to bring me on the Stage again:  
My Age is not alike, unlike my Brain.  
*Creech.*

It is needless to add any more: *Terence's* Comedies, and *Horace's* Satires and Epistles, consist entirely almost of this Style, and are abundant Proof of its Elegance.

The Style of Pastorals is likewise of the humble Kind, but still distinct from what I have now been instancing in. The one, as I said, is suited to Comedy, Satire, and Epistles; the other to Bucolics: The former represents common Life, and more especially as it appears within the City; the latter draws all its Images from the Country; that looser and freer, this sweeter and more elaborate. But of these Things more hereafter, when we come to treat of this delightful Species of Poetry separately. At present let it be observ'd, that there is a middle Kind of Style between the Sublime and the Humble, suitable to every Branch of Poetry. This of *Ovid* is a Specimen of it:

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[121] *Arma gravi numero, violentaque tela parabam*  
*Edere, materia conveniente modis.*  
*Par erat inferior versus; risisse Cupido*  
*Dicitur, atque unum surripuisse pedem.*  
*Quis tibi, sæve Puer, dedit hoc in carmina juris?*  
*Pieridum vates, non tua turba, sumus.*

Whilst I to sing in lofty Verse prepare,  
The bloody Triumphs of destructive War,  
The Urchin *Cupid* mock'd my rash Design,  
And stole one Foot from each alternate Line.  
But who, my Boy, gave thou this great Command?  
We are the Muses, not the Lovers Band.

Innumerable are the Instances of this middle Style among the Poets, especially in *Virgil's Georgics*, which are chiefly writ in that Way. For it is to be particularly observ'd, that, because the Matter of a Poem is low, it by no means follows the Thoughts and Diction must be so too, and

that there's no necessary Connexion between a common Subject and a vulgar Style. To prescribe Rules for Sowing, Harvest, and other Matters of Husbandry, is a slight Subject, but not therefore to be treated with the Unpoliteness of a Clown. Tho' the Poem be preceptive in its Nature, it may be elegant in its Manner; it may be employ'd upon Things of small Moment, yet they may be cloath'd with Ornament, and heighten'd by Description. But Comedy, and the looser kind of Satire, as they regard only the Manners of Men in common Life, are chiefly adapted to the low Style.

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It then becomes faulty, when any Thing of a sublime Nature, at least above the common Level, is introduced with some low creeping Expression. Thus *Ovid*, where he speaks of the Council of the Gods:

[122] —*tenuere silentia cuncti.*

The great Immortals held their Tongues.

And describing *Phaeton* run away with by the Horses of the Sun:[123]

[124] *Succutiturque alte, similisque est currus inani.*

The Driver thrown, the Car as empty flies.

[125] *Nec scit qua sit iter, nec si sciat, imperet illis.*

Nor knows the Way, nor, if he knew, could guide.

And in the fourth Book, after he had described the Interview between *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* well enough,

[126] *Ad nomen Thisbes oculos jam morte gravatos  
Pyramus erexit,—*

His swimming Eyes he rais'd at *Thisbe's* Name.

he thus miserably concludes the Verse:

—*visaque recondidit illa.*

And having seen her, clos'd them up again.

In another Place,

[127] *Sensit abesse dolos, numerumque accessit ad harum.*

All safe she found, and join'd herself to them.

In the seventh Book:

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[128] —*agisque  
Carminibus grates, & Diis auctoribus horum.*

You secret Transports on your Charms bestow,  
And on the Gods, the Authors of them, too.

Nothing can be more palpable than the Absurdities I have here produced: In *Ovid* they are almost unpardonable, who, as he wanted not Genius, must needs have fallen into them thro' gross Inadvertency and Supineness.

There's another Species of Style, called the *Sarcastical* and *Invective*, suited, as Reason will tell us, more peculiarly to Satire. But we shall no where find a more lively Instance of it than in *Virgil*:

[129] *Cantando Tu illum? aut unquam tibi fistula cera  
Juncta fuit? non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas  
Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?*

Thou him in piping! Had'st thou e'er a Pipe  
Jointed with Wax?. Wert thou not wont, thou Dolt,  
In the Cross-ways, upon a screeching Straw  
To murder a vile Tune with viler Notes?

Here, it is plain, the Mordacity lies in the Expression more than the Thought; which is no more than that the Shepherd mention'd was a miserable Piper; but the Words are emphatically cutting, *in triviis, stridenti, miserum, stipula, disperdere*; each of which is arm'd with Poignancy, and dresses out the Image with fresh Ridicule. On the other Hand, sometimes the Invective turns wholly upon the Thought; as in another Verse of *Virgil*:

[130] *Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi.*

Who hates not *Bavius*, be he doom'd to love  
Thy Metre, *Mævius*!

A keener Satire cannot be conceived; but the Force of it consists in the Sense only; the Words, considered separately, have nothing of that Kind in them. The former, therefore, is the proper Instance of the Invective Style; because in the Style the whole Invective is contained. It may justly be wonder'd that I should fetch Examples of the *Style* and *Thought* of Satire, from a Poet endow'd by Nature with the sweetest Disposition, and led by his Subject to a very different Way of Writing: But he had a Genius so adapted to every Thing, that he could write Satire in spite of his own good Nature. These Examples are a sufficient Proof, that if he had turn'd his Thoughts that Way, he would have gain'd the Laurel from all other Competitors; and I must ingenuously confess, that, in my Mind, *Juvenal* himself has nothing more severe than this *Virgilian* Acrimony.

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The *Florid* Style is set off with Tropes, Figures, and especially Metaphors. The Use and Abuse of these, I have already spoke of; to avoid Repetition, therefore, I would here only observe, That all Sorts of Poems admit of figurative Expressions, and receive fresh Ornament from them, when the Subject requires them, and Judgment is used in the Choice of them; but that this Style is suitable, in the first Place, to the sublimer Kind of *Ode*, and, in the next, to the *Epic* Poem.

A Style, likewise, is said to be easy or strong; short or diffuse; clear or obscure; sweet, soft, and fluent; or rough, and unpleasant. The several Properties of these, to what Subject, and to what Poem each is suitable, may be collected from this Dissertation, and the Examples produced; and are partly so self-evident, that all further Explication or Example would be needless. I only observe, in one Word, that a clear Style is never faulty, an obscure and an uncouth one always so; but that the easy or strong, the short or prolix, the loose or close, the brisk or slow, the sweet and soft, or the rough and harsh, are all of them sometimes proper, sometimes improper, according to the Subject Matter of the Poem they appear in. 'Tis farther to be observ'd, That the rough Style, artfully enrich'd with a few antiquated Words, has a certain Majesty in it, which adds a Grandeur to Tragedy especially, and a Sublimity to the Epic Poem: That this Liberty, however, is to be used with Judgment and Caution, lest it appear dull and stiff, instead of lofty and majestic. On the other Hand, that Elegies, particularly, and some sort of Pastorals, require the sweet and flowing Style, and utterly reject all Asperity: Lastly, That some of the Appellations by which Style is distinguish'd are applied to Thought likewise; as *sublime*, *low*, *satirical*, *elegant*, &c. and some of them not so: For a *brisk* or *slow Thought*, a *concise* or *prolix Thought*, &c. are Terms which the Schools are yet Strangers to.

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Elegance enters into the Composition of every Style that has any Merit in it, pervades every Part, and is, as it were, the Soul to it. What Elegance is, and wherein it consists, has been already shewn, at the Entrance of this Dissertation.

But tho' every Kind of Poem has a Style peculiar to itself, yet we are not to preserve one even Course of Writing from the Beginning to the End, but to rise or fall, to be sweet or rough, to be concise or to expatiate, &c. according to the Variety of Matter into which our Subject leads us. *Virgil*, in that Description of Prodigies which I have before cited, sometimes uses the short Diction:

[131] *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes  
Ingens; & simulacra modis pallentia miris  
Visa sub obscurum noctis; pecudesque locutæ,  
Infandum! sistunt amnes; terræque dehiscunt;  
Et mœstum illacrimat templis ebur; æraque sudant.*

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And oft in silent Woods were Voices more  
Than human heard: And Spectres wond'rous pale  
Seen in the Dusk of Ev'ning: Oxen spoke,  
(Horrid to tell!) Earth yawn'd, and Streams stood still,  
In Temples mourning Iv'ry wept; and Brass  
Sweated.

But in the next Words, where he is to express a great Inundation, he thus breaks out into an Exuberancy of Style:

[132] *Proluit insano contorquens vortice silvas  
Fluviorum Rex Eridanus, camposque per omnes  
Cum stabulis armenta tulit.*

*Eridanus*, supreme of Rivers,  
With roaring Inundation o'er the Plains  
Whirl'd Woods away, and Cattle with their Stalls.

It is a great Fault, to be always upon the Sublime: In those Poems, whose Subject leads them to be most so, some Things occur, that ought to be express'd in the plainest Diction, that scarce admit, much less require the lofty or the splendid.

Lastly, 'tis to be observed, that the Style of *Comedy* is not properly a poetical Style, but an elegant kind of Prose. It would be absurd if it were otherwise; since the Language of Comedy is to imitate familiar Discourse, and such as passes in common Conversation. For this Reason, some (as *Horace* tells us) have made a Doubt whether this Species of the Drama is to be accounted a

[133] *Idcirco quidam, Comœdia, necne, poema  
Esset, quæsivere; quod acer spiritus, ac vis,  
Nec verbis, nec rebus, inest; nisi quod pede certo  
Differt sermoni, sermo merus.*

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And therefore some do doubt (tho' some allow)  
If *Comedy* be *Poetry*, or no:  
Because it wants that Spirit, Flame and Force,  
And bate the Numbers, 'tis but plain Discourse.  
*Creech.*

'Tis Certain the *Style* of the ancient Comedy had nothing poetical in it but the Feet and Measure, and those very little different from Prose; and rejected all those Modes of Speech, which we have mention'd above as peculiar to Poetry. What, therefore, Comedy has in common with Poetry, does not consist in the Diction, but partly in the Measure, and chiefly in the Invention, the Conduct of the Plot, and the Disposal of the Parts.

I am very sensible a great Question may arise in relation to our Comedies, whether they are to be deem'd Poems, since they want those metrical Numbers, which in our former Dissertation we made essential to a Poem. This Question undoubtedly bears much harder upon our *English* Comedies, than upon the ancient *Greek* and *Latin* ones; which are manifestly writ in some certain Measure, tho' a loose one, and the nearest possible to Prose; but our's pretend to be nothing else but Prose, only with a Distich or two at the Conclusion of every Act. It may be question'd, likewise, on the other Hand, whether the *French* Poets are to be commended, who write entire Comedies not only in Ryme, but even Heroic Verse. These Doubts I shall at present wave, since a more proper Opportunity will offer to discuss them fully, when I make Comedy the Subject of an entire Dissertation.

As *Style* is my present Subject, and I shall make *Thought* my next; it may not be improper to inquire into the Relation between the Beauty of the one and the other, and what Connexion there is between writing well, and thinking justly, and how they mutually conspire to promote each other. This Enquiry is somewhat of a middle Nature between the Subject of our present Discourse and the following; and, like a Partition Wall, may serve to join, and yet divide them.

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I lay it down for a Rule, that no one can write clearly, or elegantly, that does not think so. If you are obscure to yourself, you must have great good Luck indeed, if you are perspicuous to others. And if your Thought is bad, shining Language only serves to make both ridiculous. 'Tis like dressing up a disagreeable Person in rich Cloaths, which receive Disgrace from the Wearer, and make his Deformity more contemptible. On the other Hand, 'tis scarce possible, but he whose Thoughts are clear and bright, will be so in his Style too, provided he is well vers'd in the best Authors, and Master of the Language he writes in. When we speak or write, our Thoughts break forth, like the Light, diffuse themselves around, and, by their natural Force, enter the Minds of our Hearers or Readers, as that does the Eyes of the Beholders. Words (if we may believe *Quintilian*) almost necessarily follow a clear Imagination, as the Shadow does a Substance. And if once we have a Conception of any Thing beautiful or sublime, suitable Expressions will arise, if we think proper to make use of them. If we think proper, I say, to make use of them; for it is not to be supposed, that the one will necessarily accompany the other, whether we will let them or not, or that *Quintilian* meant to extend the *Necessity* so far. It is possible the Thoughts may be beautiful and sublime, and the Words, out of Choice, plain and simple; and the Plainness of these may sometimes not only shew, but add to the Sublimity of those. To this Purpose *Longinus* cites that short Narration of the divine Historian, as a remarkable Instance of Sublimity: *And God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light.* So *Horace*:

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[134] — *Sapere aude,  
Incipe.*

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise.  
*Cowley.*

And *Virgil*:

[135] *Ostendent terris hunc tantum Fata, neque ultra  
Esse sinent.*

Him the Fates shall shew  
To Earth, and only shew him; nor shall there  
Permit his longer Stay.

In which, and many other Places, the Words are without Ornament, but the Thought sublime. Thus Beauty sometimes appears the most amiable in its native Charms, and unaffected Neatness: Thus Majesty has been seen to beam forth the strongest when all the Ensigns of it have been laid aside, and it stood supported by its own Strength. Words, then, are to the Thought, what Cloaths are to the Body; what I have to say farther upon this Head, shall be illustrated by this Comparison.

On the other Hand, there are many sublime and beautiful Thoughts that require Words of the

same Nature; they appear pitiful without them, and fall short of their proper Dignity. Witness those Instances we have produced from *Ovid* of the creeping Style, and many more might be produced. Thus frequently, I may say generally, rich Attire, and costly Ornaments, add to the Beauty even of the most beautiful; and Kings who appear by Nature formed for Majesty, display it usually to most Advantage, when deck'd with the Imperial Purple.

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But tho' the Thoughts may be beautiful or sublime, while the Words that express them are plain and simple; yet the Rule will not hold inverted: Words can have neither Beauty, nor Sublimity, unless the Thoughts have both. I mean *true* Beauty, and *true* Sublimity; because if these are wanting in the Thought, that Sparkling which appears in the Diction, is only a false Light; as fine Cloaths are no longer fine when bestowed upon some dishonest Form; they are far from being an elegant Dress, when they ill become the Wearer. And if the Thought, in this Case, is not sublime, all the Magnificence of Diction is ridiculous Affectation, and mere Bombast. Only one Kind of Poem ought to be excepted; which tho' it has no *Latin* Name, is well enough known in all the modern Languages of *Europe*: The *Doggerel* Kind I mean; which abounds much in an ingenious Liberty of Jesting, and dressing up little Things in pompous Words. But in all serious Writing, this Rule holds universally.

But tho' beautiful Expressions cannot make the Thought beautiful, yet they strongly recommend its Beauty, and even improve it; as Dress and Ornament cannot create a Face, yet they may assist its Charms, and add to those that Nature has bestow'd upon it. In Proof of this, I might produce innumerable Examples that are to be met with every where in the Writings of the best Poets. When *Virgil* had excellently described the broken and shattered Condition of *Sergestus's* Ship, which we mention'd above, it was undoubtedly a beautiful Thought to compare it working along with one Bank of Oars, to the labour'd Motion of a wounded Serpent. But how does the Poet heighten the Beauty of the Comparison in the following Manner of describing it?

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[136] *Qualis sæpe viæ deprensus in aggere serpens,  
Ærea quem obliquum rota transiit, aut gravis ictu  
Seminecem liquit, saxo lacerumque, viator:  
Nequicquam longos fugiens dat corpore tortus;  
Parte ferox, ardensque oculis, & sibila colla  
Arduus attollens; pars vulnere clauda retentat  
Nexantem nodos, seque in sua membra plicantem.*

As when a Snake  
Is catch'd (as oft it happens) on a Ridge  
Of rising Ground; whose Body cross'd aslant  
A brazen Wheel has mangled on the Road;  
Or some sour Passenger, with heavy Blow,  
Has left half dead, and shatter'd with a Stone:  
He flying twists his Length in tortuous Wreaths,  
Part fierce with ardent Eyes, and hissing Tongue,  
Uprears aloft his swelling Neck in Air;  
Part damag'd in the Wound retards him crush'd  
Wriggling his Spires, and knitting Knots in vain.

*Aristæus's* Entrance into the subterraneous Grotto's of the Water Nymph *Cyrene*, is thus described by the same Poet:

[137] — *Simul alta jubet discedere late  
Flumina, qua juvenis gressus inferret; at illum  
Curvata in montis faciem circumstetit unda,  
Accepitque sinu vasto, misitque sub amnem.  
Jamque domum mirans genitricis, & humida regna,  
Speluncisque lacus clausos, lucosque sonantes,  
Ibat, & ingenti motu stupefactus aquarum,  
Omnia sub magna labentia flumina terra  
Spectabat diversa locis, &c.*

At once she bids on either Side retire  
The Rivers, that the Youth unhurt might pass:  
Him, like a Mountain, arch'd, the standing Waves  
Surround; their spacious Bosom open wide,  
And spread his Entrance to the hoary Deep.  
And now admiring at his Mother's Court,  
And liquid Realms, the Lakes in Caverns pent,  
And sounding Groves, he goes, and wond'ring hears  
The rumbling Billows; nor less wond'ring sees  
The various Streams, which subterraneous glide  
Thro' the vast Globe.

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The Thought, the Fiction, is perfectly beautiful; but who is so blind, as not to see that these poetical Ideas receive no small Embellishment from the Elegance of the Expression; or so dull, as not to love and admire both the Art and Ingenuity of the Writer? We see, then, that the Elegance of Thought is much promoted by that of Diction; and this is true of all Sorts of Thought, as well

the beautiful, as the sublime, but more particularly of that which consists of *Comparison* and *Description*. On the other Hand, that the Elegance and Sublimity of Thought conduces much to the Elegance and Sublimity of Expression, is too clear to need either Proof or Example; Thought being, as it were, the Life of Words, and (as the Schoolmen speak) that which gives them their *essential Form*. Upon the whole, then, beautiful Thoughts and Expressions mutually help and adorn each other, as a goodly Personage and a rich Attire. Wherein consists the Beauty of Thought, shall be the Subject of our next Enquiry.

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## LECTURE VIII, IX, X, XI.

### *Of the Beauty of Thought in Poetry; or of Elegance and Sublimity.*

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In our former Dissertation we treated of the Style of Poetry: From *Words* we pass on to *Things*, and propose to speak of the Beauty of Thought; to shew wherein the Elegance and Sublimity of it consists; the Reason and Foundation of it; and to enumerate its different Species.

Every one must be sensible, as well as myself, what a difficult Subject I engage in. If therefore I sometimes err, in so abstruse a Path, I trust I have a prevailing Plea for your Pardon.

In the preceding Dissertation we have abundantly shewn, that the *Diction* of Poetry is very different from that of Prose; but between the *Thought* of the one and the other (excepting only Fiction) the Difference is not so great. What, therefore, I shall say upon this Head, will, for the most part, be in common both to the Poet and the Orator; for the Beauty of Thought is generally the same, whether it is express'd in Verse or Prose. But because Poetry is our Province, I judged it proper to produce the Examples that illustrate my Subject, from the Writings of the best Poets.

Writers have taken much Pains to give us a complete Definition of *Thought*; and some have openly declar'd, that it is not capable of a Definition. Among these, our Countryman *Cowley* bears the first Place, who directly asserts, that *Wit* (for that is the Word we often use for those Expressions that are the Effect of it) can only be defin'd in negative Terms. But (with the Leave of the Learned) this Word, and the Idea affix'd to it, is as capable of a positive and adequate a Definition, as many others which we define the most logically, and boast of having the clearest Notion of. *Wit*, then, in the largest Sense of the Word, seems to be nothing else, but *a Thought formed so agreeably to Nature and right Reason, and impressed upon the Mind with such Clearness, Vivacity, and Dignity, as excites Pleasure or Admiration.*

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*Wit* we take, as we said, in *its largest Extent*. For it is not here understood in that vulgar and narrow Sense by which it denotes only Jokes and pointed Turns; but contains every Conception of the Mind that is beautiful; whatever Elegance or Sublimity the Imagination is capable of.

*A Thought formed agreeably to Nature and right Reason*, is, in this Definition, the *Genus*; what follows contains the *Difference*. By the former Part of the Definition we understand a *Thought that is founded upon solid and just Principles*, which is twofold, either a Thought *simply* consider'd, or a *beautiful* Thought. Every ingenious Thought, then, is well founded, but every Thought that is well founded, is not an ingenious one.

It was necessary to make this the *Genus* of the *Definition*, that true Wit might be distinguish'd from false. Thoughts of real Beauty are always form'd upon Truth, Nature, and right Reason. If they are not built upon this Foundation, or flow from a less noble Spring, they are to be rank'd among those *false Brillants*, as they are term'd by our modern, and especially the *French*, Writers, which may serve to please Boys, and some others of as little Judgment, but will always be despis'd by Men of Taste, and of Understanding, who adhere to the infallible Maxim laid down by *Horace*:

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[138] *Scribendi recte sapere est & principium & fons.*

Sound Judgment is the Ground of writing well.

*Roscom.*

Thoughts are the Images of Things, as Words are of Thoughts; and we all know that Images and Pictures are only so far true, as they are true Representations of Men and Things. Those Passages in *Virgil*, *Terræque, urbesque recedunt*, and the like, where Things are represented not as they *are*, but as they *seem* to be, are no Objection to what I advance. For Poets, as well as Painters, think it their Business to take the Likeness of Things from their Appearance. When they do this, their Thoughts are just, according to the strictest Rules of Reason; for in Description or Painting that is *truly* express'd, which is express'd as the Thing *appears* to be. Neither *Metaphors*, *Hyperboles*, *Ironies*, nor even *equivocal* Expressions, when properly used, nor *Fiction* or *Fable*, are any Deviation from this Rule of right Thinking: For there is a wide Difference between *Falseness* and *Fiction*, between that which is *truly* false, (if I may so speak) and that which is only so in Appearance. Tropes and Fictions are raised, as it were, upon the Foundation of right Reason. Truth is the Basis of them, and receives new Lustre from such airy Disguises. All this will be sufficiently plain in the Sequel of this Dissertation, and from the Examples to be produced in it. But, in the first Place, it may not be improper to give one or two Instances of false

We frequently meet with Passages that want even common Sense, and yet have somewhat of a ridiculous Brightness in them. A certain Poet gives us a miserable Description of the Fate of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, and tells us, that the Sword, when died with the *Blood* of the unhappy Lover, blush'd, from a Consciousness of its Crime. No, <sup>[139]</sup> rather let the unhappy Writer blush, from a deep Sense of that Elegance which Boys would be asham'd to own. Another of the same Form, I know not his Name, tells us, that Lovers always abound with Wit, because *Venus* sprung from the *salt* Ocean. It would be endless to mention all the Turns of this sort, which take their Rise from the feign'd Names or Adjuncts of the Heathen Deities.

Modern Writers, all over *Europe*, are many of them wonderfully fond of these sort of Trifles, especially in their Epigrams and Love-Verses. And some cannot refrain from them even in their larger Compositions. Several of our Top Poets of the former Age, (for in the present these kind of Witticisms are in less Request) abound much with these shining Spots: Nor are the Ancients, (I instance in *Ovid*) wholly free from them. I can't help here observing, what an inexhaustible Fund of Conceits our modern Poets are supplied with from the Eyes of the Fair Sex; which, as they are the fruitful Parents of various Mischiefs, so are they, likewise, it seems, of spurious Wit.

There is another Species of Thought which does not, like the former, deviate from Truth and right Reason, yet is a Violation of the Laws of Beauty and Accuracy, and is an Instance of false Wit, tho' not of false Conception. In the *Troas* of *Seneca*, *Hecuba* lamenting that the Body of *Priamus* should lie unburied, thus expresses her Grief:

—*Ille, tot regum parens,  
Caret sepulchro Priamus, & flamma indiget,  
Ardente Troja.*—<sup>[140]</sup>

*Priam*, the Father of a Race of Kings,  
Now wants a Grave, nor finds a Fun'ral Fire,  
While his own City burns.

How poor a Thought, upon so great and sublime a Subject? How childish a Reflection, that while *Troy* was all in Flames, the Body of *Priamus* should want Funeral ones? How much better does *Virgil* describe the very same Circumstance?

<sup>[141]</sup> *Hæc finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum  
Sorte tulit; Trojam incensam & prolapsa videntem  
Pergama; tot quondam populis, terrisque, superbum  
Regnatorem Asiæ: jacet ingens littore truncus,  
Avulsimumque humeris caput, & sine nomine corpus.*

Such was the End of *Priam's* Fate; the last  
Concluding Scene which Destiny decreed  
To *Asia's* Lord; once o'er so many Realms  
And Nations, sov'reign Monarch; having seen  
His *Troy* in Flames, and tumbling to the Ground:  
Upon the Shore the Royal Body lies  
Expos'd; the Head from off the Shoulders torn;  
A Trunk dishonour'd, and without a Name.

Here every Thing is great, full of Majesty, and suitable to the Subject. The Poet knew better than to sport with Conceits upon so solemn an Occasion; tho' *Ovid* is perpetually hunting after them: But this is never *Virgil's* Fault; and ought to have been as studiously avoided by *Seneca*: For Tragedy is of as sublime a Nature as Epic.

That celebrated Passage of *Lucan*, at first Appearance, I confess, sounds great:

<sup>[142]</sup> —*Cœlo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.*

The Heav'ns entomb the Man that wants an Urn.

The Assertion is true, but the Wit is *false*. It is applied to the Soldiers that died in the Field, and lay unburied: And tho' we should grant that the Heavens and the Stars were Materials of greater Value than Brass and Marble; yet they are a kind of Monument, that, like Death itself, is common to all; and, in spite of this *Stoical* Maxim of the Poet, all Mankind must think it more honourable to be laid at Rest in a Grave, than expos'd to Birds and Beasts, who at last may boast of the same Canopy of the Sky, that these unburied Heroes enjoy'd.

Sometimes it happens, that there is a Mixture of true Thought and false; or the Conception is partly one, partly the other. Thus in that noted Epigram by a Modern:

<sup>[143]</sup> *Lumine Acon dextro, capta est Leonilla sinistro;  
Et potis est forma vincere uterque Deos.  
Blande Puer, lumen quod habes concede sorori;  
Sic Tu cæcus Amor, sic erit Illa Venus.*

*Strephon* and *Phyllis* each one Eye have lost,



Yet may of Beauty more than Mortal boast.  
Let his bright Orb to her the Boy resign,  
He would a *Cupid*, she a *Venus* shine.

The Epigram *seems* elegant, and *is* really so; but the different Parts of it are not perfectly reconcilable. For if *Strephon* and *Phyllis* exceeded the Gods in Beauty, what great Wonder is it, he should become *Cupid*, she *Venus*? Besides, 'tis absurd to suppose that he should be either willing, or able to transfer his Eye to his Sister. There is, however, in these Lines a true epigrammatic Spirit; and nothing can have more of it than the last of them. For as in Reasoning a true Conclusion may be drawn from false Premises; so in Writing an elegant Thought may flow from false Wit. I would not have it objected, that I here draw a Comparison between Things that are no way allied; for all Beauty, not only in the argumentative Way of Writing, but even in polite Literature, depends upon the Rules of Logic, and strict Reasoning.

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The Passages I have here produced are a few Instances of false Eloquence. Wit, therefore, differs from a plain solid Thought, as a polish'd Diamond from a rough one; and as that does not cease to be a Diamond by being polish'd, so a Thought loses nothing of its Solidity by its Elegance. We all know, that a Diamond is not less distinguish'd from other Stones by its Solidity, than its Lustre: The Difference, therefore, between true and false Wit, is much the same as between the Gems of the East, and those of our *British* Rocks.

Some Verses I have known (but not by what Means) that owe all their Success to popular Applause, and ill-grounded Fame, instead of Merit. No one can be a Stranger to the celebrated Epigram of *Sanazarius* upon the City of *Venice*; and who shall now dare to question its Title to Fame, after so long a Prescription?

*Viderat Adriacis Venetam Neptunus in undis  
Stare Urbem, & toti ponere jura mari.  
Nunc mihi Tarpeias quantumvis, Jupiter, arces  
Objice; & illa tui mœnia Martis, ait:  
Si pelago Tyberim præfers, Urbem aspice utramque;  
Illam homines dices, hanc posuisse Deos.*

In th'*Adriatic* Gulf, when *Neptune* saw  
*Venice* arise, and give to Seas the Law;  
Now, *Jove*, said he, *Tarpeian* Tow'rs oppose,  
And the proud Walls of *Mars* compare with those.  
The *Tyber* to the Sea prefer! and then  
One own the Work of Gods, and one of Men.

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I submit with humble Deference to the Judgment of the Learned; but, if I may freely speak my Sentiments, I have often wonder'd at the good Fortune of *Sanazarius*, who, by six empty Verses, got not only so great a Name, but (which is more substantial) so great a Sum of Money. The Verses, indeed, are smooth and harmonious; they have the outward Appearance of an Epigram, and contain a poetical Fiction of *Jupiter* and *Neptune*: But take away these (and these, without somewhat else, signify little) what else, in the Name of Elegance, does the Poet tell us, but that *Venice* is preferable to *Rome*? In naked and simple Terms he says, that the former looks more like the Work of the Gods, than the latter. Where is the *Acumen*, the Wit, or the Turn? The Shell, indeed, of an Epigram, we see; but not so much as the Shadow of Wit.

The first, and principal Species of Wit, is, undoubtedly, that which does not depend on poetical Fiction, but upon Truth itself. What the *French* Poet<sup>[144]</sup> says upon this Head, in the Preface to his Works, is very just; and I think I cannot do better than give you his Sentiments in an *English* Dress. "Now, if any Man asks me, says he, what this Agreeableness and this Salt is? I answer, That it is a *Je ne sçay quoy*, that may be better conceiv'd than describ'd. But yet, in my Opinion, it principally consists in offering nothing to the Reader but true Thoughts, and just Expressions. The Mind of Man is naturally full of an infinite Number of confus'd Ideas of *Truth*, which he oftentimes perceives but by Halves; and nothing pleases him more, than when any of these Ideas are presented to him well illustrated, and set in a good Light. What is a new brilliant, extraordinary Thought? It is not, as the Ignorant persuade themselves, a Thought which no Body ever had, nor ought to have. But, on the contrary, a Thought which every Body ought to have had, and which some one bethinks himself of expressing first. *Wit* is not *Wit*, but as it says something every Body thought of, and that in a lively, delicate, and new Manner. Let us consider, for Example, the famous Reply of *Lewis XII.* to some of his Ministers, who advised him to punish several Persons that in the former Reign (when he was only Duke of *Orleans*) had made it their Business to prejudice him, *A King of France, says he, revenges not the Injuries done to a Duke of Orleans.* How comes this Saying to strike us so suddenly? Is it not plainly, because it presents to our Eyes a Truth which all the World is sensible of, and which expresses better than all the finest Discourses of Morality, *That a great Prince, after his Accession to the Throne, ought no longer to act by private Movements, nor to have any other View but the Glory and general Good of his Kingdom?*" Thus far that celebrated Author, who seems very happily to have illustrated the Subject we are upon.

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We have many elegant Thoughts, likewise, founded upon Truth, with a Mixture of poetical Fiction; as in that Epigram of *Martial* address'd to *Lucifer*, the Night before *Cæsar's* Return to *Rome*: After the first Invocation,

[145] *Phosphore, redde diem; quid gaudia nostra moraris?  
Cæsare venturo, Phosphore, redde diem.*

Thou bright Forerunner of the golden Day,  
When *Cæsar* comes, what clogs thy rosy Way?

At some Distance he adds:

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*Quid cupidum Titana tenes? jam Xanthus & Æthon  
Fræna volunt; vigilat Memnonis alma Parens.*

Why hold'st thou *Phœbus*, lab'ring to be freed?  
His fiery Coursers arm themselves for Speed, }  
And fair *Aurora* quits her dewy Bed. }

He then subjoins:

*Tarda tamen nitidæ non cedunt sidera luci;  
Et cupit Ausonium Luna videre Ducem.*

But scarce the lagging Stars desert the Skies,  
And pensive *Cynthia* for the Triumph sighs.

'Tis an undoubted Truth, that Time seems long to those that are big with Expectation. The Poet, therefore, having, for this Reason, chid the Tardiness of the Moon and Stars, nothing could be more elegant, than from this very Circumstance to take a further Occasion of complimenting the Prince, by finding out another Reason of their Delay; viz. that those bright Attendants (for the Poet suppos'd them endow'd with Sense) stay'd the longer, that they might be the happy Spectators of *Cæsar's* triumphal Entry. He then gives a new Turn to his Reflections, and thus concludes the Epigram:

*Jam, Cæsar, vel nocte veni; stent astra licebit,  
Non deerit populo, Te veniente, dies.*

Yet let not *Cæsar* wait the rising Morn,  
Or damp our Blessings till the Day's Return:  
His Light shall cheer us with as bright a Ray,  
And without *Phœbus* usher in the Day.

This is ingenious enough, but a little of the boldest. The Prince of Lyric Poets is more modest upon the same Occasion:

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[146] *Lucem redde tuæ, Dux bone, patriæ;  
Instar veris enim, vultus ubi tuus  
Affulsit populo, gratior it dies,  
Et soles melius nitent.*

Ah! quickly come, and with you bring  
A brighter Sun, a brighter Spring:  
Plenty and Mirth with you appear,  
The World looks gay, when you are here.  
*Olds.*

He does not say the Approach of *Cæsar* would restore the Day, but only increase it; that is, would add to its Gaiety and Lustre: And true it is, that Men whose Breasts are fill'd with Joy, think every Thing about them partakes of that Quality.

There are other Thoughts, which tho' founded more upon poetical Fiction than the former, yet come into the Number of true and elegant ones. Thus our foremention'd *Martial*, in his Epitaph upon *Canace*, after having beautifully describ'd the Disease of which the Lady died, in the following Verses:

[147]—*Horrida vultum  
Inficit, & tenero sedit in ore lues;  
Ipsaque crudeles ederunt oscula morbi,  
Nec data sunt nigris tota labella rogis.*

A horrid Cancer seiz'd her beauteous Face,  
Prey'd o'er her Charms, and rifled ev'ry Grace;  
Nor spar'd those Lips that ravish'd with a Kiss,  
The inexhausted Treasuries of Bliss!

Thus goes on:

*Si tam præcipiti fuerant ventura volatu,  
Debuerant alia fata venire via:  
Sed Mors vocis iter properavit claudere blandæ,*

Determin'd Fate, with his unerring Dart,  
Might, without mangling, have attack'd the Heart;  
But knowing well her Voice would Life prolong,  
He seiz'd the Pow'rs of her enchanting Tongue.

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These Kinds of Fictions, tho' very numerous, are no ways repugnant to Reason, and have not only a Claim to our Pardon, but to our Praise and Imitation.

In these, and the like Instances, the great Care is, to have Truth for the Foundation of what we afterwards advance. As we see it is in the Example produced from *Martial*. We are allow'd in strictest Reason to describe others Merit, or our own Grief, in Terms a little heighten'd: If the Lady, then, whose Death the Poet laments, had, in reality, a soft and melting Voice, he might justly say it was persuasive enough to have restrained the Hand of Fate, could it but have found an Utterance: But Death, fearful of its Power, had seiz'd that Passage, and cut off the Force of Eloquence. Thus far a Poet may be allow'd to proceed; but, in good Truth, very little farther. He treads here, as it were, upon a Precipice; and this Expression of *Martial*, is, perhaps, the utmost Bound of poetic Truth; the next may carry him into the Ocean of false Thought. However, this is certain, that all these ingenious Devices must be built upon something that has an Existence in Nature, and that it is absurd to make Fiction the Basis, and the Superstructure too; as they do, more especially, who from the Heathen Mythology supply us with Fable in great abundance. The antiquated Stories of the Heathen Gods ought to afford Matter only for Comparison and Allusion, and even then ought to be brought in with Caution, and to be mention'd only as Beings once suppos'd to have an Existence. In short, even the lightest Excursions of Wit ought to be founded upon Reality; and those empty Trifles are justly contemn'd, which are neither Panegyric nor Satire, neither illustrate nor explain any Thing, but the wonderful Acuteness of the Writer. Tho' a beautiful Composition of Thought and Words is the greatest Master-piece of Nature, yet 'tis possible for an Oration, or Poem, to be too full of them, tho' never so much diversified. Whatever Subject, therefore, you endeavour to adorn, let not your Poem be loaded with Wit. Jewels have always been in Esteem, and ever will be so; yet to see a Garment disfigur'd all over with different Sorts of them, would be matter of Ridicule, rather than Admiration; and the most elegant Epicure would be but little pleas'd with an Entertainment that consisted of nothing else but Dainties. The same Rule is not less applicable to Poetry, than Prose; the Reason of it holds equally in both. Poetry, indeed, admits of greater Ornament, but right Reason always abhors Luxury, whether in Prose or Verse. The too great Plenty of whatever is exquisite, does not gratify, so much as satiate both the Senses and the Understanding; and what in itself is valuable, by Super-abundance becomes ridiculous. By this faulty kind of Writing the Mind is depriv'd of that Refreshment and Recreation it takes in passing to and fro from Things that are excellent, to those that are less so; and of that Delight which springs from Surprise; neither of which it is capable of, where all Things appear with undistinguish'd Lustre. 'Tis a foolish Ambition, therefore, to work up all the beautiful Thought and Diction you can possibly croud together. We ought always, indeed, to avoid in both whatever is mean or vulgar, and, as *Longinus*<sup>[148]</sup> says, is *below the Dignity of the Subject*; to be always, I say, above the Populace, tho' sometimes plain, and without Ornament. It is impossible for a Writer, from the Nature of his Subject, to be upon the Sublime from one End to the other: Some Things must occur, that require the common Style, but if they did not, the Rule ought still to be observ'd, for the Reasons I have before alledg'd. Let Authors take Example from Nature, who diversifies the great Poem of the World with Spring and Summer. In each Season, 'tis true, all Things appear pleasant; but how much less would they be so, nay, how distasteful, if the Fields were cover'd with nothing else but Flowers? Vivid and smiling they are throughout, but not all over beset with Nosegays. Flowers grow in their proper and peculiar Soil; so the Ornaments of a Poem should seem naturally to arise out of the Matter of it, not forced by Labour, but promoted only by proper Culture. We ought, indeed, to imitate Art, and it is no mean Specimen of it, when we intermix these Beauties so skilfully, that they mutually correspond, and set off each other; in the same Manner that the Florist disposes his party-colour'd Beds, and the Nymph her odorous Garlands.

*Ninth  
Lecture.*

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[149] — *Candida Nais*

*Pallentes violas, & summa papavera carpens,  
Narcissum, & florem jungit beneolentis anethi.  
Tum casia, atque aliis intexens suavibus herbis,  
Mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha.*

For thee the lovely *Nais* crops the Head  
Of Poppies, and the Violet's pale Flow'rs,  
With the Narcissus, and sweet Anise join'd;  
Then mingling Cinnamon, and other Herbs  
Of fragrant Scent, with the soft Hyacinth,  
The saffron Bloom of Marygolds adorns.

Afterwards,

[150] *Et vos, ô lauri, carpam, & te, proxima myrte;  
Sic positæ quoniam suaves miscetis odores.*

You, too, ye Laurels; and thee, Myrtle, next;  
Because thus mix'd, you fragrant Odours blend.

Beauty in Writing may be consider'd as twofold: Either the *Elegant*, or *Sublime*. The latter is manifestly distinct from the former; for there may be Elegance often, where there is no Sublimity; but it may be question'd, on the other Hand, whether every Thing *sublime* is not *elegant*. To me, indeed, it seems not so; or, if we must determine otherwise, it must be said, that Elegance join'd with Sublimity is often a different Species of Elegance. Whatever, indeed, is *sublime*, is *beautiful*. So *Pallas* is describ'd by the Poets, but with a Beauty peculiar to herself, awful, majestic, surrounded with an amiable Grandeur, quite different from the Charms of *Venus*, who is possess'd with all the soft Attractives, who is all over elegant, but very little sublime. But however this Question be determined, in the Sequel of this Discourse I shall examine into the Properties of each of these Beauties distinctly, and afterwards join'd together.

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That noble and happy Sublimity of Thought, which by *Longinus* is termed,<sup>[151]</sup> το περι τας νοησειστω ἀδρεπηβολον, is impossible to be learn'd by Precept: 'Tis the Gift of Nature only, tho' it may be much assisted by Art. This peculiar Turn of Mind *Virgil* thus at once describes, and remarkably exemplifies:

[152] *Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,  
Quarum sacra fero, ingenti percussus amore,  
Accipiant, cœlique vias & sidera monstrent, &c.  
Sin has ne possim naturæ accedere partes,  
Frigidus obstiterit circum præcordia sanguis;  
Rura mihi, & rigui placeant in vallibus amnes,  
Flumina amem, silvasque inglorius.*

Me may the Muses, whose vow'd Priest I am,  
Smit With strong Passion for their sacred Song,  
Dear above all to me, accept; and teach  
The heav'nly Roads, the Motions of the Stars, &c.  
But if the colder Blood  
About my Heart forbid me to approach  
So near to Nature, may the rural Fields,  
And Streams obscure, which glide along the Vales,  
Delight me; Groves and Rivers may I love.

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He shews us he is abundantly endow'd with that Strength of Imagination he pretends to want, and at the same Time gives us a Specimen of it.

The same must be said of that Fire and Energy in Poetry, which *Longinus* calls<sup>[153]</sup> το σφοδρον, και ενθουσιαστικον παθος, viz. that it is owing to the Indulgence of Nature, and to be regulated only, not acquir'd by Precept. All we can do, is to produce some Examples of it, and make a few Observations upon them. The first shall be that of *Virgil*, in the sixth *Æneis*, where the Poet displays the sacred Rage of the Sibyl, and his own:

[154] *Ventum erat ad limen; cum virgo, poscere fata  
Tempus, ait: Deus, ecce! Deus. Cui talia fanti  
Ante fores subito non vultus, non color unus,  
Non comptæ mansere comæ; sed pectus anhelum,  
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,  
Nec mortale sonans; afflata est numine quando  
Jam propiore Dei. Cessas in vota, precesque,  
Tros, ait, Ænea? Cessas?*

And now they reach'd  
The Portal: When the Virgin, 'Tis the Time  
Now t' enquire the Doom of Fate; Behold,  
The God, the God, she cry'd. While thus she spoke,  
Before the Doors her Looks, her Colour chang'd,  
Sudden; her Hair in wild Confusion rose.  
Enthusiastic Fury heav'd her Breast,  
And throbbing Heart; more large her Form appear'd;  
Nor spoke the mortal Accents; when inspir'd  
By the more present God. Dost thou delay,  
*Trojan Æneas*, thy Requests, and Vows?  
Dost thou delay? she cry'd.

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And after *Æneas* had ended his Supplication to her:

[155] *At Phœbi nondum patiens immanis in antro  
Bacchatur Vates, magnum si pectore possit  
Excussisse Deum; tanto magis ille fatigat  
Os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo.*

But impatient in her Grot

*Apollo's swelling Priestess wildly raves;  
Reluctant, lab'ring from her Breast to heave  
Th' incumbent God: So much the more he curbs  
Her foamy Mouth, subdues her madding Heart,  
And pressing forms her.*

And lastly, at the End of the Sibyl's Answer:

[156] *Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumæa Sibylla  
Horrendas canit ambages, antroque remugit,  
Obscuris vera involvens: ea fræna furenti  
Concutit, & stimulos sub pectore vertit Apollo.*

Thus the *Cumæan* Sibyl, from her Shrine,  
Sings mystic Verse; and bellows in her Cave,  
Involving Truth in Darkness: As she foams,  
*Apollo* shakes the Reins, and goads her Breast.

This is one Species of poetic *Pathos*, or Enthusiasm; *viz.* which consists in the Marvellous, and raises Admiration, by impressing upon the Mind something great, unusual, and portentous, and is styled by the *Greeks* ὄρη, by the *Latins* *Impetus*, or *furor poeticus*. There are other Kinds of it, which excite Grief, Pity, Terror, and work upon the other Passions. If the *Spirit* of the Poet is most admir'd in the former, the Reader's is at least as much affected by the latter. And since it is the great Art of Poetry to work upon the Passions, it may not be improper to dwell a little upon this Branch of it. How sweet is that Complaint of *Phyllis* to *Demophoon*, in *Ovid*? How wonderfully adapted to move Compassion?

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[157] *Credidimus blandis, quorum tibi copia, verbis;  
Credidimus generi, nominibusque tuis;  
Credidimus lacrimis: an & hæ simulare docentur?  
Hæ quoque habent artes; quaque jubentur, eunt.  
Diis quoque credidimus, quo jam tot pignora nobis?  
Parte satis potui qualibet inde capi.*

On thy soft Speeches I with Rapture hung,  
The boundless Treasures of thy melting Tongue.  
Thy Name I credited, thy Birth, thy Line:  
Art thou by Falsehood Man, by Birth divine?  
Thy Tears resistless! do they flow by Art,  
Th'obedient Tides of Nature, and the Heart!  
These have their Frauds, and find the subtle Path,  
As you direct, to steal a Lover's Faith.  
The Gods, too, I believ'd, by whom you swore;  
Each Motive was too much, what needed more?

No one was a greater Master of this Secret than *Ovid*; none understood Nature more than he, or express'd her various Conflicts better: And he has left us abundance of Instances of it in his *Epistles* and *Metamorphoses*. To pass over others, I shall produce only that Passage where he describes the Passion of *Medea* for *Jason*:

[158] *Concipit interea validos Ætias ignes:  
Et luctata diu, postquam ratione furorem  
Vincere non potuit; Frustra, Medea, repugnas,  
Nescio quis deus obstat, ait; mirumque, nisi hoc est,  
Aut aliquod certe simile huic, quod amare vocatur.  
Nam cur jussa patris nimium mihi dura videntur?  
Sunt quoque dura nimis: cur, quem modo denique vidi,  
Ne pereat timeo? Quæ tanti causa timoris?  
Execute virgineo conceptas pectore flammæ,  
Si potes, infelix; si possem, sanior essem.  
Sed trahit invitam nova vis; aliudque cupido,  
Mens aliud suadet; video meliora, proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.*

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Mean while, *Medea*, seiz'd with fierce Desire,  
By Reason strives to quench the raging Fire;  
But strives in vain: Some God, she said, withstands,  
And Reason's baffled Counsel countermands.  
What unseen Pow'r does this Disorder move?  
'Tis Love—at least 'tis like what Men call Love.  
Else wherefore should the King's Commands appear  
To me too hard? But so, indeed, they are.  
Why should I for a Stranger fear, lest he }  
Should perish, whom I did but lately see; }  
His Death, or Safety, what are they to me? }

Wretch from thy Virgin Breast this Flame expel,  
 And soon—Oh! cou'd I, all wou'd then be well!  
 But Love, resistless Love, my Soul invades;  
 Discretion this, Affection that persuades.  
 I see the right, and I approve it, too;  
 Condemn the wrong—and yet the wrong pursue.  
*Tate and Stonestreet.*

After this, the Poet wonderfully describes the dubious Strife between Love and Shame, Reason and Affection, as he does in many other Places. I know, very well, that Objections have been rais'd against this very Passage I have cited, and that *Ovid* is compar'd with *Apollonius Rhodius* and *Virgil*, even upon these Topics, much to his Disadvantage. I can't deny but that when he does best, he often falls short of that Sublimity in which he was naturally deficient; that when he shines most, he generally abounds with an unhappy Luxuriancy of Thought, disagreeable Repetitions, unseasonable and absurd Conceits; that his Style is loose and incorrect: However, let him have his due Praise, let him be allow'd to draw the Out-lines of Nature truly, tho' he does not keep accurately to every Feature of her.

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But if you want Perfection upon this Head, consult *Virgil*, who, as he excels in all other Kinds of Writing, so, especially, in describing and moving the Passions, in the fourth *Æneis* especially; which may with Justice be styled an *Epic Tragedy*. And since no Age, Nation, or Language, has yet produced a Work that lays open so wonderfully the various Tumults of the Soul; I shall perform, perhaps, no disagreeable Office, if I lay before you an Epitome of this Part of it, so far as relates to the Passions.

In the Beginning, the unfortunate Queen, in Conversation with her Sister, thus discovers the Effects of *Love*:

[159] *Anna soror, quæ me suspensam insomnia terrent?  
 Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?  
 Quam sese ore ferens! quam forti pectore, & armis!*

What Dreams, my dearest *Anna*, discompose  
 My Rest? What wond'rous Stranger at our Court  
 It here arriv'd! how God-like he appears!  
 In Mien how graceful! and how brave in Arms!

And a few Lines after:

[160] *Anna (fatebor enim) miseri post fata Sichæi  
 Conjugis, & sparsos fraterna cæde penates;  
 Solus hic inflexit sensus, animumque labantem  
 Impulit; agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ.*

My Sister, (for to thee I will disclose  
 My inmost Thoughts) since poor *Sichæus* fell,  
 And with his Blood, spilt by a Brother's Hand,  
 Sprinkled our Household Gods; this only Man  
 Has warp'd my Inclinations, and unfix'd  
 My stagg'ring Resolution: I perceive  
 The Signs and Tokens of my former Flame.

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Now *Shame*, on the other Hand, exerts its Power, and claims to be heard, in Opposition to *Love*:

[161] *Sed mihi vel tellus, optem, prius ima dehiscat,  
 Vel Pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,  
 Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam;  
 Ante, Pudor, quam te violem, aut tua jura resolvam:*

But may the yawning Earth devour me quick,  
 Or *Jove* with Thunder strike me to the Shades,  
 Pale Shades of *Erebus*, and Night profound;  
 E'er, Modesty, I break thro' thy Restraints,  
 Or violate thy Laws.

She then *complains* of *Æneas's* concealing his Departure; she *expostulates* with him of the Injury he intended her; and full, at the same Time, of *Fear* and *Grief*, she thus endeavours to work upon his *Compassion*:

[162] *Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum  
 Posse nefas? tacitusque mea decedere terra?  
 Nec te noster amor, nec te data dextera quondam,  
 Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? &c.*

And could'st thou hope, Perfidious, to conceal  
 So black a Crime? and silent leave my Coasts?  
 Cannot my Love, nor thy once plighted Faith,

Nor *Dido's* cruel, and untimely Death,  
Detain thee?

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But as soon as she hears *Aeneas* openly declare his firm Resolution, from Tears and Intreaties she bursts out into *Passion, Rage, and Phrenzy*:

[163] *Talia dicentem jamdudum aversa tuetur,  
Huc illuc volvens oculos, totumque pererrat  
Luminibus tacitis, & sic accensa profatur.  
Nec tibi Diva parens, generis nec Dardanus auctor,  
Perfide; sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens  
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.*

Thus, while he spoke, she silently intent,  
Ey'd him averse, and roll'd her glaring Balls  
Around; from Head to Foot survey'd him o'er,  
Speechless a while; and thus her Rage reply'd:  
Nor art thou of a Goddess-mother born;  
Nor is thy Birth from *Dardanus* deriv'd,  
Perfidious Wretch: But *Caucasus*, with Rocks  
Horrid disclos'd thee from its flinty Sides,  
And fierce *Hyrcanian* Tygers gave thee Suck.

Throughout the whole Speech (every Line of which is beautiful beyond all Comparison) she exclaims, interrogates, calls Gods and Men to witness, loads her Lover with Threats and Curses; in short, the Tempest of her Soul runs so high, as if it never more would know a Calm. What, then, says *Dido*, when she appears next?

[164] *Improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?  
Ire iterum in lacrimas, iterum tentare precando,  
Cogitur, & supplex animos submittere amori.*

Cruel Love,  
To what Extremes does not thy tyrant Pow'r  
Urge mortal Breasts? Again dissolv'd in Tears,  
Spight of her Rage and Pride, again she tries  
Suppliant Intreaties, and submissive bows  
Her haughty Soul to Love.

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After this, she implores, conjures her Sister to be her Mediator in this momentous Affair, and to convey to *Aeneas* her softest Entreaties; than which, nothing can be more pathetic, and adapted to move *Compassion*:

[165] *Hunc ego si potui tantum sperare dolorem,  
Et perferre, soror, potero. Miseræ hoc tamen unum  
Exequere, Anna, mihi; solam nam perfidus ille  
Te colere, arcanos animi tibi credere sensus;  
Sola viri molles aditus, & tempora nôras.  
I, soror; atque hostem supplex affare superbum.*

Could I have e'er expected such a Blow  
Of cruel Fate as this; my Soul could then  
Have borne it: Yet this only Favour grant  
Thy wretched Sister; for that faithless Man  
To thee, alone, uncommon Rev'rence paid,  
Trusted his Secrets with thee; thou, alone,  
Didst know the soft Approaches to his Soul,  
And all the proper Seasons of Address:  
Go, Sister; and this Message suppliant bear.

In the foregoing Speech she broke out into these Reproaches:

[166] *Nusquam tuta fides: ejectum littore, egentem,  
Excepi, & regni demens in parte locavi;  
Amisam classem, socios à morte reduxi.  
Heu! furiis incensa feror, &c.*

True Faith is no where to be found. Him toss'd  
On Shore, of all Things indigent, I here  
Receiv'd, and made him Partner of my Throne:  
(Fool that I was) repair'd his shatter'd Fleet,  
And hospitably sav'd his Friends from Death.  
Furies distract me.

But in what different Terms does she expostulate in this?

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[167] *Non ego cum Danais Trojanam excindere gentem  
Aulide juravi, classemve ad Pergama misi;  
Nec patris Anchisæ cineres, manesve revelli:  
Cur mea dicta negat duras demittere in aures?*

I never did conspire  
At *Aulis* with the *Greeks*, to overturn  
The *Trojan* State, nor sent a Fleet to *Troy*;  
Nor e'er disturb'd his bury'd Father's Dust.  
Why does he stop his unrelenting Ears  
To my Intreaties?

Before, she had thus express'd her Rage:

[168] —*Neque te teneo, neque dicta refello.  
I, sequere Italiam ventis; pete regna per undas;  
Spero equidem mediis (si quid pia numina possunt)  
Supplicia hausurum scopulis, &c.*

I nor detain thee, nor refel thy Words.  
Away for *Latium* by the Winds; go, seek  
Thy Kingdom o'er the Waves. For me, I hope,  
If the just Gods have Pow'r, thou wilt receive  
Thy due Reward among the Rocks.

Behold, now, another Strain!

[169] *Quo ruit? extremum hoc miseræ det munus amanti;  
Expectet facilemque fugam, ventosque ferentes.  
Non jam conjugium antiquum, quod prodidit, oro;  
Nec pulchro ut Latio careat, regnumque relinquat;  
Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque furori,  
Dum mea me victam doceat fortuna dolere.*

Whither does he fly  
So hasty? This last Favour let him grant  
To his unhappy Lover; let him wait  
An easy Voyage, and permitting Winds.  
I now no more petition him to yield  
The Rites of Nuptials, which he has betray'd;  
Nor urge him to relinquish his gay Hopes  
Of *Italy*, and Empire: All I beg,  
Is but a soothing Interval, some Rest,  
And Respite to my Passion; till my Fate  
Shall to Misfortune reconcile my Soul,  
Subdu'd by Grief, and teach me how to mourn.

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That Man must be as void of Sense, as of Humanity, that does not feel in himself the strongest Emotions of Pity and Admiration, of Grief and Pleasure, when he reads so moving a Complaint; than which, I may venture to pronounce, there is not a greater Master-piece, either in Art or Nature.

I might justly fear lying under the Imputation of Prolixity in citing these Passages, if the Beauty of them did not compensate for their Number. As no one ever touch'd the Passions like *Virgil*, you'll forgive the Liberty I have taken in recalling to your Mind so many pleasing Instances of his Power.

What *Longinus* calls<sup>[170]</sup> φαντασια, and others, as he tells us, ειδωλοποιια the *Roman* Writers style *Visions*, or *Imaginations*, and the modern *Images*. These, then, operate, "when (as *Longinus*<sup>[171]</sup> speaks) a Man has so strong an Imagination of the Things he describes, that he seems to be in Transport, as it were, to behold them with his own Eyes, and places them before those of his Hearers." What *Longinus* adds immediately afterwards, in relation to these Images, I must confess I don't rightly comprehend, or (with all Deference to so great Authority) I cannot assent to. Ὅς δ' ἑτέρου τι ἢ ῥητορικῆ φαντασία βουλεται, καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρα ποιηταίς, οὐκ ἀν λάθοι σε. Οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιῆσει τέλος ἐστὶν εκπληξίς, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις εὐαργεῖα Which *Tollius* thus paraphrastically translates: "You cannot be ignorant, I suppose, that Oratorical Visions intend one Thing, and Poetical another; that the Aim of the latter is to affect the Hearers with Terror; of the former to express every Thing so strongly, that it may be rather seen, than heard by the Audience. The one we may properly call Evidence, or Illustration; the other Consternation, or Amazement." I own, I say, this is what I cannot well digest; for neither is it true that the Images, which Poetry impresses, affect us with Terror only, for all Sorts of Images are impress'd by Poetry; nor is it the peculiar Property of Oratory to express every Thing so strongly, that it may be rather seen, than heard by the Audience; since Poetry has a much larger Share in this Province than Oratory. The only Difference between them in this Particular is, that all Images are impress'd more strongly by the one; but all are truly impress'd by both. This is a Difficulty in *Longinus*, which not one of his numerous Commentators has touch'd upon. If,

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therefore, I am fallen into any Mistake, I hope I shall be the easier pardoned, as I have none of the Helps of the Learned to conduct me out of it. But however that be, all are agreed that the Images excited, both by Oratory and Poetry, strike the Mind with a sudden Force. To prove this, *Longinus* recites the Speech of *Orestes*<sup>[172]</sup>, where he cries out, that he sees his Mother and the Furies stand before him; which *Virgil* has wonderfully imitated, in the following Passage:

[173] *Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus,  
Et solem geminum, & duplices se ostendere Thebas:  
Aut Agamemnonius, scenis agitatus, Orestes,  
Armatam facibus matrem, & serpentibus atris,  
Cum fugit, ultricesque sedent in limine Diræ.*

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So raving *Pentheus* Troops of Furies sees,  
Two Suns, and double *Thebes*: So mad with Guilt,  
*Orestes*, agitated on the Stage,  
Flies from his Mother's Ghost, with Torches arm'd,  
And black infernal Snakes; revengeful Fiends  
Sit in the Doors, and intercept his Flight.

As I have occasionally mention'd this remarkable Place, it may not be amiss to observe, that Images are no where better impress'd, than throughout that Description, where *Dido* is represented under the Conflicts of Love, and dismay'd with Prodigies. I shall only cite one Part of it, and the rather, because it contains a mere intellectual Idea not subject to the Senses, which yet is as clearly impress'd, as if it were the proper Object of them: An infallible Proof of the Skill of the Painter.

[174] — *Agit ipse furem  
In somnis ferus Æneas; semperque relinqui  
Sola sibi, semper longam incommitata videtur  
Ire viam, & Tyrios deserta quærere terra.*

In her Dreams  
Cruel *Æneas* persecutes her Soul  
To Madness. Still abandon'd to herself,  
Cheerless, without a Guide, she seems to go  
A long, a tedious Journey, and to seek  
Her *Tyrian* Subjects on deserted Coasts.

To conclude; in a word, every Conception of the Mind, join'd to a beautiful Description, is an Image. I cannot produce a better Proof of this, than that Passage in *Homer*, where *Astyanax* shrinks at the Sight of his Father array'd in Armour.

[175] Ὅς εἰπων, ὅν παιδος ορεξατο Φαιδιμος Ἐκτωρ, κ. λ.

Thus having spoke, th' illustrious Chief of *Troy*  
Stretch'd his fond Arms to clasp the lovely Boy.  
The Babe clung crying to his Nurse's Breast,  
Scar'd at the dazzling Helm, and nodding Crest.  
*Pope.*<sup>[176]</sup>

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To which may be added, the following Description of *Virgil*, out of innumerable others:

[177] — *Viridi fœtam Mavortis in antro  
Procubuisse lupam, geminos huic ubera circum  
Ludere pendentis pueros, & lambere matrem  
Impavidos; illam tereti cervice reflexam  
Mulcere alternos, & corpora fingere lingua.*

In the mossy Cave of *Mars*  
A female Wolf lay suckling; at her Teats  
Two sporting Infants hung, and lick'd their Dam,  
Intrepid: She her sleek round Neck reclin'd,  
Smooth'd them, by Turns, and form'd them with her Tongue.

And that Night Piece of his, in the seventh *Æneis*, where we see the Ship under Sail, by Moon-shine:

[178] *Aspirant auræ in noctem; nec candida cursum  
Luna negat; splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus.  
Proxima Circææ raduntur littora terræ,  
Dives inaccessos ubi Solis filia lucos  
Assiduo resonat cantu, tectisque superbis  
Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,  
Arguto tenues percurrens pectine telas.  
Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum*

A Breeze at Night

Springs fresh; nor does the silver Moon deny  
Her Beams, which tremble on the glimm'ring Waves.  
Next, coasting, close by *Circe's* Shores they sail;  
Where she, the wealthy Daughter of the Sun,  
With ceaseless singing makes the Groves resound,  
Groves inaccessible; and in the Rooms  
Of her proud Palace, for nocturnal Light,  
Sweet Cedar burns: While thro' the slender Web  
Her whistling Shuttle flies along the Loom.  
Hence Groans are heard; the Noise of Lions, fierce,  
Rebellious to their Chains, and roaring loud  
In Dead of Night; the Grunt of bristly Boars;  
The Rage of Bears, reluctant, in their Stalls;  
And huge portentous Forms of howling Wolves.

It would be entering upon too large a Field, to enquire into all the Variations, and Turns of Thought and Style, which Verse and Prose are capable of: Such as, Interrogations, Exclamations, the different Disposition of Tropes and Figures, the elegant Repetition of Words, the no less elegant Abruptness in Sentences, the Want of Connexion, Apostrophe, Prosopopœia, the Change of Numbers, Persons, Cases, Tenses; and a Multitude of other Incidents, which are reducible to Thought, as well as Style. Since the Variety of these is as infinite, as their Elegance is exquisite, it is impossible to explain them all by Rules, or illustrate them by Example. *Longinus* has mentioned some few, and our modern Books of Rhetoric are full of them. But the Want of Precept will be abundantly compensated to the Learner, by a good Taste, and a diligent Application to the Study of the best Authors.

Tenth  
Lecture.

Among the many Embellishments of Writing, few are attended with greater Beauty than *Antitheta*. The Reason is obvious, because Contraries illustrate, and recommend each other by Comparison. Of this the following Passage in *Virgil* is a remarkable Instance; where we have a beautiful Irony and Antithesis, at the same Time:

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[179] *Egregiam vero laudem, & spolia ampla refertis,  
Tuque, puerque tuus, magnum & memorabile nomen;  
Una dolo Divûm si fœmina victa duorum est.*

Prodigious Trophies you indeed have gain'd,  
You, and your Boy; vast Praise, a deathless Name;  
If by the Fraud of two celestial Pow'rs  
One Woman be subdu'd.

Near a-kin to it, is that Antithesis in *Ovid*:

[180] — *Quæ gloria vestra est;  
Si juvenes puerum, si multi fallitis unum?*

Will you, my Friends, united Strength employ,  
Against one many, Men against a Boy?

When the Thoughts are thus set against each other, they appear with Energy, and strike the Mind with redoubled Force.

Another Elegance in a Writer, is to convey the whole of his Idea to the Reader, by expressing only some Circumstances of it.

[181] *Dixerat; atque illam media inter talia ferro  
Collapsam aspiciunt comites, ensemq; cruore  
Spumantem, sparsasque manus.*

Thus, while she spoke, th' Attendants saw her fall,  
The Sword all frothing, and her Hands besmear'd  
With Blood.

Thus *Virgil* describes *Dido* killing herself: An inferior Poet, no doubt, would have represented her in the fatal Act, rushing upon the Sword with all her Strength, the Blood gushing out, and that Part of her Body which receiv'd the Wound expos'd to View. But how much better are all these passed over, and suggested to us only by their Adjuncts and Effects? There is another Example, of this kind, in the fourth *Georgic*, which is truly wonderful:

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[182] *Illâ quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina præceps,  
Immanem ante pedes hydrum moritura puella  
Servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.  
At chorus æqualis Dryadum clamore supremos*

*Implerunt montes; flerunt Rhodopeiæ arces, &c.*

She doom'd to Death, while, heedless, thee she fled,  
Along the River's Side, before her Steps,  
In the high Grass saw not the monstrous Snake,  
Which, unperceiv'd, lay lurking on the Bank.  
But all the beauteous Quire of Woodland Nymphs,  
Her Fellows, fill'd with Shrieks the lofty Hills;  
The *Rhodopeian* Mountains wept, &c.

How concise, and ingenious! This Artifice of insinuating only the Sense to the Reader, is so useful in Epigram, that the whole Thought often turns upon it. Thus in that of *Martial*:

[183] *Pexatus pulchre, rides mea, Zoile, trita;*  
*Sunt hæc trita quidem, Zoile; sed mea sunt.*

My Threadbare Coat is scorn'd by Liv'ry-*John*:  
'Tis true, 'tis Threadbare—but it is my own.

The Turn, you see, is witty, and facetious! But how poor a Joke had it been, if the Poet had only said, however true it was, that the Clothes which *Zoilus* wore were not his own? But I fear, I transgress the very Rule I am recommending: I shall therefore add no more, than only to remind the Reader, that what I have said under another Head<sup>[184]</sup>, might more properly come under this, viz. *That the Mind of Man does not love to have too minute a Detail of Particulars; but takes a Pleasure in having Room for Imagination, and in forming a Judgment of what is not express'd, from what is.*

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And since I have casually mention'd Transitions, I would here observe, that the Elegance of them is equal to their Difficulty: The great Secret consists either in digressing of a *sudden* to some new Subject, and giving the Reader the Pleasure of a Surprise; and yet continuing on the Thread of the Discourse so artfully, that he may admire a *Connection*, where, at first, there seem'd to be none: Or in such a gradual Transition from Thought to Thought, of near Affinity with each other, that the Mind may be imperceptibly led to a very different Subject, without being sensible of the intermediate Steps of the Digression. Thus, in the Rainbow, the neighbouring Colours are so like each other, that 'tis hard to say where this ends, or that begins; yet there's a wide Difference, if we leave out the intermediate Shades, and compare the Rays of the two Extremes. My Meaning, perhaps, will appear clearer from Example. *Horace* begins his 29th Ode, of the third Book, in the following Manner:

*Tyrrhena regum progenies, tibi*  
*Non ante verso lene merum cado,*  
*Cum flore, Mæcenas, rosarum,*  
*Pressa tuis balanus capillis*  
*Jamdudum apud me est, &c.*

My noble Lord, of Royal Blood,  
That from the *Tuscan* Monarchs flow'd,  
I have a Cask ne'er pierc'd before;  
My Garlands wreath'd, my Crowns are made,  
My Roses pluck'd to grace thy Head;  
As fair and sweet as e'er *Præneste* bore.

And concludes it thus:

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*Non est meum, si mugiat Africis*  
*Malus procellis, ad miseræ preces*  
*Decurrere, & votis pacisci,*  
*Ne Cypriæ, Tyriæque, merces*  
*Addant avaro divitias mari:*  
*Tunc me biremis præsidio scaphæ*  
*Tutum per Ægæos tumultus*  
*Aura feret, geminusque Pollux.*

When spreading Sails rough Tempests tear,  
I make no lamentable Pray'r;  
I do not bargain with the Gods,  
Nor offer costly Sacrifice  
To save my precious *Tyrian* Dyes  
From adding Riches to the greedy Floods.  
E'en 'midst these Storms I'll safely ride,  
My Bark shall stem the highest Tide,  
Tho' Tempests toss, and th'Ocean raves;  
*Castor* shall gather gentle Gales,  
And *Pollux* fill my spreading Sails,  
And bear me safe thro' the *Ægæan* Waves.

*Creech.*

Between the Beginning and Ending, consider'd in themselves, how wide a Difference? And yet, if we examine the Gradation of Thought thro' the whole Ode, we shall see the most elegant Connection. In the Beginning, the Poet invites his Statesman Friend to Supper: "I have prepared every Thing for your Reception, says he; leave, for a While, the City, the Business and Riches of it; 'tis a Pleasure often to Men of high Station, to partake of the Change of Low Life. Forget Politics for a While, and be not over anxious for the Nation's Welfare. Providence conceals Futurity from us Mortals: Let us therefore, in Prudence, make the best of the present; all else is carry'd down by the Stream of Time, and what is past returns no more. Fortune is fickle; I am pleas'd, when she smiles; but disregard her Frowns, contented with Poverty and Virtue. Care is the inseparable Attendant of Riches; I compound to want the one, that I may be secure from the other. I have no Business, when Storms roar, to fall into Tears," &c. Behold a Chain connected, and yet conceal'd with the greatest Art.

Sometimes it is necessary that the Transition should appear open, and design'd; but often otherwise. In the following Passage, we shall see a Specimen of either Sort; I mean, of the formal, and of the sudden Transition. *Turnus* having, in the eleventh *Æneis*, had a good many Words with *Drances*, and in great Passion thrown out these, among the rest,

[185] *Nunquam animam talem dextra hac (absiste moveri)  
Amittes; habitet tecum, & sit pectore in isto.*

A Soul like that (dismiss  
Thy Terror) by this Hand thou ne'er shalt lose;  
There let it dwell, and in that Breast remain.

thus turns his Discourse to the King:

*Nunc ad Te, & tua, magne Pater, consulta revertor.  
Si nullam nostris ultra spem ponis in armis,  
Si tam deserti sumus, ut semel agmine verso  
Funditus occidimus, nec habet fortuna regressum;  
Oremus pacem, & dextras tendamus inermes.  
Quanquam ô! si solitæ quicquam virtutis adesset;  
Ille mihi ante alios fortunatusque laborum,  
Egregiusque animi, qui, ne quid tale videret,  
Procubuit moriens, & humum semel ore momordit.*

To you, great Monarch, and to your Debates,  
I now return. If you no more repose  
Hope in our Arms; if by one Battle lost,  
We perish whole, and Fortune knows no Change;  
Let us beg Peace, and stretch our Hands unarm'd.  
(Yet Oh! did any of our pristine Worth  
And Virtue still remain; that Man to me  
Would in his glorious Toils most blest appear,  
Who, rather than behold a Thing like this,  
Fell once for all, and dying bit the Ground.)

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Reverence due to Majesty requir'd that *Turnus* should direct his Discourse from *Drances* to the King, by some solemn Address. But after *dextras tendamus inermes*, to *Quanquam ô! si solitæ quicquam virtutis adesset*, the Transition is sudden, and unexpected. The Mind, by this Means, is transported from one Contrary to another; a sure Indication of the Force of Eloquence, and of its powerful Operation on its Hearers.

In Narrations 'tis no small Art to make a Transition from one Fact to another: Several Instances of this, we have in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, the Nature of which Work requir'd them; where the Connection, indeed, is sometimes neat and artful, sometimes hard and forced, not to say ridiculous.

Under this Head we may reckon those Excursions of another kind, in which the Poet, by some sudden Allusion or Comparison, diverts from his Subject to a new Matter, and immediately returns to it again. I shall explain myself better by Example. *Juvenal*, describing the various Inconveniencies of the City, mentions these, among the rest:

[186] — *Rhedarum transitus arcto  
Vicorum inflexu, & stantis convicia mandræ,  
Eripiunt somnum Druso, vitulisque marinis.*

The Drover who his Fellow Drover meets  
In narrow Passages of winding Streets;  
The Waggoners that curse their standing Teams,  
Wou'd wake ev'n drowsy *Drusus* from his Dreams.  
*Dryden.*

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His Intent, as I said, was to recount the Disadvantages of a City Life; and mentioning, among them, the Obstructions in the Streets, from Chairs and Coaches, he takes Occasion, by the bye, to reproach the Sloth and Laziness of *Drusus*. So again, enumerating the Miseries of Old Age, he

adds:

[187] —— *Circumsilit, agmine facto,  
Morborum omne genus; quorum si nomina quæras  
Promptius expediam, quot amaverit Hippiæ mœchos,  
Quot Themison ægros Autumnno occiderit uno,  
Quot Basilus socios, quot circumscripserit Hirrus  
Pupillos, &c.*

In fine, he wears no Limb about him sound:  
With Sores and Sickneses belleaguer'd round:  
Ask me their Names, I sooner cou'd relate  
How many Drudges on salt *Hippiæ* wait;  
What Crouds of Patients the Town Doctor kills,  
Or how, last Fall, he rais'd the Weekly Bills;  
What Provinces by *Basilus* were spoil'd,  
What Herds of Heirs by Guardians are beguil'd.  
*Dryden.*

These Excursions are chiefly suitable to *Satire*; and there's no Branch of it attended with greater Wit and Poignancy.

I have not Room here, to treat of *Comparisons* in the Manner they deserve; they being so various, that they would require an entire Dissertation. When they are ill drawn, nothing is more ridiculous; when well, nothing more beautiful. No kind of Style is excluded from them, and they are not only an Ornament, but often an Illustration of the Subject. They ought always to appear natural, never forced, or far fetch'd. Avoid, therefore, the Fault of those Writers, who find out what they call *Similies* first, and afterwards Matter to apply to them. Not that they are guilty of it, whose Comparisons don't in every Respect coincide with what they were brought to illustrate. Even the most elegant of them agree sometimes with the Description but in one Adjunct. Thus *Virgil*, in the eighth *Æneis*:

[188] *Dixerat; & niveis hinc atque hinc Diva lacertis  
Cunctantem amplexu molli fovet: ille repente  
Accepit solitam flammam; notusque medullas  
Intravit calor, & labefacta per ossa cucurrit.  
Haud secus atque olim tonitru cum rupta corusco  
Igne rima micans percurrit lumine nimbos.*

She said; and round him threw her snowy Arms,  
And warm'd him, wav'ring, with a soft Embrace:  
He soon receives the wonted Flame, which flies  
Swift thro' his Marrow, and his melting Bones;  
As when in Thunder, lanc'd along the Sky,  
A Streak of Fire runs streaming thro' the Clouds.

Upon a nice Scrutiny, the Parallel between Love and Thunder will hold but very little: And yet no good Judge, I believe, will dispute the Elegance of the above Comparison.

On this Head our Moderns seem to excel the Ancients, and to have found out an Use of Comparisons which they were utter Strangers to. Theirs are merely ornamental; ours often contain the Points of Epigram, the Jibes of Satire, and the Banters of Comedy; an Art which *Ovid*, *Martial*, *Juvenal*, *Horace* and *Terence* knew very little of. It will not be allow'd me to produce Instances here; but innumerable I could produce, if a Mixture of different Languages, and especially of our own, would not sound disagreeable in these *Latin* Dissertations<sup>[189]</sup>. 'Tis true, Tragic and Epic Poets ought totally to avoid these witty Allusions; which are below the Severity of their Style, and the Dignity of their Compositions. The Comparisons that serve for Illustration only, come within their Province; such as we meet with very frequently in *Homer* and *Virgil*: Tho' (to say the Truth) even the best Writers among the Ancients seem on this Head to labour under a Poverty of Matter. In the Description of a Battle, for Instance, the Similes of a Lion, a Bull, a Serpent, an Eagle, and other Animals of the fiercer kind, recur too frequently under some small Variations. But in After-Ages the Increase of Arts, and Sciences, and of Religion more particularly, open'd a new Field, which has minister'd abundantly not only to the Emolument of Mankind in general, but in this, and in all other Respects, to the Refinement of Wit.

If I must give my Opinion of those *luxurious Comparisons* that deviate from the Subject, which *Homer*, chiefly, among the Ancients, and *Milton*, among the Moderns, run into; I must confess, they neither deserve Commendation, nor are capable of Defence. But as they have the Sanction of so great Authority, it is not for me to pass Judgment on them, but leave every one to follow his own.

If I remember right, there are few or no Similes in the Tragedies of the ancient Poets. Among the Moderns, no kind of Writing abounds more with them; and it must be own'd, they are often much to be admir'd: But very different are some of these; such, in particular, as are introduced uttered by Persons labouring under the Height of Passion, or in the Agonies of Death; than which, nothing can be more absurd, or unpardonable. As I have casually mention'd this Error in Writing, I would farther observe, your *pretty Thoughts*, as they are commonly call'd, are neither suitable

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in a Passion, nor proper to raise one; they only serve in Descriptions to play upon the Imagination, not to put the Affections in Motion. A Breast struggling with Anger, Grief, or Desire, is little solicitous to express its Anguish in fine wrought Turns of Wit, which will never be able to move the Reader to any Thing else but Madness at the Author's Folly. The plainer Commotions of the Mind are express'd, the better; here the chief Elegance is to want Ornament, and 'tis the great Master-piece of Art to conceal itself in representing Nature. Some Figures, indeed, are not only allowable in these Cases, but necessary; those, in particular, which impress upon the Mind the various Conflicts of the Soul; for such are the Language of Persons who feel these Tumults, tho' they were never taught to express them by the Rules of Rhetoric. But Metaphors and Antitheses, and all Decorations of that kind, must be us'd sparingly, excepting only those Metaphors which Orators sometimes call forth to express their Rage, with all the Fire of Eloquence. This I then rather observe, that I might not seem to contradict *Longinus*; who, speaking of a Multitude of Metaphors, says<sup>[190]</sup>, they are then most useful, *when the Passions swell like a Torrent*. He produces an Instance out of *Demosthenes*, where the Orator indeed appears in Agitation; but still they are different from those we are now speaking of, and not so much the Effect of Nature, as of Art: And even here the Metaphors are far from being bold, nor much distorted from their literal Sense. 'Tis certain, *Longinus* did not propose this as a *general* Rule; nor is it possible to represent those Throws and Labours of the Soul in Oratory, which appear in Tragic and Epic Characters; where Joy, Grief, and Anger, glow more intensely, as well as more naturally. But if the Orator feels the same Emotions, and in the same Degree, it is certain he must abstain from the abundant use of Metaphors.

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Before I conclude this Dissertation, I would lay before my Audience, as clear an Idea of the different Kinds of Thought which have not yet been touch'd upon, as Words can convey, and so nice a Subject will admit of. The *Mordacity* of the *severe* and *jocose* Satire, has been already describ'd, and some Examples produc'd of each.

**Eleventh  
Lecture.**

There are Thoughts, likewise, of the *delicate* Kind, whose Excellence does not consist in their *Acuteness*, but in an artful and agreeable Turn; which don't strike the Imagination at once with Wonder; but move it gently, with a more even Tenor. In this soft Strain, *Phædra* begins her Epistle to her dear *Hippolytus*:

[191] *Qua, nisi Tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem  
Mittit Amazonio Cressa puella viro.*

That Health, *Hippolytus*, from me receive,  
Which to the Writer you alone must give.

I could easily have excused *Ovid* making use of so beautiful a Turn twice, if he had kept it without any Variation. For in his *Metamorphoses*, *Byblis* writes to her Brother almost in the same Terms:

[192] *Quam, nisi Tu dederis, non est habitura, salutem,  
Hanc tibi mittit amans.*

Thy Lover, gentle *Caunus*, wishes thee  
That Health, which thou, alone, canst give to me.  
*Steph. Harvey, Esq.*

But here, for want of the Word *ipsa*, the Elegance is quite lost, and the Emphasis spoil'd. In the same Poet, *Helen*, under a Pretence of dissuading *Paris* from persevering in his Addresses to her, pays a Compliment to his Beauty, and shews the just Sense she has of her own; and, at the same Time, artfully insinuates, that she has no Aversion to his Love, but rather a secret Passion for him: And expresses all this with wonderful Address, in one Verse:

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[193] *Disce, meo exemplo, formosis posse carere.*

From my Example learn,  
To bear the Want of what has Pow'r to charm.

Nothing can be more ingenious. This single Line so teems with Thought, that it would bear, nay require a long Examination, to discover all its Beauties. At every Word some new Idea arises, which I shall, at present, leave to the Reflection of others, that I may not anticipate so great a Pleasure. Under this Head of *delicate Thought*, we may reckon that celebrated Compliment with which *Horace* begins his Epistle to *Augustus*:

[194] *Cum tot sustineas, & tanta negotia solus,  
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,  
Legibus emendes; in publica commoda peccem,  
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Cæsar.*

When you alone sustain the weighty Cares  
Of all the World, and manage Peace and Wars:  
The *Roman* State by Virtue's Rules amend,  
Adorn with Manners, and with Arms defend;  
To write a long Discourse, and waste your Time,

Against the publick Good, wou'd be a Crime.  
*Creech.*

The Address is as genteel as it is ingenious, and it is hard to say whether we should admire in it more the Poet, or the Courtier. [Pg 142]

*Strong Thoughts* are such as strike us neither with *Acuteness*, their *Suddenness*, nor their *Delicacy*; but are full of Sense and Solidity, carry Weight in their Meaning, and sink deep in the Understanding. As in that of *Virgil*:

[195] *Disce, Puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem,  
Fortunam ex aliis.*

True Toil and Virtue learn, dear Youth, from me;  
Fortune from others.

For it is a great Mistake to think, that Gravity and Severity in Writing is inconsistent with Wit and Ingenuity. There's Elegance in moral and philosophical Reflections; and nothing can have more of it than those Sentences that are scatter'd up and down in the Narrations, but especially the Speeches, in *Virgil*. In the eleventh *Æneis*, the confederate *Latin* Princes deliberate in Council what Steps to take after their late Defeat; *Turnus*, in a Speech upon that Occasion, observes, that since they had Forces enough left to continue the War, they were not reduced to the sad Necessity of suing for Peace. The moral Reflection he introduces, will be clearer seen, by considering the Verses before and after it.

[196] *Sin & Trojanis cum multo gloria venit  
Sanguine, sunt illis sua funera, parque per omnes  
Tempestas; cur indecores in limine primo  
Deficimus? cur ante tubam timor occupat artus?  
Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi,  
Rettulit in melius; multos alterna revisens  
Lusit, & in solido rursus fortuna locavit.  
Non erit auxilio nobis Ætolus, & Arpi?  
At Messapus erit, &c.*

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If Glory to our Foes  
Came purchas'd at a vast Expence of Blood:  
If they too have their Fun'rals; and thro' all  
The Tempest rag'd with equal Fury; why  
Faint we inglorious, in the first Attempt,  
And shrink with Fear before the Trumpet's Sound?  
Oft has Vicissitude of changeful Time  
By various Turns to better State restor'd  
Distress'd Affairs: Many with pleasing Sport  
Fortune, alternately revisiting,  
Has mock'd, and on a solid Base repos'd.  
Will not *Ætolian Arpi* give us Aid?  
Yet will *Messapus*, &c.

These *echoing Turns*, much affected by the Moderns, tho' little us'd by the Ancients, have sometimes their Beauty, sometimes not: I can by no means agree with a certain Writer of ours, who tells us, that there's only one Example of this Kind in *Virgil*, and instances in that of *Orpheus* looking back upon *Eurydice*:

[197] *Cum subito incautum dementia cepit amantem,  
Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes!*

When suddenly a Frenzy seiz'd  
Th' unwary Lover; yet a venial Crime  
Cou'd aught be venial, when the *Manes* judge.

He might with more Justice have produced that famous Sentence in the second *Æneis*:

[198] *Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem.*

To vanquish'd Men  
The only Safety is to hope for none.

Or those melodious Verses in the eighth Eclogue:

[199] *Sævus amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem  
Commaculare manus: crudelis tu quoque mater;  
Crudelis mater magis an puer improbus ille?  
Improbus ille puer, crudelis tu quoque mater.*

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Inhuman Love th' unnat'ral Mother taught

To dip her Hands in her own Children's Blood:  
Cruel indeed the Mother; was she then  
More cruel? or more impious that dire Boy?

You see what a beautiful Effect this Repetition of the Words and Thoughts has; and how much Melancholy it adds to the Complaint. It is obvious from hence to observe, that *Virgil* could have far excell'd *Ovid* in these lighter Conceits, if he had not chose to let his Genius soar to much higher Flights. Under this Head we may add the following Passage from *Ovid*:

[200] *Si, nisi quæ facie poterit te digna videri,  
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est.*

If to no Charms thou wilt thy Heart resign,  
But such as merit, such as equal thine;  
By none, alas! by none thou canst be mov'd,  
*Phaon* alone by *Phaon* must be lov'd.  
*Pope.*

The Elegance of these Lines consists in giving a new Sense to the same Words; they reverberate, as it were, the Motions of the Mind, and by that Means affect it with Surprize and Admiration. But there are many who love to be sporting thus with Words, that are even without Meaning, and have no Thought in them to be reflected. They are a sort of *nominal* Turns, that our Youth are wonderfully studious of, especially in their Prose Writings, and which conduce not a little to the Corruption of their Taste.

There are Thoughts, likewise, of near Affinity with these, that consist in *Contraries*, and are sometimes beautiful, often ridiculous. Of the beautiful Kind, is that of *Martial* to *Cæsar*:

[201] *Vox diversa sonat, populorum est vox tamen una;  
Cum verus patriæ diceris esse Pater.*

While you their Country's Guardian they proclaim,  
Their Tongues are diff'rent, but their Voice the same.

*Ovid* with less Success:

[202] *Non ego poscenti quod sum cito tradita Regi,  
Culpa tua est; quamvis hoc quoque culpa tua est.*

In the former Instance, there's only a *seeming Contrariety*, which is built upon solid Truth; the latter approaches too near a Contradiction, I fear, indeed, it is one. To many of these elegant Fancies (among the Admirers of which Crowds of our modern Writers are desirous of being number'd) that Sneer of *Martial* may with much Justice be applied:

[203] *Pauper videri Cinna vult, & est pauper.*

*Cinna's* as really poor as he wou'd seem.

They are seeming *Contradictions*, and (strange as this new Species of Wit is) are in Reality what they seem: Or, if they deserve any better Name, they are an empty Sound of Words, *meer Noise*, and *Nonsense*.

Tho' the greatest Part of modern Wit turns entirely on this playing upon Words, I don't mean in Conversation only, (where these Trifles are hardly, very hardly tolerable) but even in the severest Writings, yet every Man of common Sense is so convinced of the Absurdity of prostituting it to the Abuse of Words, that I shall dwell no longer upon so disagreeable, so contemptible a Subject. I would only observe, that the Ancients are but little guilty of this Fault: That of *Terence*<sup>[204]</sup>, *Inceptio est amentium, haud amantium*; and of *Cicero*, cited by *Juvenal*,

[205] *O fortunatam, natam, me consule, Romam.*

Fortune fortun'd the happy Day of *Rome*,  
When thou a Consul sole consol'd her Doom.  
*Dryden.*

and some others, tho' they consist of a Gingle, which I could wish such excellent Writers had wholly abstain'd from, yet they are not *equivocal* Expressions, nor do they contain a double Sense. *Ovid's*

[206] *Injustaque justa peregit,*

And solemniz'd the Death himself had wrought.  
*Addison.*

I know not how to find an Excuse for. And it must be own'd, that *Plautus* often runs into these Puerilities; for which Reason, it is probable, he falls under the Censure of *Horace*:



[207] *At proavi nostri Plautinos & numeros & Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque, (Ne dicam stulte) mirati.*

'Tis true, as I have heard, the former Times  
Clapt *Plautus' Jokes*, and his uneven Rhimes.  
*Creech.*

And it can't be denied but *Terence*, and some of the best Writers, have some little Touches of this Epidemical Distemper. There are few of these Conceits but are *merely equivocal*, that is, vary as little in the Thought, as in the Expression; a sort of Collision, from whence, 'tis possible, some Sparks of Wit may sometimes, but very rarely, be struck out. Thus much I thought proper to lay before you, in Relation to the *Elegance* of *Thought* in Poetry, both true and false.

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I have little Occasion to enlarge distinctly upon the *Sublime*, because many Things relating to it fell in with what I have before advanced. However, as this was one of the Topics I propos'd to treat of, it is necessary I should say somewhat to it, before I conclude this Dissertation. I cannot better explain to you the Nature of the *Sublime*, and the Manner of its affecting us, than by giving you the Sense of *Longinus*<sup>[208]</sup> upon it, not in a literal Version, but by representing the Substance of him in a few Words. Whence is it that Writers of this Class, in a divine Impetuosity seem regardless of Accuracy, and scorn to be confin'd within the vulgar Rules of Exactness? The Truth is, Nature has form'd Man of an inquisitive Genius, and plac'd him in the World to behold and admire the Wonders of it; not as an idle Spectator, but as one concern'd in its busiest Scenes, eager for Action, and panting after Glory. To this End, he is strongly actuated by a Love and Desire of every Thing that is great and divine. The vast Expanse of the Universe cannot bound his Imagination; he extends his Thoughts into other Worlds, and is lost only in Infinity.

[209] — *Vivida vis animi pervincit, & extra  
Procedit longe flammantia mœnia mundi.*

His vigorous and active Mind is hurl'd  
Beyond the seeming Limits of the World.  
*Creech.*

And, in Truth, if we contemplate a Hero, whose Life is one continu'd Series of great Actions, we then may make some Estimate of what we were born to. Hence, then, it is, that Fountains and Rivulets, which answer all the common Conveniencies of Life, never in a great Degree awaken our Attention. But when we view the *Rhine*, the *Nile*, the *Danube*, but, above all, the Ocean, we stand fix'd at once with Awe and Wonder. So again, without any Emotion, we behold the daily Fires, of our own making, how long soever they continue burning: But we gaze with Astonishment at any sudden Light in the Heavens, tho' it vanishes, perhaps, as soon as it appears. Nor is there any Thing more wonderful in Nature than the Eruptions of Mount *Ætna*, which sometimes discharges from its Caverns Stones, and Deluges of Fire:

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[210] — *Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis:  
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,  
Turbine fumantem piceo, & candente favilla,  
Attollitque globos flammaram, & sidera lambit.  
Interdum scopulos, avulsaque viscera montis,  
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque saxa sub auras  
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exæstuat imo.*

But *Ætna* thunders nigh  
In dreadful Ruins. With a Whirlwind's Force  
Sometimes it throws to Heav'n a pitchy Cloud,  
Redden'd with Cinders, and involv'd in Smoke;  
And tosses Balls of Flame, and licks the Stars.  
Sometimes with loud Explosion high it hurls  
Vast Rocks, and Entrails from the Mountain torn,  
With roaring Noise slings molten Stones in Air,  
And boils, and bellows, from its lowest Caves.

Upon the whole, we may draw this Conclusion, that Things of common Use or Necessity, lose all their Wonder, by their Frequency; but whatever is unusual, and beyond the Course of Nature, strikes our Attention, and calls forth our Admiration.

I before observ'd, and therefore need not insist upon it farther here, that the opposite to *Sublime* is *Bombast* and *Fustian*. I observ'd likewise, that the *Sublime* was not incompatible with the *plain* Style, tho' chiefly adapted to the *Heroic*, and produc'd Examples of both; for what I said in Relation to Style, I told you, in the Beginning of this Dissertation, was *sometimes* applicable to Thought. I would now add, that 'tis a great Mistake to think that the *Sublime* is only, or chiefly suited to Joy, Triumphs, and pompous Descriptions; for nothing has more of that Quality than those Ideas that command *Pity* and *Terror*. I shall produce one, but a very remarkable Instance of each, taken almost from the same Place. *Turnus*, when his Forces were defeated, and his own Death approaching, dissuades his Sister *Juturna* from any farther fruitless Offices of her Love, in this Heroical Complaint:

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[211] —Sed quis olympo.

*Demissam tantos voluit te ferre labores?  
An fratris miseri letum ut crudele videres?  
Nam quid ago? aut quæ nunc spondet fortuna salutem?  
Vidi oculos ante ipse meos me voce vocantem  
Murratum, quo non superat mihi charior alter,  
Oppetere ingentem, atque ingenti vulnere victum.  
Occidit infelix, ne nostrum dedecus Ufens  
Aspiceret: Teucris potiuntur corpore, & armis.  
Exscindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)  
Perpetiar? dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?  
Terga dabo? & Turnum fugientem hæc terra videbit?  
Usque adeone mori miserum est? Vos ô mihi, Manes,  
Este boni; quoniam Superis aversa voluntas.  
Sancta ad vos anima, atque istius inscia culpæ  
Descendam, magnorum haud unquam indignus avorum.*

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But who sent you down  
Dispatch'd from Heav'n, and will'd you to endure  
Such Labours? Was it that you might behold  
Your most unhappy Brother's cruel Death?  
For now what Measures can I take? What Hope  
Of new Success can any Fortune shew?  
Before these Eyes myself *Murratus* saw  
(Than whom to me no dearer Name survives)  
Calling on me for Help, I saw him fall  
Mighty, and with a mighty Wound subdu'd.  
There *Ufens* fell, unfortunate, nor liv'd  
To see our Shame: The *Trojan* Victors keep  
The full Possession of his Corps and Arms.  
Shall I endure (that only now remains)  
The City to be raz'd? Nor with my Sword  
Refel the Taunts of *Drances*? Shall I shew  
My Back? And shall this Earth see *Turnus* fly?  
Is Death so terrible? Ye Gods of Hell,  
Be kind; since those of Heav'n abhor my Pray'r.  
To you a guiltless Ghost I will descend,  
Unsully'd with this Stain, nor ever prov'd  
Unworthy of my great Forefather's Fame.

It is impossible not to be wrapt into an Extasy, as it were, of Pity and Wonder, to behold so majestic Sorrow, and such exalted Misery. Nor less sublime is that Terror, with which the Fury possesses the Breast of the same unhappy Hero, when she is sent by *Jupiter* to carry the fatal Omen:

[212] *Postquam acies videt Iliacas, atque agmina Turni,  
Alitis in parvæ subito collecta figuram,  
Quæ quondam in bustis, aut culminibus desertis,  
Nocte sedens, serum canit importuna per umbras;  
Hanc versa in faciem Turni se Pestis ad ora  
Fertque, refertque sonans, clypeumque everberat alis.*

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Soon as the *Trojan* Troops, and *Turnus'* Bands  
She sees; she changes, lessen'd, to the Shape  
Of a small Bird, which sitting on the Tops  
Of Tombs, and old deserted Tow'rs, by Night,  
Shrieks thro' the Shades, ill-omen'd: Thus transform'd  
The Fiend o'er *Turnus'* Visage, screaming, flies  
This Way, and that; and flaps upon his Shield  
With flutt'ring Pinions.

I appeal to every Reader, whether at these Lines his Blood does not run cold within him, whether he does not feel the same dismal Effects that *Turnus* did:

[213] *Illi membra novus solvit formidine torpor;  
Arrectæque horrore comæ, & vox faucibus hæsit.*

Him unusual Fear  
Stiff'ning benumbs; uprose his Hair erect,  
And to his Mouth his Speech with Horror cleav'd.

When I first engag'd in this new Province, I thought to have treated largely, and in a set Dissertation, on *poetic Licence*. But I now think that Design superfluous, having spoke so largely of it, when I treated of the *Diction* and *Thought* of Poetry, and of the *Elegance* and *Sublimity* of each. I then observ'd, that tho' Poets have a Method of Writing peculiar to themselves, and are

allow'd many Liberties in it, from which other Writers are debarr'd; yet that they are indulg'd in nothing but what is built upon the Foundation of Truth, and solid Reason: Agreeably to that of *Horace*,

[214] — *Pictoribus, atque Poetis,  
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.  
Scimus, & hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim:  
Sed non ut placidis cocant immitia, non ut  
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.*

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Painters and Poets have been still allow'd  
Their Pencils and their Fancies unconfin'd.  
This Privilege we freely give and take:  
But Nature, and the common Laws of Sense,  
Forbid to reconcile Antipathies,  
Or make a Snake engender with a Dove,  
And hungry Tygers court the tender Lambs.  
*Roscom.*

Nothing now remains, but to entreat you Gentlemen, that make up my Audience, candidly to accept these mean Attempts of mine upon so *difficult* a Subject.

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## LECTURE XII.

### *Of Epigram, and other lighter Species of Poetry.*

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Designing to treat of the several Species of Poetry, I thought proper to begin with the lowest, and so gradually proceed to others of a higher Kind, till at last I come to the Epic or Heroic Poem.

Epigram shall be the chief Subject of this Discourse. But as there are other small Poems, which will scarce deserve a distinct one, I shall here make such Observations upon them as may be necessary.

The Account we have of Epigram, both of the Name and Thing, is this: It was usual, it seems, among the Ancients, to cut short Inscriptions under the Statues of their Gods, which they call'd επιγραφαί, and επιγραμματα. These Inscriptions serv'd as *Lemmata*, or Subjects for little poetical Conceits, which were afterwards themselves term'd Epigrams. That upon the Statue of *Venus* made by *Praxiteles*, is well known.

Γυμνην οιδε Παρις με, και Αγκισης, και Αδονις.  
Τους τρεις οιδα μονους, Πραξιτελες δε ποθεν?

And what, said she, does this bold Painter mean?  
When was I bathing thus, and naked seen?

*Prior.*

In Course of Time, other Poems of like Nature, whatever their Subject was, went by the Name of Epigrams, on account of their Affinity with those to which that Title was first appropriated.

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Epigrams are divided into various Heads; the greater, the less, the equal<sup>[215]</sup>, the simple, the compound, the digressive, &c. But so minute a Distinction is needless, since they may be made upon any Subject. Some are satirical, as that of *Martial*,

[216] *Quem recitas meus est, O Fidentine, Libellus;  
Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.*

'Tis true, in Print I own my humble Muse;  
But when the Laureat shall my Lines traduce,  
*Tartuffe* in *England* justly I disown;  
*The Food was mine, the Excrement's his own.*

and in another Place:

[217] *Quid Te, Tucca, juvat vetulo miscere Falerno  
In Vaticanis condita musta cadis?  
Quid tantum fecere boni tibi pessima vina?  
Aut quid fecerunt optima vina mali?  
De nobis facile est; scelus est jugulare Falernum,  
Et dare Campano toxica sæva mero.  
Convivæ meruere tui fortasse perire;  
Amphora non meruit tam pretiosa mori.*

What mean'st thou, *Tucca*, with Tocay to join  
 The vapid Refuse of dull Rhenish Wine?  
 Do you the cordial Juice such Treach'ry owe,  
 Prepost'rous Charity the Cut-throat show?  
 To spoil Tocay, however fare your Guest,  
 Is Murder, without Benefit of Priest.  
 Poison allow the Merit of your Friend;  
 But the poor Cask deserv'd a better End.

This, I should think, is the best kind of Epigram; for if the Nature of it in general consists in being acute, whatever is satirical, must always be so. Not but that there are other proper Subjects of it. Some panegyric, directly contrary to the former; many of which we have in *Martial* upon the Emperor *Domitian*, and in others. That of *Virgil* is famous.

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*Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane;  
 Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.*

The Show'rs brought on the Night, the Shews the Day:  
 Thus *Jove* and *Cæsar* bear an equal Sway.

And the Inscription by a Modern design'd for the Palace of the late King of *France*:

*Non orbis gentem, non urbem gens habet ullam,  
 Urbsve domum, dominum nec domus ulla, parem.*

The world no Realm, no Realm a City sees,  
 No City House, no House a Lord like this.

In which, tho' there is not that witty Turn which is usually reckon'd essential to Epigram; yet the Climax is so finely work'd up, that it well deserves the great Praises that have been given it. There are other Epigrams of the Love Kind; as the following one in the Anthology of *Italian* Poets:

*Me lætis Leonilla oculis, me Lydia torvis  
 Aspicit; hæc noctem nuntiat, illa diem.  
 Has Cytherea meo stellas præfecit amori;  
 Hæc meus est Vesper, Lucifer illa meus.*

One with a sleepy, one a smirking Ray,  
*Fusca* the Night foretels, *Lucy* the Day.  
*Venus* ordain'd, that each by Turns shou'd move,  
 The Morning, and the Ev'ning Star of Love.

Here, indeed, we have the true *Form* and *Shape* of an Epigram, it has all the *Appearance* of Wit and Elegance; but I fear it offends against right Reason and Nature. Some there are, upon various Circumstances or Events, which are scarce reducible to any Class. As this of *Martial*, upon the City *Ravenna*, where there is a great Scarcity of Water:

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[218] *Callidus imposuit nuper mihi caupo Ravennæ;  
 Cum peterem mixtum, vendidit ille merum.*

By a *Ravenna* Vintner once betray'd,  
 So much for Wine and Water mixt I paid.  
 But when I thought the purchas'd Liquor mine,  
 The Rascal fob'd me off with only Wine.  
*Addison.*

And upon the Boy whose Throat was cut with an Icicle.

[219] *Quid non sæva sibi voluit Fortuna licere?  
 Aut ubi mors non est, si jugulatis, aquæ?*

What various Deaths are we decreed to feel,  
 If Waters poignard like the stubborn Steel?<sup>[220]</sup>

And this *Greek* Epigram:

Χρυσον αυηρ ευρωω ελιπε βροχου, αυταρ ο χρυσου.  
 Ου λιπεν ουχ ευρωω, ηψευ ου ευρε βροχου.

The Noose just tying, *Cotta* found a Purse, }  
 The Rope serv'd *Strephon*, who, by Fate's Reverse,  
 Had lost the Gold,—to one a Blessing, one a Curse.

Here, again, the true Spirit of Epigram seems wanting; we have no Point of Wit, but only a plain Narration of Fact. But still, the Words are so elegantly opposed to each other, and in so short a Compass, that we shall scarce meet with any Thing which exceeds it. While I am speaking of the different Subjects of Epigram, I would observe, that Religion is sometimes one. And as nothing is

so suitable to Poetry as the *Marvellous*, nothing can afford more Matter for it than the *Christian* Religion, which so much abounds with Miracles. I shall shew, perhaps, hereafter, how well adapted it is for Poems of the highest Kind, when I come to speak of *sacred Poetry*; but how proper a Subject it is for Epigram, is self-evident. For tho' these sort of Verses are often ludicrous, and trifling; yet they sometimes breathe a Spirit of Sublimity, every way becoming them. There are many of *Martial* of this Kind. That, for Instance, to the Emperor *Domitian*, upon his erecting to himself a triumphal Arch, and a Temple to Fortune:

[221] *Hic, ubi Fortunæ Reducis fulgentia late  
Templa nitent, felix area nuper erat.  
Hic stetit, Arctoi formosus pulvere belli,  
Purpureum fundens Cæsar ab ore jubar.  
Hic lauro redimita comas, & candida cultu,  
Roma salutavit voce, manuque, duces.  
Grande loci meritum testantur & altera dona;  
Stat sacer, edomitis gentibus, arcus ovans.  
Hic gemini currus numerant elephanta frequentem;  
Sufficit immensis aureas ipse jugis.  
Hæc est digna tuis, Germanice, porta triumphis;  
Hos aditus urbem Martis habere decet.*

Here late a happy Plain, where shines the Dome  
Sacred to *Fortune safe conducting home*.  
Here stopt great *Cæsar*, in his ruddy Car,  
With Dust resplendent of the northern War;  
While *Rome* with White bedeck'd, and Laurels crown'd,  
With eager Voice and Hand her Genius own'd.  
Here stands (for such the Merit of the Place)  
An Arch Triumphant o'er the *Dacian* Race.  
Two Chariots, drawn by Elephants, proclaim  
His double Conquest, and their double Shame.  
In Gold both Teams he reins with equal Hand,  
Alone sufficient for the wide Command.  
Portals like this, great *Cæsar*, well become  
The Mistress of the World, and Lord of *Rome*.

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And in another Place, upon *Pompey* and his Sons:

[222] *Pompeios juvenes Asia atque Europa, sed ipsum  
Terra tegit Libyes, si tamen ulla tegit:  
Quid mirum, toto si spargitur orbe? jacere  
Uno nun potuit tanta ruina loco.*

*Asia* and *Europe* *Pompey's* Sons contain,  
Himself, if buried, lies in *Afric's* Plain.  
Nor wonder, if throughout the Globe are hurl'd  
The mighty Ruins which once shook the World.

If it be ask'd in what the Nature of Epigram in general consists; I reply, Acuteness and Facetiousness are its chief Characteristicks. It ought not to be mix'd, but uniform; to tend only to one Point, which is always to be express'd with Strength and Poignancy in the last Verse. This is above all to be regarded: If the last Verse be flat and languid, or faulty in any Respect, it spoils the whole, how beautiful soever the several Parts are.

This, I say, is, in general, the Nature of Epigrams; to which, however, there are, perhaps, some few Exceptions, that are not so remarkable for their Acuteness and Facetiousness, as for their Softness and Delicacy, or some other Elegance. I have given Instances of one or two already; whether they are to be look'd upon as Epigrams, or to be class'd under some other Species of Poetry, I am little solicitous. It is certain, there are some short beautiful Poems which cannot come within this Denomination; several in *Martial*, particularly, and many which you, Gentlemen, compose for your Lent Exercises upon philosophical Subjects; which, as they have already gain'd you great Reputation, so would they farther extend it, if a judicious Collection of them were publish'd [223]. The greatest Part of these are true Epigrams, witty and facetious. Some are Descriptions, Allusions, or poetical Fictions, elegant and beautiful, by whatever Name they are call'd, matters not. No one, I think, could justly object to you, that you affected a barren Subject for Poetry, the better to shew the Strength of your Parts, and Liveliness of your Invention; like a certain Monarch, who industriously chose a Place for his stately Fountains, incapable of having Water brought to it but at a prodigious Expense, only that he might leave a Monument of the Greatness of his Power and Magnificence: For as different as Poetry and Philosophy may seem to be, the one affords abundant Matter for the other, by furnishing the Mind with a Variety of Ideas, and diverting it continually into new Channels.

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*Elogiums* and *Inscriptions* are to be reduced to this Head, and *Epitaphs* likewise; the Elegance of which chiefly consists in an expressive Brevity. They should not have so much as one Epithet, properly so called; nor two Words synonymous. Some of these are true Metre, others are something between Prose and Verse, without any set Measure, but the Words perfectly

poetical<sup>[224]</sup>.

These little Compositions are often very beautiful: And I might add to them *Emblems*, or *Symbols*; by which I mean certain Figures, painted or cut, metaphorically expressing some Action, with an imperfect Sentence at Bottom, which in some measure explains the Sense of the Device, but leaves the Reader to supply the rest. The Painting is call'd the Body of the Emblem, the Sentence at Bottom, the Soul of it. These are Compositions purely poetical, and are often full of Thought and Elegance, I may add, of poetical Action too. A certain *French Writer*<sup>[225]</sup> (and among the *French* this Invention is in most Esteem) has writ a long and accurate Dissertation upon Emblems; wherein he has precisely defin'd their Nature, explain'd their different Species, laid down Rules for their Composition, and for distinguishing the true from the false; and, lastly, has produc'd Variety of Examples of them. I shall lay before you one Instance from him, that you may the better judge both of their Nature and Elegance. To express the Secresy of the King of *France's* Counsels, as well as the terrible Effects of them to his Enemies, the Sun was represented behind a Cloud, with this half Verse at Bottom:

—*Tegiturque, parat dum fulmina.*—

Conceal'd while he prepares his Bolts.

This is an Invention which I take to be modern, entirely unknown to the Ancients. And tho' the *French* Author I just mention'd may (according to the Genius of his Nation) attribute, perhaps, more to it than it deserves; yet it certainly deserves its Praise, for Elegance and Ingenuity.

But to return to Epigrams: Whatever you write, *be short*. Those, perhaps, are the best, which don't exceed eight Lines; for the rest, they cannot be too short. This Rule, however, I don't propose as a general one. Some Epigrams may be beautiful, tho' longer; one of which I have already cited in this Discourse.

As to the Verse; in *Latin* (for of that Language I here principally speak) Hexameter and Pentameter are the most proper, tho' others are not to be excluded; for Iambics and Hendecasyllables are frequently made use of.

Many of the Hendecasyllable Poems are rather Odes than Epigrams: Some seem to be of a mix'd Nature; and Poetry has nothing more beautiful than both. *Catullus* is reckon'd the Prince in this Kind of Writing, whom others, both Ancients and Moderns, have very happily imitated, and some, perhaps, excell'd. The Nature of them consists in being lax and free, in chusing light Subjects, especially those of Love; and sometimes serious ones, as Epitaphs, and the like. It is always soft and sweet, full of tender Diminutives, and of Repetitions of the same Verse at proper Distances.

Whether the Ancients or Moderns have deserv'd best of these light Kinds of Poetry, but especially of Epigram, is hard to say. It is certain, the latter have a Turn of Wit which the former were Strangers to; but still I dare not decide the Preference. But leaving that Dispute, we shall all agree in this common Maxim, *Inest sua gratia parvis*; Little Things have their Beauty; and sometimes not a little Beauty. Tho' they are small in Bulk, yet they are great in Value; and not only Wit and Ingenuity are requir'd in the Composition of them, but true Reason, and solid Judgment:

<sup>[226]</sup> *In tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria.*—

Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise.  
*Pope.*

Sometimes the Pains requir'd in this Kind of Composition is very great; but then they are always repaid by it. To which we may often apply what *Virgil* says of the Bees:

<sup>[227]</sup> *Ingentes animos augusto in pectore versant.*

Their little Bodies mighty Souls inform.

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## LECTURE XIII.

### *Of Elegy.*

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This is a Subject, which, if I am not mistaken, very few have largely treated of. *Scaliger*, indeed, and some others, have just mention'd it, and made some short Strictures upon it: But no one, that I know of, except *Vossius*, of the better Sort of Writers, have writ a professed Dissertation of this Species of Poetry, tho' it is the sweetest, the most engaging, and every way worthy our Consideration. Who the Inventor was, *Horace* professes himself ignorant:

<sup>[228]</sup> *Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit Auctor,  
Grammatici certant; & adhuc sub iudice lis est.*

But to whose Muse we owe that Sort of Verse,  
Is undecided by the Men of Skill.

*Roscom.*

Nor is this an Enquiry of much Moment. Under the Title of Elegy, is generally and primarily understood a mournful Poem, bewailing the Loss of some Person lately dead; and sometimes has any other melancholy plaintive Circumstance for its Subject. *Scaliger* calls it a Poem proper for *Complaints*:

[229] —— *Neu miserabiles*

*Decantes elegos;*

says *Horace*, addressing himself to *Tibullus*, the best of Elegiac Writers. This appears clear enough, from the Etymology of the Word; either from ελεος, or (as others more justly) from ι, a Particle of Grief, and λεγειν to *speak*; not from εν λεγειν, as some have ill judg'd, because, forsooth, we generally speak in Praise of whose Deaths we lament. It is certain, this Sort of Poem was anciently, and from its first Origin, made use of at Funerals. That, therefore, of one famous Elegiac Poet upon the Death of another, of equal Fame, of *Ovid*, I mean, on *Tibullus*, deserves, in the most proper Sense, this Title: The Writer himself observes as much, in the following Lines:

[230] *Flebilis indignos Elegeia solve capillos;*  
*Ah! nimis ex vero nunc tibi nomen erit.*

In wild Disorder let thy Tresses flow,  
Thy Name now too much verify'd by Woe!

By which Words, however, he intimates, that some other Poems, besides Funeral ones, went under the Name of Elegies. *Horace* is very express:

[231] *Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,*  
*Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.*

In Verses *long* and *short* Grief first appear'd,  
In those they mourn'd past Ills, and future fear'd:  
But soon these Lines with Mirth and Joy were fill'd,  
And told when Fortune, or a Mistress smil'd.  
*Creech.*

From whence we learn, that Deaths are not the only Subjects of Elegy, but that by Degrees it was employ'd upon other Things that had nothing mournful in them, nay, that turn'd upon Gaiety and Festivity. *Ovid's* Books of Love, the Poems of *Tibullus* and *Propertius*, are entitled *Elegies*; and yet so far are they from being sad, that they are sometimes scarce serious. *Ovid*, particularly, takes too great a Liberty in this Kind of Poem, and lets his Joy break out to Excess. But if we look back to the Original, both of the Name and Thing, we shall find that Writings of this Sort are styled *Elegies* only in an improper Sense of the Word. One and the same Title, therefore, was indiscriminately given to Poems on different Subjects, but which agreed in their Verse, and Manner of Writing.

The chief Subjects to which Elegy owes its Rise, are Death and Love: The Connexion between which, it is not my Business here to examine. The Writings of the Poets, I have above mention'd, chiefly consist of Love; tho' Elegies admit almost of any Matter, especially if it be treated of seriously. The Contempt of Riches, the Pleasures of the Country, are in great measure the Subject of them, in which a little Love is generally interspers'd. Some, but few, in *Tibullus* and *Propertius*, have nothing of Death or Love; which, however, have been always the chief Subjects of this Kind of Poem. That Elegy, therefore, ought to be esteem'd the most perfect in its Kind, which has somewhat of both at once: Such, for Instance, where the Poet bewails the Death of his *Corinna*, his *Delia*, or *Lycoris*, or of some Youth or Damsel falling a Martyr to Love. Among the Love Elegies, those are to be placed next, which are full of that melancholy Complaint which Lovers seldom want Matter for. Yet there are some of a very different Temper; but which, as I observ'd before, are improperly rank'd in the Number of Elegies. Some, again, are full of Joy and Triumph: As in *Ovid*,

[232] *Ite triumphales circum mea tempora lauri.*

Triumphant Laurels, round my Temples twine.

Others satirical: As that of the same Poet, where, describing an old Woman, he breaks out into these Imprecations against her:

[233] *Dii tibi dent nudosque lares, inopemque senectam,*  
*Et longas hyemes, perpetuamque sitim.*

May'st thou with Poverty and Age be curst,  
The Length of Winter, and the Summer's Thirst.

Others are jocose in different Ways, Instances of all which we meet with in *Ovid*.

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Many Elegies are writ in the Epistolary Manner, as is obvious, to every one that has but the least Knowledge of the Poets I have now cited. Under this Head, therefore, *Ovid's Heroine* Epistles (as they are usually call'd, from their being writ by Ladies of Prowess and Renown) come very properly to be mention'd, since they partake of the Nature of Elegy, not only on account of their Verse, but Sentiment. They are deservedly esteem'd the best Part of that Poet's Works; as his Book *De Tristibus*, tho' the truest Elegies, are the worst. Nothing can have a more delicate Turn than some of these Epistles. I have given Instances of this elsewhere; and have no need of repeating them here, or producing new ones. His *Heroine* Epistles differ from his Elegiac in this, that the former are fictitious, and personate the Character of some one or other mention'd in fabulous History; the latter are address'd, in the Poet's own Name, to his Friends of either Sex. Setting aside this Circumstance, and that of their Length, there is very little Difference between them. To return, therefore, to Elegy, according to the common Acceptation of the Word; its chief Property is to be easy and soft; to flow in one even Current, and captivate the Ear with Melody. It must be free from all Asperity, from every Thing that is harsh, or unpleasant. For, as *Propertius* sweetly expresses it:

[234] *Carmina mansuetus lenia quærit Amor.*

Soft flow the Lines that gentle Love indites.

And nothing is often more harmonious than Complaints; the Music of Birds is said by the Poets to be expressive of them, as in *Ovid*:

[235] *Et latere ex omni dulce queruntur aves.*

And all around  
The Birds return a sweetly plaintive Sound.

How vocal are Tears, how moving poetic Grief! Hear *Tibullus* thus bewailing his Sickness in a foreign Land:

[236] *Ibitis Ægæas sine me, Messala, per undas,  
O! utinam memor es ipse, cohorsque, mei!  
Me tenet ignotis ægrum Phæacia terris;  
Abstineas avidas, mors modo nigra, manus.  
Abstineas, mors atra, precor; non hic mihi mater,  
Quæ legat in mæstos ossa perusta sinus:  
Non soror, Assyrios cineri quæ dedat odores,  
Et fleat effusis ante sepulchra comis.*

While you, *Messala*, tempt th' *Ægæan* Sea,  
I am prevented to attend your Way.  
But Oh! I wish you still may condescend  
To bear a kind Remembrance of your Friend.  
Oppress'd with Sickness, wearied out with Pains,  
*Phæacia* me in unknown Lands detains,  
Sick, and a Stranger, in a foreign Land.  
Black Death, withdraw thy dire capacious Hand;  
Black Death, keep off, I pray, no Mother here  
Can gather up this Dust with pious Care:  
No Sister here with decent Grief can come }  
To please my Shade, and, off'ring rich Perfumè, }  
With flowing Hair lament before my Tomb. }  
*Dart.*

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Hear *Ovid* thus lamenting the Death of the same Poet, which follow'd from that Sickness. He speaks to Elegy:

[237] *Ille tui Vates operis, tua fama, Tibullus,  
Ardet in extracto corpus inane rogo.  
Ecce Puer Veneris fert eversamque pharetram,  
Et fractos arcus, & sine luce facem.  
Aspice, demissis ut eat miserabilis alis,  
Pectoraque infesta tundat aperta manu.*

Thy Poet, and Promulger of thy Fame,  
*Tibullus* burns upon the Fun'ral Flame.  
With Torch extinct, and Quiver downward born,  
See *Cupid*, once sincere! attend his Urn.  
Now beats his Breast, his tender Hands now wrings,  
Broken his Shafts, and pendulous his Wings.

While the one dies thus, while the other so laments his Death, how justly are they both render'd immortal? They that thus write, and thus deserve Elegies, are such as least need them. Some *Descriptions* in Elegy are not less affecting; as of the Elysian Fields, in the same Passage of *Tibullus*:



[238] *Hic choreæ, cantusque vigent; passimque vagantes  
 Dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves.  
 Fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros  
 Floret odoratis terra benigna rosis.  
 Ac juvenum series, teneris immista puellis,  
 Ludit, & assidue prælia miscet Amor.*

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There Songs perpetual charm the list'ning Ear,  
 Whilst all the feather'd Wand'rers of the Air, }  
 To join the Sound, their warbling Throats prepare.  
 Cassia from ev'ry Hedge unbidden breathes,  
 And to the Gales its fragrant Sweets bequeaths;  
 The bounteous Earth its purple Product yields,  
 And od'rous Roses paint the blushing Fields:  
 There Trains of blooming Youths, and tender Maids,  
 Sport on the Green, and wanton in the Shades;  
 While busy Love attends them all the Way,  
 Joins in the Conflict, and provokes the Fray.  
*Dart.*

With this Kind of Poem, every Thing that is epigrammatical, satirical, or sublime, is inconsistent. Elegy aims not to be witty or facetious, acrimonious or severe, majestic or sublime; but is smooth, humble, and unaffected; nor yet is she abject in her Humility, but becoming, elegant, and attractive.

Among our modern Poems, we have few entitled Elegies; those only that are made on Funeral Occasions: But we have many that may be call'd so, in the larger Sense of the Word, as it was used by the Ancients, and we have above explain'd it: Many very ingenious ones on Love; and others of a melancholy and soft Turn.

Among the Ancients, Hexameters and Pentameters were so peculiar to Elegy, that this Kind of Metre is usually styl'd *Elegiac*; nor is any more soft, or more harmonious. Instead of it, we, in our own Tongue, use the Heroic.

The Writers in this Way that Antiquity has handed down to us, are all in *Latin*. Some there were more early among the *Greeks*, as *Callimachus*, *Philetas*, and others; the Fragments only of whose Writings have been sav'd from the Wreck of Time. They that would know which they are, may consult the learned *Vossius*, and others; it being beside my Purpose to enquire into Facts and History.

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Among the *Latins*, *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*, bear the first Rank; with whom *Catullus* is sometimes join'd: But not so properly, his Merit being chiefly in his Hendecasyllables, and some other wanton Verses, and his elegant Poem on the Argonautic Expedition. There is nothing of his Elegiacal, except the Measure of some of his Verses; and they so uneven, that they scarce deserve the Name of Verse; so rough, that they cannot be read without Offence to the Ear, nay, to the very Teeth. *Ovid* is generally reckon'd, and that deservedly, the first in this Class, no one having equall'd his Numbers, nor exceeded his Diction. I submit it only, for it is a Matter of Doubt, whether *Tibullus* is not less diffuse, and more correct. There is one Fault in *Ovid*, which is unpardonable, his perpetual and nauseous Repetition of *mei*, *tui*, and *sui*, in the last Foot of his Pentameters. How much more beautiful would they have been, if this Fault had been avoided, which might have been done with little Care. And yet a sixth Part, at least, are so terminated, than which, nothing can be more lifeless and insignificant. *Tibullus* and *Propertius* rarely fall into this Fault, but into another, especially the latter of them, from which *Ovid* is free; I mean the concluding the Pentameter with Words of three or more Syllables; whereas Harmony requires a Word of no more than two. One Writer in this Way it would be unpardonable to pass over, tho' we have little remaining of him, if he is the same (as it is probable he is not) with him to whom *Virgil* has given Immortality by mentioning him in his Works: For immortal, sure, he must needs be, of whom the best of immortal Poets has given this Eulogy:

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[239] *Pierides, vos hæc facietis maxima Gallo,  
 Gallo, cujus amor tantum mihi crescit in horas, &c.*

You shall for *Gallus* dignify this Verse,  
*Gallus*, for whom my Friendship grows each Hour.

This from *Virgil's* Eclogues, which Species of Poetry will be the Subject of our next Discourse.

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## LECTURE XIV. Of Pastorals.

This, also, is another Species of Poetry, not professedly treated of by any of the Ancients, nay,

not so much as mention'd amongst their various Precepts relating to this Art. The later *Latin* Critics have bestow'd some Pains upon it; but our modern ones, of the present Age, much more; and (to speak my own Judgment, which I shall always be ready to submit to better) seem to have attributed too much Honour to it, and to have rais'd more Dust, than the Importance of the Subject deserv'd. Not but that I think it a very elegant Kind of Writing, and every Way worthy of Imitation. As it is now incumbent on me to say somewhat of it, agreeably to my present Design, I shall put together what I think most material relating to it, without making any Difference between what I have advanced new, or others have observed before me.

In the first Ages of the World, before Men were united in Cities, and had learnt the studied Arts of Luxury, they lead in the Country plain harmless Lives; and Cottages, rather than Houses, might be said to be their Habitation. Those happy Times abounded with Leisure and Recreation: To feed the Flock, and cultivate the Land, was the only Employ of its peaceable Inhabitants; the former the joint Care of the Women and the Men. Hence arose abundant Matter for Love and Verse. Nay, when the World was grown older, and Mankind so numerous, that they began to secure themselves in Walls, and to introduce what we call a more civil Life, yet still Shepherds and Husbandmen maintain'd their primitive Honour. Country Affairs, but especially the Care of the Flock, was not only the Labour of the Vulgar, but the Exercise of the Rich and Powerful, nay, of Princes of either Sex. This appears sufficiently, from sacred History, in the Example of *Jacob*, *Rachel*, *Moses*, and the other Patriarchs: From the Testimony of Heathen Writers; as in that of *Virgil*,

[240] *Nec te pœniteat pecoris, divine Poeta,  
Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.*

Them, heav'nly Poet, blush not thou to own:  
Ev'n fair *Adonis* did not scorn to tend  
Along the River's Side his fleecy Care.

And in another Place, to omit other Instances:

[241] *Quem fugis, ah! demens? habitarent Dii quoque silvas,  
Dardaniusque Paris.*

Whom fly'st thou, thoughtless? Gods have liv'd in Woods;  
And *Trojan Paris*.

From what has been said, it is easy to see the Origin of *Pastorals*. It appears to have been a very ancient Species of Poetry, tho' I can by no means agree with *Scaliger*<sup>[242]</sup>, in thinking it the oldest, which is an Honour I shall hereafter shew to be due to the Lyric Kind, Shepherds, 'tis true, were the first Poets; but Odes and Hymns, not Pastorals, were their original Compositions. However, Pastorals, as I said, are undoubtedly of very great Antiquity; and the *Song of Solomon* in sacred Writ comes under this Denomination; from whence, 'tis very observable, *Theocritus* has borrow'd literally many Expressions; making use of the Version of the Seventy-two, with whom he was cotemporary.

The Nature of this Kind of Poem is to be sweet, easy, and flowing, and simple beyond all others: And yet not so humbly simple, (which is a common Mistake) as if it represented only the Characters of poor ignorant Shepherds, and the Thoughts of modern Rustics. The Scene, indeed, of Bucolics (for that is another Name for Pastorals, the former derived from the Herds, as the latter from the Flocks, that are the different Objects of the rural Care) ought always to be laid in the Country. Nor ought it to be diversify'd with any Thing repugnant to such a Situation; nay, Views, and little Descriptions of Lawns and Groves, ought always to be interspers'd in these Poems, whatsoever the Subject of them be. Yet there may be a Mixture of Images of a different Kind, and much elevated above the Apprehension of the Vulgar. *Virgil*, therefore, is very undeservedly censured by many for having introduced Philosophy, and even somewhat of the Sublime, into his Eclogues: For since, as we observ'd, many of the ancient Shepherds were Persons, I need not say of the better, but even of the first Rank, it is no great Wonder if some of them were Scholars, and Philosophers. 'Tis a Mistake to say that *Virgil's* fourth and fifth Eclogues are not Pastorals; and that nothing sublime, but every Thing simple and rustic, is compatible with this Kind of Poetry. They are Pastorals, undoubtedly; tho' of a different Kind from the common ones. There is a certain Sublimity, agreeable enough to Pastorals; a Sublimity that arises from Philosophy and Religion, not from the Tumults of War, the Poms of a Court, or the Refinements of the City. I don't see, therefore, why that divine Eclogue; *Sicelides Musæ*, &c. (divine I may call it, on many Accounts) should not be allow'd a Place among the Pastorals. The rural Muses are invok'd; the Woods are celebrated; many Things expresly relate to the Country, and nothing repugnant to it. The Subject, indeed, is great; the Words and Thoughts sublime; sublimer, I may say, than the Poet himself was aware of. For it is the Opinion of the most learned Divines, to which I very readily adhere, that he by happy Error celebrates from the Sibylline Oracles the Birth of *Christ*, which was then approaching; and it is evident, that many of the Lines describe the Nature of the Messiah, and of his Kingdom, in Terms of near Affinity with the sacred Writings<sup>[243]</sup>. And nothing, surely, could be more proper, than that the Prince of Poets should promulge that joyful News in Pastorals, which was first proclaim'd from Heaven to Shepherds. That Objection drawn from the Invention of War and Ships, both which the Poet touches upon in the following Lines, is of little Moment.

[244] *Alter erit tum Tiphys, & altera quæ vehat Argo*  
*Delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella,*  
*Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.*

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Another *Tiphys* o'er the Main shall waft  
The chosen Chiefs, another *Argo* guide;  
New warlike Expeditions shall be form'd,  
And great *Achilles* sail again for *Troy*.

These are only incidental Ornaments of the Poem, not properly the Subject of it. Now it is impossible that the Argonautic Expedition, so famous throughout the World, should be unknown to Shepherds of Birth and Education. And as little probable is it, that they should be ignorant of the *Trojan* War, occasion'd by one of their own Profession. It is repugnant, indeed, to Pastorals, to turn wholly upon warlike Affairs; but it is a very different Thing to bring them in only as Embellishments. This is what may be justly pleaded for all the Eclogues of *Virgil*, where Arms are mentioned; excepting only the tenth:

[245] *Nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis*  
*Tela inter media, atque adversos detinet hostes.*

Now frantic Love amidst thick Darts and Foes  
Detains me in the rigid Toil of Arms.

Which, I confess, raises in me some Difficulty; because the Speaker introduc'd is manifestly a Soldier. But it must be observ'd, that he does not at the same Time personate a Shepherd, as is manifest, from his Speech to the *Arcadians*, when he expresses his Envy of their happy Retirement:

[246] *Atque utinam è vobis unus, vestrique fuissem*  
*Aut custos gregis, aut maturæ vinitor uvæ.*

O had kind Fortune made me one of you,  
Keeper of Flocks, or Pruner of the Vine.

Had he been *one of them*, he would have join'd two contradictory Ideas; for a Shepherd in Arms, who could have born? But if it be ask'd, Why then is the chief Person in the Pastoral drawn of a very different Character from Pastoral; it is sufficient to answer, That *Virgil* so thought fit; and there is nothing absurd, or unnatural, in such a Conduct. For the State of the Case is no more than this: *Gallus*, engag'd in Camps, happens to fall in Love, and retires to the Solitude of the Country, to give vent to his Passion. Shepherds, Nymphs, *Sylvanus*, *Pan*, and even *Apollo* himself, lend their kind Endeavours to assuage it. Thus far every Thing is natural, elegant, and truly pastoral. And the whole Poem is of the same Nature, excepting only the two Verses I have now cited. Leave out these, and even *Gallus's* Complaint is perfectly rural, and all the Thoughts drawn from the Country. In short, so far am I from assenting to those Critics who would exterminate this from the Number of Pastorals, that I would place it the very first of all. The sixth Eclogue of *Virgil*, which I just now mention'd, is full of Philosophy and Religion: And that's a sort of Sublime, which, I before observ'd, was very consistent with Pastoral. The fourth I have likewise spoke to. The rest of them are Pastoral, without any Objection; tho' the Etymology of the Word *Eclogue* by no means implies it; which signifies no more than *Select Poems upon any Subject whatsoever*. The Word *Idyllium* is as little expressive of *Pastorals*, nor are all *Theocritus's* such: It is deriv'd from **eidōs**, Species; and the Word *Idyllia* imports no more than *Poems of various Sorts*.

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It must be own'd, however, that the greatest Essential in Pastoral is *Simplicity*; and that these Lines have much less of the Nature of it,

[247] *Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,*  
*Terrasque, tractusque maris, &c.*

See the globous Weight  
Of Earth, of Heav'n, of Ocean, nod and shake.

than the following:

[248] *Forte sub arguta consederat ilice Daphnis,*  
*Compuerantque greges Corydon & Thyrsis in unum,*  
*Thyrsis oves, Corydon distentas lacte capellas.*

By chance, beneath the Covert of an Oak,  
That whisper'd with the Breezes, *Daphnis* sate;  
And *Corydon* and *Thyrsis* to one Place  
Together drew their Flocks; *Thyrsis*, his Sheep;  
His milch Goats, *Corydon*.

But then it ought to be elegantly simple, for the Plowmen should appear in their Holyday Garments. Thus we see Shepherds and Shepherdesses introduced upon the Stage; and tho' they bring Crooks in their Hands, and Straw Hats on their Heads, yet their Dress is nearly rural, and

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above the Habit of the Vulgar. In *Virgil* we have frequent Examples of this polite Rusticity, in those Places, especially, where Love is concern'd. I shall only produce one, out of many, where *Damon*, desperately in Love with the fair, but cruel *Nisa*, vents his Passion in these Words:

[249] *Sepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala  
(Dux ego vester eram) vidi cum matre legentem;  
Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus,  
Jam fragiles poteram à terra contingere ramos:  
Ut vidi! ut perii! ut me malus abstulit error!*

Thee, with thy Mother, in our Meads I saw,  
Gathering fresh Apples; I myself your Guide;  
Then thou wert little; I, just then advanc'd  
To my twelfth Year, cou'd barely from the Ground  
Touch with my reaching Hand the tender Boughs:  
How did I look! how gaze my Soul away!  
How did I die! in fatal Error lost!

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How unartful the Complaint, but yet how lovely?

Tho' the Style of Pastoral is humble, it is not sordidly mean, nor slovenly careless, neither resembling the Diction of Comedy, which is almost Prose; nor of the bantering Satire, which is one Degree farther from it: But is sweet, pleasant, and easy; elegant with Plainness, and but poetically low:

[250] *O tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura,  
Atque humiles habitare casas, & figere cervos!*

O! were but thy Delight with me to dwell,  
In lowly Cottages, and rural Shades  
By thee despis'd! *to drive the Kids a-field  
With a green Wand*, and shoot the flying Deer!

Antique Phrases, Ænigma's, Proverbs, superstitious Fables, are no unbecoming Ornaments of this Sort of Poetry.

It generally consists of Dialogue, in which some little dramatical Action ought to be represented, a rural Scene described, Interlocutors under different Circumstances, and a certain Plot carried on to a Conclusion. For 'tis not to be imagin'd, as many, now a-days do, that every Dialogue between two Shepherds, full of the bleating of Flocks, is a proper Pastoral. No, 'tis a Thing that requires more Labour, Art, and Judgment, than we are generally aware of: Nor is any Kind of Poem less tolerable, if ill, or even moderately perform'd. Who can bear those Crowds of Pastorals, as they are inscrib'd, that are daily publish'd in *Latin* and *English*, upon the Death of Princes, or Friends? They are all cast in the same Mould; read one, you read all. *Daphnis* asks *Thyrsis* the Reason of his Grief, whether he has lost a Goat; or *Amaryllis*, or *Neæra*, has been unkind to him. The Answer is, his Sorrow is owing to no such Cause; but that *Pan*, or *Phyllis*, or any one else is dead. Say you so, says *Daphnis*, I thought all along that *Pan* had been immortal, or *Phyllis*, I am sure, deserv'd to have been so. They then join in celebrating, alternately, the Praises of the deceas'd. Birds, Sheep, Woods, Mountains, Rivers, are full of Complaints. We are told how the croaking Raven foreboded the dismal Event; Oaks were riv'd with Thunder; every Thing, in short, is wondrous lamentable, and in the most emphatical Sense miserable.

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The Subjects of Pastoral are as various as the Passions of human Nature, nay, it may, in some measure, partake of every Kind of Poetry, but with this Proviso, that the Scene of it ought always to be in the Country, and the Thoughts never contrary to those that are bred there. Some of these short Strictures of Wit between contending Shepherds, favour something of Epigram: Thus in *Virgil*;

[251] *Fraxinus in silvis pulcherrima, pinus in hortis,  
Populus in fluviis, abies in montibus altis:  
Sæpius at si me, Lycida formose, revisas;  
Fraxinus in silvis cedet tibi, pinus in hortis.*

In Groves the Beech, in Gardens is the Pine  
Most beautiful; the Poplar near the Streams;  
On the high Mountain's Tops, the stately Fir.  
Yet, lovely *Lycidas*, if oft thou come  
To visit me; thou, beauteous, shalt excel  
The Pine in Gardens, and the Beech in Groves.

The second Eclogue is *Elegiac*, containing a Love Complaint; so is the latter Part of the fifth, bewailing the Death of *Daphnis*. The Songs, and Pipe, seem reducible to some Kind of *Ode*. And I see no Reason, why the third Eclogue may not be deem'd a short rural *Comedy*, representing the Manners, the Follies, little Tricks, and Quarrels of low Country Life; intermix'd, likewise, with various Strokes of *Satire*, many Examples of which we have elsewhere produced. *Damon's* Complaint; in the former Part of the eighth Eclogue, is *tragical*, and ends thus:

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[252] *Præceps aerii specula de montis in undas*  
*Deferar; extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.*

From yon aerial Rock  
Headlong I'll plunge into the foamy Deep.  
Take this last Gift, which dying I bequeath.

But the Thoughts and Diction of the fourth Eclogue, I before observ'd, favour much of the Heroic.

The Pleasure that arises from this Kind of Poetry, is owing to those beautiful rural Scenes, which it represents; and to that innate Love, which human Nature, depraved as it is, still retains for its primitive Simplicity. Simplicity and the Country I join together, because in Fact they were both united. We are born with a Love for a Country Life, for Nature always pleases us more than Art, not only as it is prior to it in Point of Time, but as the Works of God are more perfect, and more various, than those of Men. Nay, Art itself is then most pleasing, when it represents Nature. Thus Architecture affects the Mind with less Pleasure and Wonder than Poetry, or its Sister Painting because that is the Effect of Art only, these of Nature likewise. And tho' it may be the Business of one Art to describe another, yet it never is so successfully employ'd, as when Nature sits for the Description. Thus, in Painting, the Prospect of a magnificent Structure is beautiful; but how much more agreeable is *that* which is diversified with Woods, Flowers, Rivers, Mountains, Cottages, Birds, Flocks, Herds, and Husbandmen? And how much would the Pleasure be still heighten'd, could the Picture convey to us the Fragrancy of Flowers, the Warbling of Birds, the Lowing of Oxen, the Bleating of Sheep, and all those other Gratifications that are the Objects, not of the Sight, but of the Hearing, and other Senses. Since Nature, then, and the Country, are the same, and Cities the Effect of Art and Refinement; it is no Wonder, if the former has the Preference. It pleads Prescription for our Choice; if we date our own Infancy from that of the World, we are all by Birth Inhabitants of the Fields and Woods: Thither, therefore, we naturally tend, and, as *Ovid* says, less justly, upon another Occasion,

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[253] —*documenta damus, qua simus origine nati.*

Give Proofs of our Original.

For, I'll be bold to say, that they who prefer a City Life, have a natural Affection for a Country one. It is *Horace's* Observation:

[254] *Nempe inter varias nutritur silva columnas,*  
*Laudaturque domus, longos quæ prospicit agros;*  
*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*

That House is most esteem'd, he wisely builds,  
That hath a Prospect to the open Fields.  
Strive to expel strong Nature, 'tis in vain,  
With doubled Force she will return again.  
*Creech.*

And those that make the City Life their Choice, do so, as the Schoolmen speak, only *by Accident*; either to indulge their Vices and Extravagancies; or on account of some Inconveniencies which the Country *sometimes* labours under; as the Want of Company, or the Opportunity of gaining or increasing a Fortune; not out of any Distaste of the Pleasures of the Country. Who can help sympathizing with *Horace's* Citizen, and wish him Success in so reasonable a Request?

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[255] *O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit*  
*Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, & inertibus horis,*  
*Ducere sollicitæ jucunda obliviam vitæ?*

Oh! when shall I enjoy my Country Seat?  
Oh! when remov'd from Noise to quiet Peace,  
Amidst my learned Books, my Sleep and Ease,  
While Hours do smoothly flow, and free from Strife  
Forget the Troubles of a busy Life?  
*Creech.*

And it is impossible to read *Virgil's* Description of the Country, in his second *Georgic*, without being in Love with the Subject, as well as the Poet. Upon the whole, since Innocence and the Country are even now so agreeable to human Nature, it is easy to see from what Source the Pleasure of Pastoral Poetry springs.

As *Theocritus* is the first that attempted this Way of Writing, so has he excell'd all others that have follow'd him. *Virgil* copies, and in some Places literally translates him. He has sometimes, however ventur'd to deviate from his Original, by throwing in a Mixture of the Sublime. If *Theocritus's* are truer Pastorals; *Virgil's* may be said, *perhaps*, to be the better Poems. I speak this with some Hesitation; for, it must be own'd, the *Idyllia* are truly beautiful; and the Author of them, I think, ought to be rank'd among the best Poets. The Sweetness of his Versification (owning partly to his own Ingenuity, and partly to his Doric Dialect) is equall'd by none. Take, only as a Specimen, what first offers, the very Beginning of the first *Idyllium*:

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Θ. Άδυ τι το ψιθυρσμα, και, ά πιτυς, αιπολε, τηνα,  
Α ποτι ταις παγαισι, μελισδεται άδυ δε και τυ  
Συρισδες μετα Πανα το δευτερον αθλον αποιση, κ.λ.

Αι. Αδιον, ω ποιμαν, το τεον μελος, η το καταχες  
Την απο πετρας καταλειβεται ύποθεν ύδωρ.  
Αικα ται Μωσαιταν ουδα δωρον αγωνται,  
Αρνα τυ σακιταν λαψη γερας αι δε κ' αρεσκη  
Τηναις αρνα λαβειν, τυ δε ταν οιν ύστερον αξις.  
Θ. Ληις ποτι νυμφαν, ληις, αιπολε, τηδε καθιζας, κ.λ.

*Thyr.* Goatherd, that Pine-tree's Boughs by yonder Spring,  
In pleasing Murmurs mix, and sweetly sing:  
And thou dost sweetly pipe; dear charming Swain,  
And well deserv'st the next Reward to *Pan*, &c.

*Goat.* And sweeter Notes thy Pipe, dear Shepherd, fill,  
Than murm'ring Springs, that roll from yonder Hill  
When Muses claim a Sheep, a Lamb's thy Due;  
When they a Lamb, thou shalt receive a Ewe.  
*Creech.*

*Thyrsis* then proceeds to lament, in the softest Verse that is possible, *Daphnis's* unhappy Love, the Beginning of which only I shall recite to you:

Παι ποκ' αρ' ησθ' όκαΔαφνις ετακετο παι ποκα, νυμφαι;  
Η κατα Πηρειω καλα τεμπεα, η κατα Πινδω;  
Ου γαρ δη ποταμοιο μεγαν ροον ειχετ' Αναπω,  
Ουδ' Αιτνας σκοπιαν, ουδ' Ακιδος ιερον ύδωρ.

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Where were you, Nymphs? Where did the Nymphs reside?  
Where were you then, when *Daphnis* pin'd and dy'd?  
On *Pindus'* Top, or *Tempe's* open Plain,  
Where careless Nymphs, forgetful of the Swain?  
For not one Nymph by swift *Asopus* stood,  
Nor *Ætna's* Cliff, nor *Acis'* sacred Flood.  
*Creech.*

These harmonious Lines, *Virgil* imitates, in the following ones, but does not equal.

[256] *Quæ nemora, aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellæ, &c.*

What Groves, ye Nymphs, detain'd you hence? what Lawns?

What *Bion* and *Moschus* have done in this Kind, among the *Greeks*, the Learned are no Strangers to. Among the Latins, we have nothing remaining of *Calphurnius Siculus* and *Aurelius Nemesianus*, but their Names<sup>[257]</sup>. The *Syrinx*, or Shepherd's Pipe; the Form, the Number, and the Manner of disposing the *Oaten Reeds*; the Names of the first Inventors of this Sort of Poetry, and other Things of the like Nature, I pass over, as foreign to my Province. Whoever is studious this Way, may consult the Writers of poetical History. I would only observe, that it seems universally agreed upon, that Pastoral owes its Rise and Increase to *Sicily*.

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I cannot but think it a Poem less suitable to modern Times, on account of the Difference in the Circumstances of human Life, from what it was anciently. As the Condition of Shepherds is now mean and contemptible; it seems too forced a *Prosopopœia* to affix to them any Character of Politeness, or to introduce them as Men of Wealth and Education: These Things are contradictory to Truth, and therefore leave no Room for Fiction. The very Foundation, then, of Pastorals, as they are accommodated to the present Times, seems wholly taken away. But setting aside this, it must be own'd, several of the Moderns have attempted them very successfully, both in their own Tongue, and in *Latin*. The *Italians* and *French* generally want the Bucolic Genius: Their Shepherds are too genteel; as well bred as Citizens at least, if not as Courtiers, and fall into other Absurdities of the same Kind. Our Countryman *Spencer* has succeeded much better; and one or two of the present Age seem justly to have deserv'd the Prize.

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## LECTURE XV.

### *Of DIDACTIC or PRECEPTIVE POETRY.*

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Human Nature, at the same Time it is desirous of Knowledge, is cautious of confessing its Want of it. The Precepts, therefore, design'd for its Information, must not be obtruded with Moroseness, but insinuated with Mildness; and even its Vanity soothed, to remove its Ignorance.

Instructions are the better receiv'd, and sink the deeper upon the Mind, in proportion to the Address with which they are convey'd. There's Sort of Obsequiousness due from the Teacher to the Scholar, and even in this Sense that Maxim of *Juvenal* holds true:

[258]

*Maxima debetur puero reverentia.*

Hence it is, that Precepts deliver'd in Verse, are imbib'd with so much Pleasure; and are held in so great Esteem, that they constitute one distinct Species of Poetry. Many Rules we have already given, concerning the other Branches of it, and are now come to teach even the Art of Teaching. Upon this Subject I am under little Temptation of rifling the Stores of the Learned: I don't know one that has treated of it, except the ingenious Author of the *Essay on Virgil's Georgics*, prefix'd to Mr. *Dryden's* Translation of them. And he, indeed, has so exhausted the Subject, that it is as hard to come after him, as it is after the great *Dryden*, or his greater Original.

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From what has been said, it appears, that Poetry is in its Nature adapted to deliver Precepts of any Kind, which are sure to be learnt with more Ease, and retain'd the more faithfully by the Help of it. Laws, and religious Maxims, were anciently promulg'd in Verse; and Priests and Poets were the same: And even to this Day it is a prudent Custom to have religious Lessons drawn up in Verse for the Sake of Youth: In this Respect it may more truly be said

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*—pueris dant crustula blandi  
Doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima.*

Thus Teachers bribe their Boys with Figs and Cake,  
To mind their Books.

*Creech.*

For by Poetry the very *Elements* that are taught are soften'd into Allurements. The common Grammar, we see, is Verse; and tho' the Language of it, indeed, is Prose, whatever the Measure be, yet it is a sufficient Proof, that, in the Opinion of the past and present Age, Precepts and Poetry are no ways inconsistent: And it were to be wish'd, that not only Rules of Rhetoric and Logic, but of Philosophy, and all other Sciences, were drawn up in a more entertaining Manner. Not that *technical Words*, or *Terms of Art*, as they are call'd, should be excluded; for it is impossible any Science should be without them: But they might be so dress'd up, as to invite, not deter the Pains of the Learner. But these are Observations less material to our Purpose, and I only make them by the Way. I now proceed to observe, that there are four Kinds of Didactic Poems, *viz.* those that relate to moral Duties; or philosophical Speculations; or the Business or Pleasures of Life; or, lastly, to Poetry itself.

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Of the *moral* Poems we shall say but little. We have elsewhere observ'd, that these have scarce any Thing of Poetry in them but their Measure, and therefore hardly deserve to be class'd under the Head of it: Such are *Pythagoras's Golden Verses*; the *Sentences* of *Theognis*; the Πουημα Νουθετικον of *Phocylides*. We have nothing of this Kind of the *Latin* Writers, or of our own<sup>[260]</sup>, worth mentioning; and, in short, they have nothing in common with a Poem, except this, that a Life led according to the strictest Rules of Virtue, resembles the best, and the noblest.

But, on the other Hand, nothing shines more in Verse, than Disquisitions of natural History. We then see the strictest Reasoning join'd to the politest Expression. Poetry and Philosophy are happily united: The latter affords abundant Matter for Description; it opens a large Field for Fancy, and strikes out new Ideas, which the other expresses with suitable Dignity. What Subject can be a more poetical one than

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*—Errantem Lunam, Solisque labores,  
Unde hominum genus, & pecudes, unde imber, & ignes,  
Unde tremor terris, qua vi maria alta tumescant  
Obcibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa residant;  
Arcturum, pluviasque Hyadas, geminosque Triones:  
Quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles  
Hyberni, vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstet?*

The wand'ring Moon, the Labours of the Sun;  
Whence Men, and Beasts, whence Rain, and Lightnings come;  
The Constellations of the northern Cars,  
*Arcturus*, and the show'ry *Hyades*:  
Why Suns, in Winter, haste so swift to tinge  
Themselves in Ocean; and what Cause retards  
The sluggish Nights.

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What can be more suitable to the Dignity of a Poem, than to celebrate the Works of the great Creator? What more agreeable to the Variety of one, than to describe the Journies of the heavenly Orbs, the Rise of Thunder, and other Meteors, the Motion of the Earth, and the Tides of the Sea; the attractive Force of the Magnet, the impulsive Motion of Light, and the slower Progression of Sound; and innumerable other Wonders, in the unbounded Storehouse of Nature. I shall say nothing, at present, of *Aratus* among the *Greeks*, or of *Manilius* among the *Latin* Writers; *Lucretius*, alone, shall suffice, instead of all the rest. He, indeed, is so far from celebrating the Creator, that he supposes there is none; but, allowing him his Hypothesis, his

Poem is truly philosophical. He had deserv'd much greater Praise, had he corrected his Notions in Philosophy, and his Style in Poetry; for in this Particular, also, he is often deficient. The Asperity of his Versification must be imputed rather to the Times he liv'd in, (*viz.* the Age between *Ennius* and *Virgil*) than to the Subject he treated of; which, whatever the common Opinion be, not only admits of the Harmony of Numbers, but requires it. The following Directions of *Virgil* about burning the Turf, part of which we cited before, upon another Occasion, don't lose any Thing of their Philosophy by their Smoothness:

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[262] *Sive inde occultas vires, & pabula terræ  
Pinguia concipiunt, sive illis omne per ignem  
Excoquitur vitium, atque exudat inutilis humor;  
Seu plures calor ille vias, & cæca relaxat  
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas:  
Seu durat magis, & venas astringit hiantes,  
Ne tenues pluvix, rapidive potentia solis  
Acrior, aut Boreæ penetrabile frigus adurat.*

Whether from thence they secret Strength receive,  
And richer Nutriment: Or by the Fire  
All latent Mischief, and redundant Juice,  
Oozing sweats off: Or whether the same Heat  
Opens the hidden Pores, that new Supplies  
Of Moisture may refresh the recent Blades.  
Or hardens more, and with astringent Force  
Closes the gaping Veins; lest driv'ling Show'rs  
Shou'd soak too deep, or the Sun's parching Rays,  
Or *Boreas*' piercing Cold shou'd dry the Glebe.

And even *Lucretius* himself is sometimes more flowing and sonorous, not only when he addresses himself to *Venus*, as in the following beautiful Passage:

[263] *Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli,  
Adventumque tuum; tibi suaves dædala tellus  
Summittit flores; tibi rident æquora ponti,  
Pacatumque nitet, diffuso lumine, cœlum.*

At thy Approach, great Goddess, strait remove  
Whate'er are rough, and Enemies to Love;  
The Clouds disperse, the Winds do swiftly waft,  
And reverently in Murmurs breathe their last.  
The Earth with various Art (for thy warm Pow'rs  
That dull Mars feels) puts forth her gawdy Flow'rs.  
To pleasure thee, ev'n lazy Lux'ry toils,  
The roughest Sea puts on smooth Looks, and Smiles:  
The well-pleas'd Heav'n assumes a brighter Ray  
At thy Approach, and makes a double Day.

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*Creech.*

But sometimes, likewise, when he unfolds the Principles of Matter, the Causes of Things, and the Phænomena of Nature. It is certain, *Virgil* is much indebted to him, tho' he has much improv'd his Manner.

Another Imperfection in *Lucretius* is, that he never makes any Excursions into poetical Fiction. Some Digressions he has, but they are rather philosophical, than poetical; and therefore don't diversify the Subject, nor afford the Reader sufficient Refreshment. He has some, indeed, philosophical; but then they are impious, such as reason against Providence, the Foundations of Religion, and the Immortality of the Soul. One, however, I must except, that upon the Plague of *Athens*; which contains, indeed, a poetical Description, but nothing of poetical Fable. It must be own'd, this Poet reasons too much in the Manner of the Schools, the Philosopher appears too open, he wants the Gentility to conceal his Beard, and temper his Severity. Poetry and Philosophy, indeed, were both to be join'd together, but the one ought to be as the Handmaid to the other; which *Virgil* would not have fail'd to have taken care of, had he been engag'd on such a Subject. Not so *Lucretius*, who appears more a Philosopher than a Poet, and yet of Poets not the meanest: *Virgil*, in his *Georgics*, appears more a Poet than a Husbandman, and yet of Husbandmen the greatest.

I can't see why, in a Work of this Kind, Nature may not be so explain'd, as to admit sometimes of poetical Fiction; in the same Manner that *Virgil* describes the *Cyclops* forging the Thunderbolts?

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[264] *Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosæ  
Addiderant, rutili tres ignis, & alitis Austri:  
Fulgores nunc terrificos, sonitumque, metumque,  
Addiderant operi, flammisque sequacibus iras.*

Three Forks of darted Hail, of wat'ry Cloud



Three more they added; three of glaring Fire,  
As many of the winged southern Wind;  
Then dreadful Flashes, and the roaring Noise,  
And Rage, and Terror, and avenging Flames.

Here the Formation of the Thunder is poetically feign'd; the Matter and the Adjuncts explain'd physically; Philosophy is made the Basis, and Poetry the Superstructure.

I know of no modern Poem of this Sort worth mentioning, except *Buchanan's Sphere*, which is a Work by no means contemptible. But as Natural Philosophy has, by the Help of Experiments, been lately brought to much greater Perfection than ever; this Kind of Poetry, no doubt, would have made proportionable Advances, if the same Age that shew'd a *Boyle*, a *Halley*, and a *Newton*, had produc'd a *Virgil*; or if we had not been so much worse Poets than the Ancients, as we are better Philosophers. We have, indeed, some poetical Essays on the<sup>[265]</sup> *Circulation of the Blood*, the *Air-pump*, the *Microscope*, and the *Telescope*, and the like: But these are short *Descriptions*, no ways reducible to the Species of Poetry before us. 'Tis true, they may in some Sense be reduc'd under the Title of *Didactic*, tho' not of *Preceptive* Poetry; they *teach* by *Description*, not by *Precept*.

But the next Kind I mention'd, relating to the *Business* or *Pleasures* of Life, do both. Under this Head *Virgil's Georgics* stand foremost, containing the most useful Rules for Husbandry in all its Branches, Agriculture, the Method of raising Trees, or Cattle, or tending of Bees. The Pleasure that naturally results from reading them, is chiefly owing to the Pleasure and Advantage which attends a Country Life. Here *Virgil* has *imitated Hesiod*, as he has *Theocritus* in his Eclogues, and *Homer* in the *Aeneis*; I should rather have said, has *exceeded* each in their peculiar Way of Writing, unless, perhaps, we ought to except *Theocritus*: But *Hesiod* he has left so far behind him, that he scarce deserves to be mention'd in the Comparison. The good old Man of *Ascræa* is at best but a downright Yeoman, whereas *Virgil* appears with the Learning of a Scholar, and the Elegance of a Gentleman. From his *Georgics*, then, all the Maxims that relate to this Subject must be illustrated.

The first Rule I would lay down, is, That we ought to select with Judgment such Circumstances as are capable of shining in Verse; not that we are to omit the gravest Precepts, but to express them by their most poetical Adjuncts:

[266] *Jam vinctæ vites, jam falcem arbusta reponunt;  
Jam canit extremos effœtus vinitor antes:  
Sollicitanda tamen tellus, pulvisque movendus;  
Et jam maturis metuendus Jupiter uvis.*

And now the Vines are ty'd, nor longer ask  
The Pruning Hook; the weary Dresser now  
With Songs salutes his outmost Ranks complete:  
Yet must we still sollicit the dull Mold;  
And the ripe Grapes have still to fear from *Jove*.

I need not explain myself any farther. To produce all the Instances of this Kind, would be to transcribe the *Georgics*. 'Tis with the same View the great Author of them is so copious upon the different Properties of Trees and Cattle; the Combat of Bulls; the Conduct and Politics of Bees, and the like.

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To vary the Form of Instruction, and to add Life to his Precepts, he sometimes instils them as Matters of Fact, and conveys them under the Appearance of a Narration:

[267] *Quid dicam, jacto qui semine cominus arva  
Insequitur, cumulosque ruit male pinguis arenæ?*

What shou'd I say of him; who, having sown  
His Grain, with ceaseless Industry proceeds,  
And spreads abroad the Heaps of barren Sand?

[268] *Quid, qui, ne gravidis procumbat culmus aristis,  
Luxuriam segetum tenera depascit in herba?*

Or what of him; who, lest the Stalks, o'ercharg'd  
By the plump Ears, shou'd sink beneath their Weight,  
Crops their Luxuriance in the tender Blade?

And in another Place:

[269] *Et quidam seros hyberni ad luminis ignes  
Invigilat, ferroque faces inspocat acuto;  
Aut dulcis musti Vulcano decoquit humorem,  
Et foliis undam trepidi desumat aheni.*

One watches late by Light of Winter Fires;  
And with the sharpen'd Steel for Torches splits  
The spiky Wood.—

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Or of sweet Must boils down the luscious Juice;  
And skims with Leaves the trembling Cauldron's Flood.

Sometimes he foretels the ill Consequences of a contrary Practice:

[270] *Quod nisi & assiduis terram insectabere rastris,  
Et sonitu terrebis aves, & ruris opaci  
Falce premes umbras, votisque vocaveris imbrem;  
Heu! magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum,  
Concussaque famem in silvis solabere quercu.*

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Unless then with assiduous Rakes thou work  
The Ground, and chase the Birds with scaring Noise;  
And with the crooked Pruner lop the Shades  
Of spreading Trees, and pray to Heav'n for Show'rs,  
Another's Store, in vain, alas! admir'd,  
Thou shalt behold, and from a shaken Oak  
Thy hungry Appetite in Woods relieve.

Or he describes the ill Effects he has observ'd to attend it:

[271] *Semina vidi equidem multos medicare serentes,  
Et nitro prius, & nigra perfundere amurca, &c.  
Vidi lecta diu, & multo spectata labore,  
Degenerare tamen.*

Many I've known to medicate their Seed,  
In Nitre steep'd, and the black Lees of Oil;  
And tho' o'er mod'rate Fire  
Moist, and precipitated, and with Pain  
Long try'd, and chosen, oft they have been prov'd Degen'rate.

By this agreeable Variety the Reader's Attention is wonderfully awaken'd, tho' he sees not the Reason of it; and the Poet's Art is the more to be admir'd, because it escapes Observation.

But the greatest Ornaments of this sort of Poems, are the frequent *Excursions* into some more noble Subject, which seem'd naturally to arise out of that the Poet is treating of. Sometimes, for Instance, he runs back into *History* and *Antiquity*, or, perhaps, the very Origine of Things:

[272] *Ante Jovem nulli subigebant arva coloni, &c.*

E're *Jove* was King, no Hinds subdu'd the Glebe.

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And again:

[273] *Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram  
Instituit, &c.*

'Twas *Ceres* first taught Mortals with the Share  
To cut the Ground.

Sometimes he makes Reflections on the Condition of Human Life:

[274] *Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi  
Prima fugit, subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus, &c.*

The best of Life, which wretched Mortals share,  
First flies away: Diseases, sick Old Age,  
And Pain, and Death's Inclemency, succeed.

At another Time he heightens his Subject with *Astronomy*, and *Natural Philosophy*; an Instance of which I have already cited, from the *Georgics*: But I cannot help adding one more, not only as it makes very remarkably for our present Purpose, but is, moreover, an abundant Proof of what I before advanc'd, that Natural Philosophy might be express'd in the sweetest Numbers, and consequently is capable of much smoother Versification than that of *Lucretius*. The Poet, then, having mention'd the Noise of Crows as a Sign of fair Weather, proceeds thus:

[275] *Haud equidem credo, quia sit divinitus illis  
Ingenium, & rerum fato prudentia major:  
Verum ubi tempestas, & cœli mobilis humor  
Mutavere vias, & Jupiter humidus Austris  
Densat erant quæ rara modo, & quæ densa, relaxat;  
Vertuntur species animorum; & pectora motus  
Nunc alios; alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,  
Concipiunt: Hinc ille avium concentus in agris,  
Et lætæ pecudes, & ovantes gutture corvi.*

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Not that I think an Ingeny divine  
 To them is giv'n, or Prescience of Events  
 In Fate superior: But when changeful Winds  
 Alter the various Temper of the Sky;  
 And the moist Ether what before was dense  
 Relaxes, and condenses what was rare:  
 The shifting Phantasms of their Minds are turn'd;  
 And now within their Breasts new Passions move,  
 Diff'rent from those they felt, when driving Blasts  
 Dispers'd the Clouds: Hence that Concent of Birds  
 Chirping in Chorus; hence the Joy of Beasts,  
 And Flocks of Crows exulting in the Fields.

Often he digresses into *Fable* and *Fiction*, as in that beautiful Episode of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*: And still more often into *poetical Descriptions*, as those of the perpetual Spring in *Italy*, and the bleak Winter in *Scythia*; of the Happiness of a Country Life; of the various Prognostications of the Weather; of the Prodigies that foretold the Death of *Cæsar*; and, to name no more, of the Murrain among the Cattle. Of which, I wonder the foremention'd Author of the *Essay on Virgil's Georgics* should say, that *Virgil* seems in it to have summon'd up all his Might to equal the Description of the Plague in *Lucretius*, since the one is as much beyond the other in the Ingenuity of the Composition, as it is inferior to it, in the Dignity of the Subject; and the Plague in *Lucretius* is exceeded by that of *Virgil*, as much as Beasts are by Men. Upon the whole, this is deservedly esteem'd the most finish'd Piece of all *Virgil's* Works; I need not add, that it is the compleatest in its Kind, of any we now have, or the World ever saw.

The Moderns have produc'd nothing in this Kind, except *Rapin's* Books of Gardening, and the celebrated Poem on Cyder by an ingenious Author, that not long since resided among us; who, if he had enjoy'd the Advantage of *Virgil's* Language, would have been second to *Virgil* in a much nearer Degree. As long as the fluctuating State of our Tongue will permit, this *English Georgic* shall infallibly flourish,

—& honos erit huic quoque Pomo.

And to this Apple Honours shall be paid.

Among the *Pleasures* of a Country Life, we may reckon *Hunting, Fishing, Hawking*, and the like; which are excellent Subjects for Didactic Verse, and are very fruitful of poetic Matter. We have only some Essays of this Sort, and those by modern Hands, except only *Gratius's Cynægeticon*, which owes all its Value to Fortune, rather than any true Merit of its own; viz. that it has the Advantage of being writ in the *Augustan* Age, and being recommended by *Ovid*, a Contemporary, in the following Verse,

*Aptaque venanti Gratius arma dabit.*

And *Gratius* to the Hunter Arms supplies.

*Oppian's Halieutica* and *Cynegetica* are scarce to be reckon'd among the Writings of the Ancients, but to be plac'd rather in the Middle Age<sup>[276]</sup>.

The Rules for writing upon these Subjects are the same with what I have mention'd under the *Georgics*; I have no Occasion, therefore, to add new ones here. The same may be said for that Species of Poetry, that consists in teaching the *Art of Poetry*; the Manner of Writing is the same, as far as the Difference of the Matter will admit.

The Pieces that have been writ in this Way, are known to all; and Poetry seems never to have employ'd her Time better, than upon herself. The Ancients have left us only one Specimen of this Kind, but such as may compensate for all the rest, *Horace's* Epistle to the *Piso's*; a Work that ought to be got by Heart by all true Lovers of Poetry, in which 'tis hard to say, whether we should admire the Wit or Judgment most, both in the Choice of the Precepts, and the Manner of delivering them. Among the Moderns, the celebrated *French* Poet<sup>[277]</sup>, and several of our Countrymen<sup>[278]</sup>, have succeeded, each in his native Tongue, very happily.

These are the several Kinds of Didactic Poetry, with which the Writers of the past or present Age have furnish'd us. In this Number I might reckon *Ovid of the Art of Love*; but I pass it by, on account of its Levity, not to say its Indecency. Much less excusable are *Claudius Quilletus*, and *Hieronymus Fracastorius*, among the Moderns; who, it were to be wish'd, had chosen Subjects less obnoxious to Censure.

I would, however, observe, that any Thing in the World may be the Subject of this Kind of Poem: The Business or Recreations of the City, or the Country; even the Conduct of common Life, and civil Converse: But none more suitable than Arts and Sciences. And among those, which of them so proper to receive Instructions from the Hand of Poetry, as its two Sister Arts, Painting and Music? In the former, particularly, there is Room for the most entertaining Precepts concerning the Disposal of Colours; the Arrangement of Lights and Shades; the secret Attractives of Beauty; the various Ideas which make up that one; the distinguishing between the Attitudes proper to either Sex, and every Passion; the representing Prospects, of Buildings, Battles, or the Country; and, lastly, concerning the Nature of Imitation, and the Power of Painting. What a boundless Field of Invention is here? what Room for Description, Comparison, and poetical

Fable? How easy the Transition, at any Time, from the Draught to the Original, from the Shadow to the Substance? And, from hence, what noble Excursions may be made into History, into Panegyric upon the greatest Beauties or Hero's of the past or present Age? The Task, I confess, is difficult; but, according to that noted, but true Saying,<sup>[279]</sup> So are all Things that are great. Let the Man, therefore, that is equal to such an Undertaking, be fir'd with a noble Ambition to attempt a Work untouch'd before; and let the *Georgics*, which have been our great Example, furnish him with this noble Incentive:

[280] — *Tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim  
Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora.*

A Way by me, too, must be try'd, to raise  
Myself from Earth, and fill the Mouths of Men.

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## LECTURE XVI.

### *Of LYRIC POETRY.*

**Spoke in the THEATRE,  
before the *Philological Act*,  
July 10, 1713.**

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The Subject I now engage in, however mean it may appear in my Hands, is not only noble in itself; but, at this Time, peculiarly seasonable: At this Time, I say, when Odes and Music are the Instruments of our present Festivity, and Peace restor'd to *Europe*, under the Conduct of the greatest and best of Queens, the happy Occasion of it. And no Kind of Poetry is so proper to express either our Joy, or the Heroes Triumphs, as the Lyric:

[281] *Quem virum, aut heroa, lyra, vel acri  
Tibia sumes celebrare, Clio?*

What Man, what Hero wilt thou claim,  
What Godhead, Muse? For whom inspire  
Thy warbling Pipe or Lyre?

*Oldsworth.*

Since, then, it is incumbent upon me to bear a Part in this Solemnity, let me prevail with my usual Audience, and those additional Guests that make up this chearful Assembly, to restrain their Impatience for the Verses and Orations, that are to follow, only while I lay before them the Original and Antiquity of Lyric Poetry, the distinguishing Properties of it, the Variety of its Matter, and the Difference between modern Writers in this Way, and the ancient.

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That this is the most ancient Kind of Poem, is pretty evident. *Jubal*, in sacred Writ, is said to be the first Inventor of musical Instruments; and little Doubt is to be made, but vocal Music was added to them. And we are farther told, by a *Jewish* Author, of venerable Antiquity<sup>[282]</sup>, tho' his Works are not admitted into the Canon, that the same *which found out musical Tunes, recited Verses in Writing*. We have before observ'd, that Poetry took its Rise from those Festival Hymns which were sung at the Conclusion of Harvest, in Gratitude to the Deity. Odes, therefore, and Poetry, date their Original from the same Æra: And, in Truth, if we consider the internal Motions of the Soul, it will seem very probable that Poetry, which is so peculiarly adapted to express the several Emotions of Joy, or Praise, or Gratitude, owes its Rise to Nature herself, and was therefore join'd with Music. We have no Instance of Poetry older than the celebrated Song, or rather Ode, of *Moses*<sup>[283]</sup>. The Antiquity of the other Hymns mention'd in sacred History, and, particularly, the Collection of them in the Book of *Psalms*, is so well known, that I shall dwell no longer upon this Particular.

As to the Nature of the Lyric Poem, it is, of all Kinds of Poetry, the most poetical; and is as distinct, both in Style, and Thought, from the rest, as Poetry in general is from Prose. I have before observ'd, the Peculiarity of its Diction; the Thought, only, now comes under Consideration. Now this is the boldest of all other Kinds, full of Rapture, and elevated from common Language the most that is possible; so that what *Horace* says at the Beginning of one of his Odes, may not improperly be applied to all the rest:

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[284] *Odi profanum vulgus, & arceo.*

I hate, I scorn the Vulgar Throng.

Some Odes there are, likewise, in the free and loose Manner, which seem to avoid all Method, and yet are conducted by a very clear one; which affect Transitions, seemingly, without Art, but, for that Reason, have the more of it; which are above Connexion, and delight in Exclamations,

and frequent Invocation of the Muses; which begin and end abruptly, and are carried on thro' a Variety of Matter with a sort of divine *Pathos*, above Rules and Laws, and without Regard to the common Forms of Grammar.

Hence, then, we learn the chief Property of Lyric Poetry, *viz.* that it abounds with a Sort of Liberty which consists in Digressions and Excursions. *Pindar* set his Successors this Example, insomuch that this Style, when applied to Odes, is generally call'd Pindaric; not that he is to be esteem'd the Inventor of it: For it is plain that he, and the rest of the *Grecians*, receiv'd their Learning from the Nations of the East, the *Jews* and *Phœnicians*: And it is well known, the eastern Eloquence abounded not only with Metaphors, and bold Hyperboles, but in long Digressions; as is sufficiently evident from the sacred Writings. The *Roman Pindar* often imitates the *Theban*, and sometimes exceeds him, even in his characteristic Excellence. Thus in that Ode, where he addresses himself to the Ship that bore so valuable a Freight as *Virgil*,

[285] *Sic te, Diva potens Cypri, &c.*

at the Conclusion of the eighth Verse, he inveighs against the Temerity of Mankind, and pursues this Argument to the End of the Ode, which is not a very short one. So, again, speaking of the Tree which had like to have fallen upon him,

[286] *Ille & nefasto te posuit die, &c.*

a few Lines after he adds;

*Quam pene furvæ regna Proserpinæ,  
Et judicantem vidimus Æacum,  
Sedesque descriptas piorum; &  
Æoliis fidibus querentem*

*Sappho puellis de popularibus;  
Et Te sonantem plenius aureo,  
Alcæe, plectro, dura navis,  
Dura fugæ mala, dura belli?*

How near was I to Realms of Night?  
Where *Minos* does in Judgment sit;  
Where pious Shades walk o'er the Plains;  
Where *Proserpine* and Darkness reigns:

Where *Sappho's* warbling Measures tell  
By what disastrous Cause she fell:  
*Alcæus*, in sublimer Strains,  
Of Toils by Sea and Land complains.  
*Oldsw.*

He then expatiates into their Praises, and so concludes this elegant Ode with them. It is, indeed, just Matter of Complaint, that we have only some Fragments of both these Poets remaining, to whom we owe the Invention of the two chief Kinds of Lyric Poetry. In this loose Way of Writing, the Poet just touches upon the Subject at first propos'd, and strait diverts to another:

[287] — *Cætera fluminis  
Ritu feruntur, nunc medio alveo  
Cum pace delabentis Etruscum  
In mare, nunc lapides adesos  
Stirpesque raptas, & pecus, & domos,  
Volventis una, non sine montium  
Clamore, vicinæque silvæ;  
Cum fera diluvies quietos  
Irritat amnes.*

All worldly Things, like Waters, flow,  
Sometimes too high, sometimes too low:  
Sometimes the even Current gently glides  
Down to the Deep, and oft with mighty Roar  
Bears Rocks upon its swelling Tides,  
Sweeps Herds and Houses from the Shore,  
And Trunks of Trees; the Rivers quit their Bounds,  
Whilst ev'ry lofty Hill, and neighb'ring Wood resounds.  
*Oldsworth.*

Nothing can describe the unbounded Nature of this Kind of Ode better than those Lines of *Horace*, which, at the same Time, give us a lively Instance of it. We may add, to the same Purpose, his Description of the *Theban* Poet;

[288] *Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres  
Quem super notas aluere ripas,*

*Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo  
Pindarus ore.*

*Pindar's a mighty raging Flood,  
That from some Mountain flows,  
Rapid, and warm, and deep, and loud,  
Whose Force no Limits knows.  
Oldsworth.*

From what has been said, some will be induc'd to think, that to write a Lyric Poem, which is indulg'd with so many Liberties, is the easiest Thing imaginable: But, in Reality, it is the most difficult in every Respect, except its Shortness, as it is the most elegant. It demands not only a flowing Imagination, Brightness, Life, Sublimity, and Elegance, but the nicest Art, and finest Judgment, so as to seem luxuriant, and not to be so; and under the Shew of transgressing all Laws, to preserve them. For it is not impossible but a Writer's Fire may be temper'd with the severest Judgment; and Poets may be said, tho' Lovers cannot, to be *mad with Reason*.

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Those Digressions which quite leave the Subject, and never return to it again, please me less than some others of a very different Kind. The former, no doubt, are defensible, and sometimes highly commendable; for a Poet is not always oblig'd to dwell upon the same Argument from one End to the other; and I would rather call them Transitions, than Digressions: But the Digressions which I chiefly admire, are such as *take Occasion* from some *Adjunct* or *Circumstance* of the Subject, to pass on to *somewhat else* not totally distinct from it, with which the Imagination having been diverted for some Time, new Matter starts up, and from some new *Adjunct* of that, the Poet is brought back, of a sudden, to his first Design. I cannot produce a better Instance of this, out of *Horace* himself, than from a late Ode of one of our own Countrymen<sup>[289]</sup>, who, since he has paid the Debt of Nature, may, without Envy, receive the Tribute of our Praise; that beautiful Ode, I mean, upon the Death of the famous Dr. *Pocock*; where the Poet describes his Travels to the East, in these Words<sup>[290]</sup>:

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*Quin nunc requiris tecta virentia  
Nini ferocis, nunc Babel arduum,  
Immane opus! crescentibusque  
Vertice sideribus propinquum!  
Nequicquam; amici disparibus sonis  
Eludit aures nescius artifex,  
Linguasque miratur recentes,  
In patriis peregrinus oris.  
Vestitur hinc tot sermo coloribus,  
Quot Tu, Pococki, dissimilis Tui  
Orator effers, &c.*

Now *Ninus'* Walls you search with curious Eye,  
Now *Babel's* Tow'r, the Rival of the Sky.  
In vain! the mad Attempt new Tongues confound,  
The Toil eluded by discordant Sound:  
To his own Sire the Son *Barbarian* grown,  
Unletter'd, starts a Language not his own.  
Hence various Bounds to Nations set by Speech;  
But not to You, who, Orator in each, }  
His proper Tongue th'admiring Native teach. }

With what Elegance does the Poet divert from his Purpose, that he may bring in a beautiful Description of *Babel*, and the Confusion of Tongues: Then, with no less Elegance, he returns to the Praise of his venerable Traveller, surprizingly skill'd in most of them. Afterwards, with a peculiar Delicacy, his Comment upon *Joel* is hinted at, and from thence Occasion taken to represent that terrible Day of the Lord, which the Prophet speaks of, and then the holy Ardour of his Interpreter:

*Ac sicut albens perpetua nive  
Simul favillas, & cineres sinu  
Eructat ardenti, & pruinis  
Contiguas rotat Ætna flammis:  
Sic te trementem, te nive candidum,  
Mens intus urget, mens agit ignea  
Sequi reluctantem Joelem  
Per tonitru, aereasque nubes.*

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*Annon pavescis, dum Tuba pallidum  
Ciet Sionem? dum tremulum polo  
Caligat astrum, atque incubanti  
Terra nigrans tegitur sub umbra?  
Quod agmen! heu! quæ turba sequacibus  
Tremenda flammis! quis strepitantium  
Flictus rotarum est! O Pococki  
Egregie! O animose Vatis*

*Interpres abstrusi! O simili fere  
Correpte flamma!—*

As *Ætna's* lucid with perpetual Snow,  
While heaving Flames within its Entrails glow;  
O'er the hoar Frost the raging Fury's spread,  
And ruddy Flouds of Fire beam round its Head:  
So trembling thou, and venerably white,  
Thy urging Soul tries sacred *Sion's* Height,  
Attends thy *Joel*, clad in dark Array,  
Where Clouds and Lightnings mark his awful Way.  
Hark! dost not shudder while the Trumpet's Sound  
The tott'ring Tow'rs of *Solyma* rebound?  
Behold what Troops come rolling from afar  
With Gleams of Terror, and the Din of War!  
In the bright Front consuming Fires ride,  
And Slaughter stalks indignant by their Side.  
Oh! whither, whither tends thy eager Course,  
Rapt by thy own, thy kindred Prophet's Force?

The Matter and Thoughts are sublime and elegant, the Transitions artful; and it is, in short, all over wonderful.

This, likewise, is a Peculiarity in Lyric Poetry, that (as the Name implies) it is attended with musical Instruments more than any other. *More than any other*, I say, because there's no Necessity that Odes should be always sung; they are often repeated: Nor is Music so peculiar to them, as to be suitable to no other Poems; for the Flute was anciently join'd with Elegy; and now a-days we see other Kinds of Poetry accompanied with Music, nay, even Prose itself; tho' anciently, I say, it was thought more *peculiarly* adapted to the Ode. Hence we find many Ideas among the Lyrics, that we meet with no where else; hence the frequent mention of musical Instruments, I may say the frequent Invocation of them.

[291] —*Age dic Latinum,  
Barbite, carmen.*

[292] —*Nec turpem senectam  
Degere, nec cithara carentem.*

[293] —*Si neque tibias  
Euterpe cohibet, nec Polyhymnia  
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton.*

Which are Circumstances that often throw an additional Ornament on a Poem.

The Ancients have left us very imperfect Accounts of their Music. They that would see a Description of their chief Instruments, the Harp and Flute, may consult *Vossius*, and others. But the Manner of their *Composing* has been scarce touch'd upon by any. For my Part, I cannot but think it was more simple than our modern Way, and consisted of fewer Divisions. And my Reason is, because we meet with very few Encomiums of this Art, or of those that excell'd in it; nay, scarce any of their Names are handed down to Posterity. There's frequent mention, indeed, among the Lyrics, of musical Instruments, as Adjuncts of that Kind of Poetry; but it is scarce credible the Ancients should have said so little of this Art, if it had flourish'd as much in their Time, as it does in ours. As, therefore, we are much inferior to them in Lyric Poetry, so in its Sister Science we far exceed them. We have not their *Horaces*; nor had they those masterly Hands which are now, or lately have been the Admiration of all *Europe*; none to be compar'd with our *British Orpheus*<sup>[294]</sup>, or his worthy Successor<sup>[295]</sup>, that receives, on this Day, Academical Honours.

The proper Subjects for *Odes*, are almost all comprehended in the following Lines of *Horace*:

[296] *Musa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,  
Et pugilem victorem, & equum certamine primum,  
Et juvenum curas, & libera vina referre.*

Gods, Heroes, Conquerors, *Olympic* Crowns,  
Love's pleasing Cares, and the free Joys of Wine,  
Are proper Subjects for the Lyric Song.  
*Roscom.*

Heroes and Triumphs, we before observ'd to be the principal Subjects; and *Horace*, accordingly, places them first. But, in Course of Time, Love and Entertainments were likewise thought very suitable ones. *Horace* has left us several of both Sorts, writ with a Sweetness and Elegance that always distinguish him: Nay, he more than once insinuates, that light Subjects come peculiarly within his Province, and that he stands in need of Apology when he presumes to meddle with greater:

[297] *Nos convivia, nos prælia virginum, &c.*

And after a Recital of *Juno's* Speech to the Gods, he concludes:

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[298] *Non hæc jocosæ conveniunt lyræ;  
Quo, Musa, tendis?*

Stay, Muse; this suits but ill the sportive Lyre.

But these Expressions are the Effects of the Poet's Modesty, not to be understood critically; not as spoken of Lyrics in general, but of his own, which with a becoming Decency, he says, are unequal to greater Subjects. For the Ode in its own Nature is *chiefly* adapted to the Sublime; and nothing can have more of that Quality than some of *Horace's*. Who, for Instance, can read, without Rapture,

[299] *Motum ex Metello Consule civicum, &c.  
Jam nunc minaci murmure cornuum  
Perstringis aures; jam litui strepunt;  
Jam fulgor armorum fugaces  
Terret equos, equitumque vultus.  
Audire magnos jam videor duces  
Non indecoro pulvere sordidos;  
Et cuncta terrarum subacta,  
Præter atrocem animum Catonis.*

Methinks I hear the horrid Din of Arms:  
Bright gleaming Armour paints the Field:  
The rattling Trumpet pours its dread Alarms:  
The Brave lie low in Dust, the Valiant yield:  
Revenge and Honour the stern Warrior warms,  
And ev'ry Breast, but *Cato's*, is with Horror fill'd.  
*Oldsworth.*

Or this:

[300] *Descende Cælo, & dic, age, tibia,  
Regina, longum, Calliope, melos, &c.*

And to mention one more:

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[301] *Qualem ministrum fulminis alitem, &c.*

And many others I might produce, from the same Poet, of equal Sublimity.

But in the Verses abovemention'd he has omitted one Subject very suitable to the Ode, and which he himself has often happily attempted; that, I mean, which relates to moral Reflections; which not only affords the greatest Advantage to the Reader, but, for aught I know, the greatest Elegance to the Writer. Many of his Odes are full of it:

[302] *Æquam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem, &c.*

Be calm, my Friend, be easy, and sedate,  
And bend your Soul to ev'ry State.  
*Oldsworth.*

[303] *Cedes coemptis saltibus, & domo,  
Villaque flavus quam Tiberis lavit  
Cedes, & extractis in altum  
Divitiis potietur hæres.*

You must your Fields and pleasant Seat forego,  
Where *Tiber's* yellow Waters flow;  
You must to *Pluto's* gloomy Realm repair,  
And leave your Heaps of Wealth to a luxurious Heir.  
*Oldsworth.*

Again:

[304] *Eheu! fugaces, Posthume, Posthume,  
Labuntur anni, &c.*

And, to omit innumerable other Instances of this Nature, I will add only his Ode on Avarice:

[305] *Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops,  
Nec sitim pellit, nisi causa morbi*



'Tis great this Passion to controul,  
For 'tis the Dropsy of the Soul:  
Unless you purge each sickly Vein,  
'Twill thirst, and drink, and thirst again.  
*Oldsw.*

These moral Odes are often interspers'd with Encomiums on a Country Life, on moderate Circumstances, and the like; which always afford Matter for entertaining Descriptions:

[306] *Vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum  
Splendet in mensa tenui salinum;  
Nec leves somnos timor, aut cupido  
Sordidus, aufert.*

Blest he with little, on whose thrifty Board  
That Salt still shines, that call'd his Father Lord;  
No vexing Fears his Breast can seize,  
No sordid Lust will break his Ease.  
*Creech.*

Upon the whole, then, we see, that the Ode may be either Sublime, or of the lower Strain; jocose or serious; mournful or exulting; even satirical sometimes, epigrammatical never. It may consist of Wit, but not of that Turn which is the peculiar Characteristic of Epigram. They that have a Mind to know the various Classes of Odes, with their uncouth Titles, into which they are by some Writers distinguish'd; may consult *Vossius*, *Scaliger*, and others. This to me is an Enquiry not more superfluous than disagreeable; since any Thing, we find, may be the Subject of them, if they are but dress'd up in their own peculiar Manner.

From whence the Pleasure arises with which this Kind of Poetry affects us, may be known from what we have before discours'd of the Pleasure of Poetry in general, when we examin'd how it address'd itself to the Passions, the common Principles of human Nature, and human Happiness. I would only now observe, that what we said of Poetry in general, is applicable to the Lyric more particularly: Besides the Advantages of a florid and figurative Style, it commands that Sweetness and Variety of Numbers; that Diversity of Thought; that Elegance of Conciseness; that Energy of Expression; that Quickness of Transition, and Liberty of Excursion; that lively Ardour, and noble Sublimity, which can never fail to raise in the Soul all those agreeable Sensations, we before describ'd.

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It is not my Design to give an historical Account of the ancient Writers in this Kind of Poetry: *Vossius* reckons up several among the *Greeks* of both Sexes; we have nothing but Fragments of all of them remaining, except the Poems of *Pindar* and *Anacreon*. The former I have already spoke of; those of the latter are so few, and the peculiar Nature of them so well known, that tho' they deserve much Praise, they need no farther Explication. Among the *Romans*, we have none of any Note, except *Horace*; but he, alone, indeed, is equal to many; and we may venture to affirm, that his Odes exceed any Collection of Poems the learned World has yet been bless'd with.

To come now to later Times; it must be own'd, the Moderns are excell'd by the Ancients in no Kind of Writing more than this; they succeed best, when they make use of their Language; for many of the Moderns are very good Masters of it. *Casimire* is often very happy this Way; but often harsh, turgid, and pompously empty; of which the present Solemnity reminds me of one Instance. The Poet is speaking in Praise of a Peace lately made; and after he had begun well enough,

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[307] *Jam minæ sævi cecidere belli,  
Jam prophanatis male pulsa terris  
Et salus, & pax.*

he goes on thus,

—*niveis revisit  
Oppida bigis.*

Then comes, a little after:

[308] *Grandinat gemmis, riguoque cælum  
Depluit auro.*

The Verses are smooth and sonorous; only they have the Misfortune to want common Sense. But in another Ode he is much happier, unless, perhaps, a little too bold:

[309] *Vive, jucundæ metuens juventæ,  
Crispe Lævini; fugiunt avaræ  
Mensium lunæ, nimiumque volvi  
Lubricus Æther.*

But the Lines that follow, a little after, are perfectly just, and beautiful:

*Quod tibi larga dedit hora dextra,  
Hora furaci rapuit sinistra;  
More fallentis tenerum jocosæ  
Matris alumnum.*

Our *Hannes* needed only to have writ more to have made himself second to *Horace* in all future Ages. But the Odes that are writ in the modern Languages, in *French, Italian, and English*, have nothing of the Genius of the Ancients. Ours, which generally go under the Name of *Pindarics*, are such empty, trifling Performances, that they are below even the Censure of a Critic. A Heap of Verses, tho' never so insipid and ridiculous, form'd as little upon the Laws of Reason, as of Metre, a monstrous Product of the Brain, shall be call'd, forsooth, a *Pindaric!* a Scandal which it is to be wish'd the Learned would no longer suffer to be offer'd to so sacred a Title. Our Songs and Catches, likewise, which are daily set to Music, whatever Charms they may borrow from thence, have very rarely any of their own; nay, it is observable, that often the worst Verses are set to Music best; as if true Poetry, and good Music, Sisters as they are, cou'd never agree: Which is a Reproach that redounds no less to the Dishonour of Music, than the former, I just mention'd, was to *Pindar*. But better Times appear, in which we hope to see these, and all other Arts, improv'd to their utmost Perfection; in this happy Age, I mean, wherein (that I may conclude my Discourse as I began, with a View at once to our present Solemnity, and our present Subject)

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[310] *Jam Fides, & Pax, & Honor, Pudorque  
Priscus, & neglecta redire Virtus  
Audet, apparetque beata pleno  
Copia cornu.*

Now Honour, Chastity and Peace,  
Virtue and banish'd Faith, return;  
Now Plenty broods a fair Increase,  
And fills with Flow'rs her fragrant Horn.  
*Olds.*

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## LECTURE XVII, XVIII. Of SATIRE.

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It is Merit enough for a Writer on a Subject that has been often canvass'd, if he can reduce into a short Compass whatever hath been said before, and add something material of his own. Whether I have done this in the present Case, must be submitted to the Judgment of the Audience; I am sure I shall make it my Endeavour, not only to represent my own Sentiments in an advantageous Light, but those of others; for I have a large Field of Writers before me, on this Subject; not only *Horace, Quintilian*, and the rest of the Ancients, but the learned *Casaubon, Scaliger, Vossius, Dacier*, and some others.

A Difficulty occurs upon our first Entrance; for a Doubt has been made about the Name of *Satire*, and the Orthography of it: The Reason of which Doubt will appear, from the uncertain History we have of this Kind of Poem. It cannot be denied, but that the *Grecian Satire* differ'd from the *Roman*; but yet the Difference seems not so great, as some are apt to imagine: The former was of the dramatic Kind, a Sort of Interlude annex'd to Tragedy, to remove from the Audience too melancholy Impressions. It is *Horace's* Observation,

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[311] *Carminè qui Tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,  
Mox etiam agrestes Satiros nudavit, & asper  
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit; eo quod  
Illecebris erat, & grata novitate, morandus  
Spectator.*

The first Tragedians found that serious Style  
Too grave for their uncultivated Age,  
And so brought wild and naked Satires in,  
(Whose Motion, Words, and Shape, were all a Farce)  
As oft as Decency wou'd give them Leave;  
Because the mad ungovernable Rout,  
Full of Confusion, and the Fumes of Wine,  
Lov'd such Variety, and Antic Tricks.  
*Roscom.*

The *Scene* was laid in the Country, the *Persons* Satyrs, and rural Deities. Sometimes Peasants and Rustics were mix'd with them. The Subject was jocose, and full of Sneer and Banter; the

Style a Medium between Comedy and Tragedy. This, as I said, was the satirical Poetry of the *Grecians*; but Satire, as we now have it, is entirely *Roman*, if we may believe *Quintilian*, who says<sup>[312]</sup>, *Satira quidem tota nostra est*; or *Horace*<sup>[313]</sup>, who styles *Ennius* the *Inventor of a Poem unknown to the Grecians*, meaning *Satire*, according to the Opinion of most of his Interpreters. *Scaliger*, however, expressly denies it to be of *Roman* Original; and there is Reason, indeed, as we shall see hereafter, to understand those Expressions of *Quintilian* and *Horace* with some Abatement. Those that will not allow it to be deriv'd from the *Grecians*, but entirely *Roman*, maintain, that *Satira* should be writ with an *i*, not a *y*; and that it is not deriv'd from *Satyrus*, but *Satur*; *Satira*, therefore, is the same as *Satura*, as *Maximus* anciently *Maxumus*. Now *Satur* signifies full of a Mixture of Things, as *Lanx Satura*, a Dish full of Varieties; and, as *Dacier* observes<sup>[314]</sup>, "those Laws were call'd *Leges Saturæ*<sup>[315]</sup>, which contain'd several Heads and Titles under them; as the *Julian-Papian-Poppæan* Law, which was otherwise call'd the *Miscella*, which is but another Word for *Satura*. Hence that Expression, *per Saturam legem ferre*, when the Votes of the Senators were not taken in Order, or counted, but were given together promiscuously. And this is properly *per Saturam sententias exquirere*, which is an Expression *Sallust* makes use of after *Lælius*. Nor is this all; some Books anciently bore this Title; as *Pescennius Festus* left *Historias Saturas*, or *per Saturam*." Thus far *Dacier*. *Satire*, then, when applied by a Metaphor to Writing, is a Miscellaneous Poem, full of Variety of Matter: According to that of *Juvenal*,

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[316] *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,  
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli.*

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Whatever since that golden Age was done,  
What Human Kind desires, and what they shun,  
Rage, Passions, Pleasures, Impotence of Will,  
Shall this satirical Collection fill.

*Dryden.*

But however various the Matter of it is, it ought always to have somewhat of Keeness and Invective, to expose the Vices and Follies of Mankind with Raillery, or chastise them with Severity. Before Plays were brought to *Rome*, the *Saturnine* and *Fescennine* Verses were much in Vogue: They were a Sort of rude and unpolish'd Compositions, at best, full of Contumely, and often of Ribaldry. Whence *Horace*,

[317] *Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem  
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit.*

Hence grew the Liberty of the looser Muse,  
Hence they grew scurrilous, and wou'd abuse.

*Creech.*

Afterwards, as the *Romans* grew more polite, these kind of Verses refin'd in Proportion: But they retain'd, still, their Jibes and Banter and kept so far to their first Institution, as to make the Follies of human Life the Object of their Ridicule. From hence proceeded *Satire*, so call'd from the *Farrago* and Variety of Matter it contain'd. It was improv'd, likewise, with Music and Dancing, which, considering its being carried on in Dialogue, made it resemble somewhat of the dramatic Kind; nor had the *Romans* any Thing, yet, that came so near the Drama as this did. Afterwards, when they had receiv'd both Tragedy and Comedy from the *Grecians*, they were so taken with the Novelty, that Satire, for some Time, lay neglected. But coming again into Esteem, it was added, as a Kind of *Exodium*, to Comedy. Thus Things went on for some Years, till *Ennius* arose, endu'd with Wit, and true poetic Fire, who observing how fond the People were of seeing the Vices of Mankind expos'd upon the Stage, thought a Poem on the same Subject, without the Decoration of Scenes and Action, might have the same Effect. Accordingly, he attempted Satires in the same Form we now see them, only he did not confine himself to the Hexameter, but made use of all Sorts of Measure. The Remains we have of this Poet, are noble Indications of the Strength of his Genius; and *Horace* and *Virgil* have shewn what Opinion they had of his Writings, by borrowing so much from them. After *Ennius*, succeeded *Pacuvius*; but his Works are all lost, excepting some Fragments, and those of uncertain Authority. Next came *Lucilius*, of whom, likewise, we have only some Fragments remaining. But his Excellencies and Imperfections are very amply set forth by *Horace*, whose Words I have no Occasion to cite here. I would observe, however, that those Lines,

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[318] — *Quid, cum est Lucilius ausus  
Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem?*

How, Sir, *Lucilius*, that did first engage  
In writing Satires, and that lash'd the Age.

*Creech.*

are not so to be understood, as if he was the first that attempted Satire; which both *Ennius* and *Pacuvius*, as we just now observ'd, had done before him: But that *Lucilius* improv'd it so far as to give it that new Face, under which it appear'd in *Horace's* Time: For that his Satires were of the same Form with *Horace's*, is maintain'd by Monsieur *Dacier* against *Casaubon*<sup>[319]</sup>. It must be allow'd, however, that one Species of Satire owes its Perfection to *Horace*, as another does to

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*Juvenal*; both which we shall hereafter speak of separately. A third Kind was the *Varronian* or *Menippean* Satire, so call'd from *Menippus*, a Cynic Philosopher, among the *Grecians*, whose Doctrine *Varro* follow'd. It was a Sort of Medley, consisting not only of all Kinds of Verse, but of Verse and Prose mix'd together; a Specimen of which we have in *Petronius's Satyricon*<sup>[320]</sup>. We have none of *Varro's* poetical Works remaining, except some small Fragments; which is the more to be lamented, considering the Character *Quintilian* gives of him, That he was the most learned of all the *Romans*.

The Word *Satire* was anciently taken in a less restrain'd Sense than it is at present, not only as denoting a severe Poem against Vice, but as consisting of Precepts of Virtue, and the Praises of it: And even in the Satires, as they are call'd, of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Persius*, &c. which are principally levell'd against the Weakness, the Follies, or Vices of Mankind; we find many Directions, as well as Incitements to Virtue. Such Strokes of Morality, *Horace*, particularly, is full of; and in *Juvenal* they occur very frequently. Thus,

[321] *Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus, quid  
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris:  
Charior est illis homo, quam sibi.*

Intrust thy Fortune to the Pow'rs above,  
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant  
What their unerring Wisdom sees thee want:  
In Goodness, as in Greatness, they excel;  
Ah! that we lov'd ourselves but half as well.  
*Dryden.*

And afterwards:

[322] *Monstro, quod ipse tibi possis dare; semita certe  
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.*

The Path to Peace is Virtue: What I show,  
Thyself may freely on thyself bestow.  
*Dryden.*

All of them sometimes correct Vice, like Moralists, I may say, like Divines, rather than Satirists: What less can we say of this of *Persius*?

[323] *O curvæ in terras animæ, & cœlestium inanes!*

O Souls, in whom no heav'nly Fire is found.  
*Dryden.*

Sentiments, these, one would think, were fetch'd from true Religion, not from unassisted Reason; and which we might expect from the *Christian*, more than the *Stoic*.

Notwithstanding the learned Arguments which *Casaubon*, *Dacier*, and others have urg'd, for the Etymology of the Word *Satire*, I can't but think their Opinion has more Probability in it than Truth; nor can any sufficient Reason be assign'd, why it may not be as well deriv'd from *Satyrus*, a Satyr, as from *Satur*; full. There's certainly too much Reason to think that some Things in *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Persius*, were borrow'd from the suppos'd Manners and Customs of Satyrs; and I cannot but lament, that Writers so deserving in all other Respects, should reprove some Vices in such a Manner, as to teach them; and that while they are recommending Virtue, they should throw in some Expressions so injurious to it. This Controversy, then, about the *Name* of *Satire*, (which, it must be own'd, is the more material, because it in a great Measure defines its *Nature*) I shall leave in Uncertainty, with *Vossius*, rather than determine upon it positively with *Dacier*.

For I cannot but be surpriz'd to see this last Author so confidently assert<sup>[324]</sup>, "That *Satire* is a Species of Poetry unknown to any but the *Romans*, and has no Relation to the satirical Compositions of the *Grecians*, as some learned Men, by Mistake, have thought<sup>[325]</sup>. Now, I'll be bold to say, that not only *some*, but *most*, if not all the Learned, have thought so, and still think the same; and even Mons. *Dacier* himself, I reckon among the Number, how much soever he seems here to have forgot himself. I appeal not only to what I have before said upon this Subject myself, but to what I have cited from him, whether it does not appear that the *Roman Satire* had some *Affinity* with the *Grecian*, and, particularly, that it ow'd its Rise to it.<sup>[326]</sup> *Vossius*, speaking of the *Grecian*, tells us, "That the Discourse was agreeable to the Characters of the Speakers; full of Ribaldry, Ridicule, and Scurrility. The Failings of Men were the Objects of their Scoffs, and to excite Laughter the Aim of them. *Horace*, in his Art of Poetry,

[327] *Verum ita risores, ita commendare dicaces  
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo."*

Yet Satires shou'd observe this decent Rule,  
And so turn serious Things to Ridicule,  
As, &c.

Now will any one say, the *Grecian* and *Roman* Satire had nothing of this in common between them? Are Lasciviousness, Ridicule, and Banter, the exposing Vice, and the exciting Laughter, Properties in which the *Roman* Satire had no Share? We readily grant, indeed, that as it appear'd in a *different Form*, it was not the very *same Kind* of Poem with the *Grecian*: But surely there was some, nay, a great deal of Affinity between them; and the one, particularly, owes its Rise to the other.

Thus much for the Etymology, the History of the Rise and Progress of Satire. With Respect to the Nature and different Species of it, I can by no means subscribe to *Vossius's* Opinion, who observes<sup>[328]</sup>, "That, as the Vices of Mankind may be corrected either publickly, or in private, the latter Method is much the more suitable to Satire: And that *Juvenal* and *Persius*, setting aside the Metre, have deviated more from the true Nature of it, than *Lucian* in his Dialogues, or *Julian* in his *Cæsars*. For the former shew their ill Nature more than their Wit, and don't so much put Vice out of Countenance, as themselves out of Temper; whereas the latter always keep up their Humour, and mix their Reproof with Facetiousness<sup>[329]</sup>. According to this, the *Horatian* Satire is the only true one; and the Writings of *Juvenal* and *Persius* have no Pretence to that Title. But the truer State of the Case is this: Satire in *general*, is a Poem design'd to reprove the Vices and Follies of Mankind: It is twofold; either the *jocose*, as that of *Horace*, or the *serious*. like that of *Juvenal*. The former hidden, the latter open. That generally makes Sport with Vice, and exposes it to Ridicule: This probes it to the Bottom, and puts it to Torture: And so far is it from not deserving the Title of Satire, that, in my Opinion, it is the more noble Species of it; and the genteel Jokes of *Horace*, how ingenious soever, are less affecting than the poetic Rage, and commendable Zeal of *Juvenal*. I shall speak to both Kinds, as *Persius* has well distinguish'd them, where he describes the Difference between *Lucilius* and *Horace's* Way of Writing:

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[330] — *Secuit Lucilius urbem*  
*Te Lupe, te Muti, & genuinum fregit in illis.*  
*Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico*  
*Tangit, & admissus circum præcordia indit,*  
*Callidus excusso populum suspendere naso.*  
 Yet old *Lucilius* never fear'd the Times,  
 But lash'd the City, and dissected Crimes.  
*Mutius* and *Lupus* both by Name he brought;  
 He mouth'd 'em, and betwixt his Grinders caught.  
 Unlike in Method with conceal'd Design,  
 Did crafty *Horace* his low Numbers join;  
 And, with a sly insinuating Grace,  
 Laugh'd at his Friend, and look'd him in the Face:  
 Wou'd raise a Blush, where secret Vice he found;  
 And tickle, while he gently prob'd the Wound.  
 With seeming Innocence the Crowd beguil'd;  
 But made the desp'rate Passes when he smil'd.  
*Dryden.*

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*Vossius* still erring upon the same String, says, "It is not so much the Business of Satire to reprove all Sorts of Vice, as those that are the proper Subjects of Laughter<sup>[331]</sup>. If this Maxim is true, *Juvenal* will scarce find a Place among the Satirists: For tho' he may sometimes laugh, he is, for the Generality, serious; and shews the Lash much more than his Teeth. Nay, his Smiles are very different from those of *Horace*; they are not the genteel ones of a Courtier, but mix'd with Gall and ill Nature; such as *Virgil* describes:

*Ad quem subridens mista Mezentius ira.*

To whom *Mezentius* with malignant Smile.

The Argument which *Vossius* cites for his Opinion, makes against it, rather than for it. He urges<sup>[332]</sup>, "that those Vices are the proper Subjects of Satire, that were so of the ancient Comedy: Hence *Horace*;

[333] "*Si quis dignus erat describi, quod malus, aut fur,*  
*Aut mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui*  
*Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant."*

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If they were to describe a vile, unjust,  
 And cheating Knave, or scourge a lawless Lust,  
 Or other Crimes; regardless of his Fame,  
 They shew'd the Man, and boldly told his Name.  
*Creech.*

I ask, then, are Thieves, Whoremasters, and Robbers, guilty of those less Crimes which are only to be expos'd to Ridicule?

But the same learned Writer goes on: "The Diction of Satire, says he<sup>[334]</sup>, ought to resemble

Prose rather than Poetry, and appear with as much Ease as if it flow'd *Extempore*. *Juvenal* has had little Regard to this Rule, whose Style is Epic<sup>[335]</sup>; and *Persius* still less, who is swelling, and lofty. Whereas nothing is so great an Ornament to Satire, as an Appearance of Truth and Simplicity, with which bold Metaphors are very inconsistent." Here he takes for granted that there is only one Kind of Satire, such as *Horace* writ; which is begging a Question, that can by no means be granted him. All he says may be very true, in respect to that one Kind, but not at all applicable to the rest; and to blame *Juvenal* for not writing in the familiar Style, is the same Absurdity, as if he should arbitrarily lay it down as an universal Rule, that every Dramatic Piece ought to be writ so too; and then very gravely tell us, *That Sophocles has had little Regard to this Maxim*. For, to say the Truth, there is scarce less Difference between the two Kinds of Satire, than there is between Comedy and Tragedy. But I cannot conceive what possess'd this Writer, when, to prove his Position, that Satire ought to be writ in the low Style, he urges this of *Horace*<sup>[336]</sup>.

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"*Non ego inornata, & dominantia nomina SOLUM,  
Verbaque, Pisones, satyrorum scriptor amabo.*"

You must not think that a satiric Style  
Allows of scandalous and brutish Words.  
*Roscom.*

"Here, says he, it is evident, that the Character of a Satirist is not to affect Ornament, but Strength and Propriety." Now, not to observe that *Horace* is not speaking of the Satire of his own Time, but of the satirical Drama that was us'd as an Interlude in Tragedy; to pass by, I say, the Occasion of the Words, the Sense of them is so far from favouring the Opinion they are brought for, that they directly overthrow it: He says, that in this Kind of Writing he does not chuse ONLY Words of common Use, proving therefore that Satire may be writ in a sublimer Style. *Vossius*, I suppose, here took *non* for *nihilo*<sup>[337]</sup>.

In the same Discourse he observes<sup>[338]</sup>, "That it is the Business of the Satirist not so much to correct the Manners of past Times, as of the present. *Persius*, says he, often transgresses this Rule; for he taxes few of his own Age, and those only under general Names; such as *Titius*, or *Mævius*. His Poems, therefore, scarce deserve to be call'd Satires, because they affect no one particularly. And *Juvenal* sometimes deviates from this indubitable Rule." I cannot help making a few Remarks on these Assertions, which will not a little serve to illustrate the Subject before us. In the first Place, I can't see why it is the Business of a Satirist to correct Mankind in Individuals, rather than in general. He may chuse, indeed, either Way, and it is hard to say which is more peculiarly his Province. But if any Difference is to be made, I should take the Side against *Vossius*, and avoid reproving Particulars. It is undoubtedly fairer to aim our Shafts against the Vice, rather than the Man. The latter, indeed, is sometimes justifiable, against some notorious Monsters, that deserve to be the Butts of Mankind: But even here the Poet does not point them out by their real Names, but under fictitious Characters; which is another Particular I have been oblig'd to observe against the foremention'd Author; who, for what Reason I know not, makes it essential to Satire to characterise by Name; a Property which I should much rather leave to the Libeller, than the Poet. *Horace* and *Juvenal*, it is true, sometimes assume this Liberty; but, for the Generality, 'tis Vice they reprove in the Abstract; and when they seem to mention Names, it is to be observ'd, that we, at this Distance of Time, know not whether they are real or borrow'd ones. The other Observation of *Vossius's*, *That it is the Business of a Satirist not so much to correct the Manners of past Times, as of the present*, I readily assent to; and is so evident a Proposition, that it is needless to assert it. The Living, not the Dead, are capable of Amendment; the latter are accidentally only, brought upon the Stage, that the former, through their Sides, may receive the more advantageous Wound. To this End, we often see *Juvenal's* Example follow'd:

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[339] —*Experiar, quid concedatur in illos,  
Quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina.*

Since none the Living Villains dare implead,  
Arraign them in the Persons of the Dead.  
*Dryden.*

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Which, by the Way, is a Confirmation of what we before alledg'd against *Vossius's* Opinion, *viz.* That, in *Juvenal's* at least, the Living ought to be noted in Satire under their real Names. But it is Time we should now return to the two different Species of it which I before mention'd.

They both agree in being pungent and cutting; yet are distinguish'd by very evident Marks: The one is pleasant and facetious; the other angry and austere: The one smiles; the other storms: The Foibles of Mankind, are the Object of the one; greater Crimes, of the other: The former is always in the low Style; the latter generally in the Sublime: That abounds with Wit only; this adds to the Salt Bitterness and Acrimony. *Horace's* Satires are of so fine and delicate a Turn, as may much easier be conceiv'd, than express'd: They are rightly term'd *Discourses*, for some of them are scarce reducible under either Species of Satire. *Juvenal's* are all true Satires, except the fifteenth, which is of uncertain Authority. So far is *Vossius* from being in the right, when he makes *Horace* almost the only Satirist, and scarce admits *Juvenal* to the Title of one.

It is not very clear, then, why *Horace* should say of himself,

[340] *Sunt quibus in Satira videar nimis acer.*

Some fancy I am bitter when I jeer,  
Beyond the Rules of Satire too severe.  
*Creech.*

or who they were that thought so. I cannot, indeed, come into the Opinion of others whom he mentions: [Pg 233]

[341] — *Sine nervis altera, quicquid  
Composui, pars esse putat, similisque meorum  
Mille die versus deduci posse.*

Some, that my Verse is dull, and flat; and say  
A Man may write a Thousand such a Day.  
*Creech.*

But surely too much Warmth was never his Fault; he ought sometimes, perhaps, to be condemn'd for the Want of it.

Either Kind of Satire may be writ in the Dialogue or Epistolary Manner, and we have Instances of both Forms in *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Persius*. As some of *Horace*'s, which are call'd Satires, are as truly Epistles; so many of his Epistles might as well be call'd Satires. For Example, [342] *Qui fit Mecænas*, &c. might, with equal Reason, be reckon'd among the Epistles; and [343] *Prima dicte mihi*, &c. among the Discourses or Satires, if the Author or Editor had so thought fit.

The distinguishing Nature of *Juvenal* cannot be better known, than from the very Beginning of his Satires:

[344] *Semper ego auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam,  
Vexatus toties rauci Theseide Codri? &c.*

Still shall I hear, and never quit the Score,  
Stunn'd with hoarse *Codrus Theseid*, o'er and o'er.  
*Dryden.*

At the first Onset, he declares open War, and gives sufficient Intimation of the Strength of his Spirit, and what the Reader may expect from it. He first sharpens his Style against the scribbling Poets of his Age; and when he had, in a sarcastical Manner, mention'd the Reasons that induced him to write, [Pg 234]

[345] — *Stulta est clementia, cum rot ubique  
Vatibus occuras, perituræ parcere chartæ.*

But since the World with Writing is possest, }  
I'll versify in Spite; and do my best, }  
To make as much waste Paper as the rest. }  
*Dryden.*

He sallies forth, a few Lines after, into a more extensive Field of Satire, and with no less Wit than Gall, tells us the Reasons why he chose this *Kind of Writing*:

[346] *Cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo,  
Per quem magnus equos Auruncæ flexit Alumnus,  
Si vacat, & placidi rationem admittitis, edam.  
Cum tener uxorem ducat spado, Mævia Tuscum  
Figat aprum, & nuda teneat venabula mamma;  
Patricios omnes opibus sum provocet unus,  
Quo tondente gravis juveni mihi barba sonabat;  
Cum pars Niliacæ plebis, cum verna Canopi,  
Crispinus, Tyrias humero revocante lacernas,  
Ventilet æstivum digitis sudantibus aurum,  
Nec sufferre queat majoris pondera gemmæ;  
Difficile est, Satiram non scribere: nam quis inquæ  
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, us tentat se?*

But why I lift aloft the Satire's Rod,  
And tread the Path that fam'd *Lacilius* trod,  
Attend the Causes which my Muse have led:  
When sapless Eunuchs mount the Marriage-Bed,  
When mannish *Mævia*, that two-handed Whore,  
Astride an Horseback hunts the *Tuscan* Boar,  
When all our Lords are by his Wealth out-vy'd,  
Whose Razor on my callow Beard was try'd;  
When I behold the Spawn of conquer'd *Nile*,  
*Crispinus* both in Birth and Manners vile,

Pacing in Pomp with Cloak of *Tyrian Dye*,  
 Chang'd oft a Day for needless Luxury;  
 And finding oft Occasion to be fann'd,  
 Ambitious to produce his Lady Hand;  
 Charg'd with light Summer Rings, his Fingers sweat,  
 Unable to support a Gem of Weight:  
 Such fulsome Objects meeting ev'ry where,  
 'Tis hard to write, and harder to forbear.  
*Dryden.*

In these, and the Lines that follow, he lays down the chief Heads of Satire he design'd to treat of; this he does in an elegant and poetical Manner, not by proposing them in general Terms, but by Particulars. Afterwards, having weigh'd the Reasons his Friend alledges to dissuade him from so dangerous an Attempt, he replies, with a Quickness and Vivacity Worthy of a Satirist:

[347] *Qui dedit ergo tribus patruis aconita, vehetur  
 Pensilibus plumis, atque illinc despiciet nos?*

Shall they who drench'd three Uncles in a Draught  
 Of pois'nous Juice, be then in Triumph brought?  
*Dryden.*

What a Poignancy in the Words, and how swift a Turn in the Thought?

I agree with *Vossius*, but for a different Reason from his, that *Persius* scarce deserves a Place among the Satirists. He has dropp'd, indeed, many fine Expressions in describing the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice: But he wants Poignancy and Sting; he never laughs, and strikes but seldom: He does not correct Faults so much, as find them; his Reproof, at best, is too mild, and more like the Evenness of a *Philosopher*, than the Severity of a *Satirist*.

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To come now to our own Times. There are few Kinds of Writing, in which the Moderns, of our own Country especially, are less exceeded than in this<sup>[348]</sup>; I mean in that Species of it in which *Juvenal* writ: For the *Horatian* Satire is but little affected among us. That Author, particularly<sup>[349]</sup>, who not long since attack'd the *Jesuits*, tho' his Works, either through want of Care, or Judgment, or, more probably, considering his Youth, for want of both, are not so correct as might have been wish'd; yet his shewn a true poetical Vein, and a Fire not unworthy *Juvenal* himself. No one can be a Stranger to *Dryden*, who, as he exceeds others in every Kind of Poetry, so, in this, exceeds himself. But to pass by the rest of our own Countrymen whom I might mention, that deservedly celebrated *French* Poet<sup>[350]</sup> has so happily blended *Horace* and *Juvenal* together, that he seems to have found out a beautiful Species of Satire between both. He claims the poetical Laurel, but in Satire more particularly, from all the Writers of this Age, by universal Consent; and that is an Authority, to which I shall never think fit to oppose my private Judgment, whatever it is.

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## LECTURE XIX, &c. Of the DRAMA in general.

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We are come, at last, to that Species of *Poetry* which is chiefly and primarily so call'd, because it agrees best with the Sense of the original Word, **poiein**, whence *Poema* is deriv'd. For such is the comprehensive Signification of this Word, that it denotes not only the Invention, but the Contexture of the Fable, the Conduct of the Action, and the Disposal of the Parts: All which concern the two Sorts of Poems that now remain to be discours'd of, *viz.* the Epic and Dramatic, but more especially the latter. The former, indeed, is, upon the whole, more noble in its Nature; but, in some Circumstances, is inferior to the other; in the Action, particularly, as the Etymology of the Word *Drama*, from **dran**, to *act*, implies. In Epic, indeed, Heroes and Gods are represented speaking: But the Poet there performs only the Part of an Historian, and the Speeches are no more than Narrations. Whereas, in the Dramatic Writings, the Persons themselves are introduced, every Thing is transacted in our Sight, and our Eyes and Ears at once are gratified. Now *Horace's* Observation is undoubted just:

[351] *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
 Quam quæ sunt oculis commissa fidelibus.*

But what we hear, moves less than what we see.  
*Roscommon.*

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Besides, the Action in the Drama is much more simple, and compendious, than in the Epic; it takes up less Time, and therefore requires more Art to conduct it. It excites in the Mind more rapid Motions, and consequently makes the Pleasure and Admiration more intense. For these, and other Reasons, *Aristotle*, in the last Chapter of his Book of Poetry, does not scruple to give



the Preference to Tragedy before Epic. Not that I think he reckons it a more noble Kind in *general*, (for that would be contrary to Truth and Reason) but only so far as its Sphere extends: And this is a Difference, which, I humbly conceive, is very distinguishable. This Excellence of the Drama, which I here speak of, is the Reason, no doubt, why, tho' his Book bears the Title of *Poetry* in general, yet he dwells solely upon that Species of it. I am not ignorant, indeed, that this Work of his, as it is now extant, is imperfect, and part of it lost. But by what we have now remaining, the rest of it appears to have been spent on the same Subject. And *Horace*, the best Interpreter of *Aristotle*, in his famous Epistle to the *Piso's*, keeps chiefly in this Track. The other Kinds of Poetry he does but lightly touch: But the Laws of the Drama he treats of fully and professedly. After his Example, various Writers upon the *Art of Poetry* in different Ages and Languages, have chose to dwell chiefly upon the *Drama*, and have left abundance of elaborate Treaties upon that Subject. I shall make it my Business to collect what others have said, into as short a Compass as I can, and explain more fully what I have now to add of my own.

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The principal Species of the Drama are two, Comedy and Tragedy: Some others there are, of less Note; as Pastoral, and Satire, both which we have already spoke of. Tragi-Comedy I don't reckon one of them, because I think it the greatest Absurdity in Nature, and is not so properly a Species distinct from the other two I first mention'd, as the Abuse and Corruption of them. For what can be more ridiculous, than, in the Compass of three Hours, to distract the Mind with Joy and Grief, in such a Manner, that the two contrary Passions may debilitate, or totally extinguish each other? How ill are such incoherent Parts united? And what is it but a monstrous Production?

[352] — *Turpiter atrum*

*Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne.*

A Handsome Woman with a Fish's Tail.  
*Roscom.*

How irrational a Transition is it, from beholding the Conflicts of Kings and Heroes with Misfortunes, to descend, on a sudden, to low Scenes of Ribaldry, and to return again from these to so moving a Spectacle! A Poem, indeed, should be adorn'd with Variety, but not with Inconsistencies. The Passions, likewise, and Affections of the Mind, should be bent and bow'd down; but so bent, that they may not grow languid, but recover new Strength. This poetic Kind of Prodigy, I think, is altogether modern, and chiefly of *British* Extraction; for it was the last Age produc'd Multitudes of them in our own Tongue. I know very well that the learned *Vossius*<sup>[353]</sup>, speaking of the Plays of the Ancients divided into *Prætextatæ* and *Togatæ*, observes, that "there was a *mix'd* Kind, call'd *Tabernariæ*, where some of the Persons appear'd in the *Prætexta*, others in the *Toga*. Thus *Festus* in *Pomponius Lætus*: *The Togatæ were of two kinds, viz. the Prætextatæ, when the Actors represented Persons of Quality, such as had the Liberty of wearing the Prætextæ; and the Tabernariæ, when Persons of low Rank were mix'd with others of Birth and Figure.* From hence it is plain, if the *Prætextatæ* were a Sort of Tragedies, and the *Togatæ* Comedies; the *Tabernariæ* being of a *mix'd* Nature, were what *Plautus* calls Tragi-Comedies. Such is the *Amphitryo* of *Plautus*, and *Hercules Licymnius* of the *Greeks*." And as absurd as these Poems were, they agreed so far, only, with our Tragi-Comedies, that they mix'd Persons of high and low Rank together; but they never debas'd the Misfortunes of the former with the Lasciviousness of the latter, as is usual with our Writers. As to the *Mimi*, *Pantomimi*, the *Nomi*, and the *Attellani*, they don't so much come within the Province of a Criticism on Poetry, as of a History of it; since the Writings of the Ancients, in this Way, are now quite out of Date. They that are desirous of this Part of Knowledge, may consult other Writers, and *Vossius* particularly. But there's another Species of Dramatic Folly, which the Ancients were utter Strangers to, the *Opera's*, I mean, introduc'd among us from foreign Parts, by the mercenary Traffic of Eunuchs and Courtezans: Among us, I say, and it is with Shame I speak it, who set a Value upon every Thing that is foreign; and are laugh'd at, on that Account, by the very Foreigners we admire. Too fatal an Indication this, of the Depravity of our Taste, as well as of our Manners, when we place the Height of our Pleasure in those Things, which it would be too much to honour, even with a Toleration. Metre, no doubt, is very suitable to Poetry, especially to the Dramatic Kind, and ought often to be us'd there, as it is a proper Instrument of raising or soothing the Passions: But that the whole Drama should be Sing-Song, that the Actors should always appear

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[354] *Et cantare pares, & respondere paratos.*

Well pair'd to sing,  
And ready with each other's Skill to vie.

that the most insignificant Action, as well as the deepest Passion, should be express'd in Tune; and whether they send a Message, or read a Letter; whether they quarrel, fight, kill, or are kill'd; whether they laugh, or storm, or die; that this should all be perform'd in Song, is somewhat more monstrous than the Poets ever yet describ'd<sup>[355]</sup>. Whatever Share of Poetry these Performances can pretend to, is so wretchedly silly, that it does not deserve our Notice. Those Words of *Horace* are truly applicable to them, and in a more proper Sense, than he was ever aware of:

[356] — *Versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.*

Mere sounding Trifles, Verses void of Sense.

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'Tis then for the Music, only, they are follow'd. My sincere Wishes are, that Music may for ever flourish; but by no Means at the Expulsion of Poetry, whereas both Comedy and Tragedy seem, at present, to have been banish'd our Country, and yielded up the Stage to the *Opera*; I will farther add, if I may say so much, with humble Submission to better Judges, even Music itself, when join'd with these empty Rhythms, seems too light and childish, and, by the frequent Repetition of the same Sound, tiresome. And tho' I readily grant, that the great Masters of *Italy*, in former Ages, far exceeded ours; yet we have now such Artists, as, from imitating the immortal *Purcell*, are arriv'd to a greater Perfection than any which *Italy*, *France*, or *Germany* send us. For, you must know,

[357] —*Huc omnes tanquam ad vivaria currunt.*

Chas'd from their Woods and Bogs the Padders come,  
To this vast City, as their native Home.  
*Dryden.*

They live upon us; our ambitious Poverty, our Luxury, Folly, and Vices, are all subservient to their Advantage; to the utter Neglect and Contempt of our own Countrymen. Broken and unnerv'd *Britains!* into what a shameful Effeminacy are we sunk? Far, far be it from us, to detract, in the least, from the Merit of our Neighbours; but let us not be injurious to our own Countrymen, merely because they are such: Let the Rule hold, not only in greater Things, but even in these of less Moment, (which are yet of greater than they seem to be)

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[358] *Vincat amor patriæ*—

His Country's Love  
Shall conquer.

[359] —*Non possum ferre, Quirites,  
Græcam urbem.*

To speak my Mind,  
I hate in *Rome* a *Grecian* Town to find.  
*Dryden.*

Having thus set aside these spurious Offsprings, Comedy and Tragedy remain now to be discours'd of distinctly, after I have first said something of what relates to them in common, that is, to Dramatic Poetry in general.

The History of the ancient Drama, both *Greek* and *Roman*, as it does not come within my present Design, I leave to be learnt from *Vossius*, and others. I shall only lay before you the following Passage, from his *Poetical Institutions*, which may serve for a short View of it. [360] The Drama, says he, owes its Rise to Days of Festivity. For in ancient Times 'twas usual for Men, when they had collected in the Fruits of the Earth, to meet together, that they might sacrifice to the Deity, and unbend their Minds from the Fatigues of the Harvest. Hence arose two Sorts of Poetry; the one graver, in Praise of the Gods; the other jocose, full of Lampoon against one another. Under the former Head we may reckon the *Dithyrambics* of *Bacchus*, Hymns to the Gods, and Panegyrics upon Heroes. Under the second *Iambics*, and *Phallic* Verses. The first Essays were rough, and unpolished; but, by Degrees, the great Actions of Gods and Heroes grew more numerous, and increas'd into set Fables: So, in like manner, the jocose Compositions began to come under proper Regulations. Thus from the former Kind arose Tragedy; from the latter, Satire, Comedy, and Mimic." Thus he, agreeable to which, is *Virgil*, in his *Georgics*:

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[361] —*Baccho caper omnibus aris  
Cæditur, & veteres ineunt proscenia ludi.*

An horn'd He-Goat,  
Sacred to *Bacchus*, on each Altar bleeds;  
And ancient Interludes adorn the Scene.

And *Horace*, in his Epistle to *Augustus*:

[362] *Agricolæ prisci fortes, parvoque beati,  
Condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo  
Corpus, & ipsum animum, &c.*

The ancient Swains, those temp'rate happy Swains,  
Contented Sov'reigns of their little Plains,  
When all their Corn was hous'd, wou'd make a Feast,  
Unbend their Minds, and lay them down to rest;  
Their Cares dissolv'd into a happy Thought,  
And Minds enjoy'd the Rest their Labour sought.  
*Creech.*

For the same Reason, I shall pass over all the Apparatus of the ancient *Drama*, of which the foremention'd learned Author, and many others, have treated fully; the Form, for Instance, and

Ornaments of the Theatre, the *Scene, Proscenium, Pulpitum, Orchæstra*; the Habits of the Actors, as the *Toga, Pallium, Soccus, Cothurnus*, and many other Particulars of the like Nature. I cannot help, indeed, making this one Remark, that the Mask of the Ancients has been, to me, Matter of Astonishment. For can any Thing in the World be more contradictory to Reason? The great Aim of the Drama has always been, to represent Nature herself, and conceal Art, as much as possible: The Poet, therefore, thought it his Business to draw the Characters of Men, as they really were. Is it the Custom, then, I beseech you, either for Kings and Heroes, on the one Hand, or the Commonalty, on the other, to walk about with Masks on? Why, then, do they appear with them, upon the Stage? If it is the Excellence of the Poet to counterfeit Nature, why are so much Pains thrown away, to convince the Spectators, that what they see is but an imperfect Copy of her. This Artifice might do well enough in Puppet Shews: But that the immortal Works of *Sophocles* and *Terence* should be murdered with so monstrous a Device, is perfectly amazing. Besides, (to omit the Impediment they must be to the Actor's Speech) is it usual for Men to preserve the same Countenance in all the possible Variety of Circumstances? Why, then, must they do so upon the Stage? Where are the different Passions, of Joy or Sorrow, and the various Turns of the Muscles that express them? At this Rate, indeed, *Horace's* Rule is preserv'd according to the Letter, tho' very far from the Sense of it:

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[363] — *Servetur ad imum*

*Qualis ab incepto processerat, & sibi constet.*

Let all the Parts agree, and be alike.

*Creech.*

I cannot help wondering, that *Horace*, and the rest of the great Critics of *Greece* and *Rome*, should have borne with this *Opprobrium* of the Theatre<sup>[364]</sup>. How much better is it for the Persons to appear as they do among us, with their own Face, and, to use our own academical Term, each habited according to his *Degree*. Nor am I perfectly satisfied with the Sock and Buskin of the Ancients, tho' undoubtedly a less Absurdity than the Mask; for we all know, that the Commonalty did not, in Fact, wear the Sock, nor the Nobility the Buskin; and why Actors should appear only as Actors, I can see no Reason, since it is the Business of the Poet to imitate Nature, and conceal Art and Fiction as much as possible.

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As I before determin'd to pass over the History, and the Decoration of the Drama, so I had much less Inclination to describe the musical Instruments that were made use of in it; this is rather the Province of Musicians and Antiquaries, than Poets or Criticks. The various Kinds of Flutes, the *Tibicines, Choraules, Pythauls*, &c. are abundantly explain'd by *Vossius*, whom we have often had Occasion to mention.

To come, then, at last, to the Subject that properly concerns us: The Drama, I define to be, *A Poem containing some certain Action, and representing a true picture of human Life, for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind.*

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A certain *Action* I say, in the singular, because it ought to be but *one*; two do but distract the Minds of the Audience, and create more Uneasiness than Pleasure. In many, indeed, I may say most Tragedies, as well as Comedies, but in Comedies more particularly, two Actions seem to be carried on; but they are often only seemingly two, not so in Reality. One of them is so subservient to the other, so united, and interwoven with it, that it must be reckon'd rather a Part of the same, than a distinct Action. Like a small River that branches out from a greater, which returns to its first Channel, and is totally lost in it. But in some Plays the Action is entirely one, and tho' the other Kind may be justly admitted, nay, often admir'd; yet this must be allow'd the more excellent of the two; for it requires a much nicer Art to excite Pleasure and Admiration by a proper Conduct of one simple Tale, than from a Variety of surprizing Incidents. Besides, when the Mind is solicitous only about one Event, the Thoughts are more close and compact, the Expectation more attentive, the Concern more exquisite, and the Impressions strike deeper than when it is distracted and weaken'd between two different Prospects. Here, therefore, *Horace's* Rule is more *peculiarly* directed, tho' propos'd by him in general:

[365] — *Sit quod vis simplex duntaxat & unum.*

True, indeed, it is, according to the Principles of Nature, and Natural Philosophy, that all Things, the more simple they are, and less compounded, are the more perfect, and less subject to Change and Corruption, to Vice and Error. This appears manifestly, from a Comparison between the Body and Soul, the Creature and the Creator.

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Tho' the Words, *Fable, Action, and Design*, are frequently us'd indiscriminately, they have each of them peculiar and distinct Ideas. By the *Action* is meant some Adventure of one or other of the principal Persons, attended by a great and memorable Event. By the *Fable*, or Plot, a Heap of Incidents, Episodes, and Other Things, which are subservient to the carrying on the Action, and bringing it to a Conclusion. The *Design* is a particular Disposal of the several Parts, so as they may be artfully interwoven, and unfolded. What we call the *Distinction of Persons or Characters, the Passions, Thought and Diction*, are certain Adjuncts and Circumstances adhering to the Persons represented. These Things, tho' of the greatest Moment, and the chief Concern of the Poet, which we shall treat of singly in their proper Place, it shall suffice to have mention'd only at present; because they don't

*Twentieth  
Lecture.*

so properly come under the Head we are upon, of the *Drama in general*. When we come to the distinct species of it, these will then offer themselves very naturally.

I would now, however, observe, that those general Precepts of *Horace* relate to the Drama, where he speaks *first* of the *Passions, Thought, and Diction*:

[366] *Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunt,  
Et, quo unque volent, animum auditoris agunt.  
Ut ridentibus arrident, ita fientibus adflent  
Humani vultus: Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi; tunc tua me infortunia lædunt,  
Telephe, vel Peleu: male si mandata loqueris,  
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. Tristia mœstum  
Vultum verba decent, iratum plena minarum,  
Ludentem lasciva, severum seria dicta.  
Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem  
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,  
Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit, & angit:  
Post effert animi motus, interprete lingua.*

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He that wou'd have Spectators share his Grief,  
Must write not only well, but movingly,  
And raise Mens Passions to what Height he will.  
We weep and laugh, as we see others do.  
He only makes me sad, who shews the Way,  
And first is sad himself. Then, *Telephus*,  
I feel the Weight of your Calamities,  
And fancy all your Miseries my own;  
But if you act them ill, I sleep, or laugh:  
Your Looks must alter, as your Subject does,  
From kind to fierce, from wanton to severe;  
For Nature forms and softens us within,  
And writes our Fortunes Changes in our Face.  
Pleasure enchants, impetuous Rage transports,  
And Grief dejects, and wrings the tortur'd Soul,  
And these are all interpreted by Speech.

*Roscom.*

Next of the *Characters*, or the different Circumstances, and Dispositions of the Persons:

[367] *Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,  
Romani tollent Equites, Peditesque cachinnum.  
Intererit multum Davusne loquatur, an Heros,  
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa  
Fervidus, an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix,  
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli,  
Colchus, an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus, an Argis.*

But he whose Words and Fortune disagree,  
Absurd, unpitied, grows a public Jest.  
Observe the Characters of those that speak,  
Whether an honest Servant, or a Cheat;  
Or one whose Blood boils in his youthful Veins,  
Or a grave Matron, or a busy Nurse,  
Extorting Merchants, careful Husbandmen,  
*Argives* or *Thebans*, *Asians* or *Greeks*.

*Roscom.*

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The subject Matter of this Kind of Poem, is call'd the *Fable* tho' it is often grounded upon true History; because the greatest Part of it is fabulous, tho' the Fiction be intermix'd with Matter of Fact. When it is not so, it ought to be styl'd rather a *Dramatical History*, than *Drama*; of which Sort are many of the Plays of our celebrated Countryman<sup>[368]</sup>, who has crowded together the Annals of some of our Kings, without any Regard to the dramatical Rules of Time or Place. But in other Respects, he

[369] — *Spirat tragicum satis, & feliciter audet.*

With happy Boldness draws a tragic Scene.

Yes, extremely happy, and in *these* Works, but more especially in his truer Tragedies, has deserv'd well of Posterity.

But often the Drama, properly so call'd, is built upon true History; as the *Octavia* of *Seneca*, and many of our modern Tragedies, both *English* and *French*, (for *Comedy* has rarely such a Foundation; but is either rais'd from some private Fact, which, tho' true, is below History; or from Fiction only;) sometimes, indeed, it is built upon Fable, but such as is common, and well

known; as the *Trachiniæ* of *Sophocles*, *Oedipus*, &c. the Author disposing of the Fable according to his own Fancy, and giving it a new Appearance: According to that of *Horace*:

[370] *Publica materies privati juris erit, si  
Nec circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem,  
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus Interpres.*

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For what originally others writ,  
May be so well disguis'd, and so improv'd,  
That with some Justice it may pass for yours.

*Roscommon.*

Sometimes it is built upon the Poet's Invention only, who forms an entire Plot out of his own Head. Most of the Ancients, both *Greeks* and *Romans*, form'd their Tragedies upon fabulous History; most of the Moderns either upon true History, or upon Fiction of their own Invention, or such as has been borrow'd from Romances of later Writers; which tho' they are fabulous, are not, however, trite and vulgar, like several of the Ancients; as the *Medea*, for Instance, *Hercules*, *Iphigenia*, and the like.

In the Foundation of the Drama, *Horace's* Rule, in the first Place, ought to be observ'd:

[371] *Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,  
Scriptor.*

Follow Report, or feign coherent Things.

*Roscommon.*

If it is built either upon true or fabulous History, let nothing be introduc'd contrary to the Notices we have receiv'd from Fame or History, of the Persons concern'd in it. For, in this Case, the Faith of the one, and the Report of the other, would openly contradict the Fiction. A noble Critic of ours<sup>[372]</sup> has severely lash'd a certain Poet<sup>[373]</sup> for this Fault, *viz.* for representing *Hannibal* soft, effeminate, and languishing in the Blandishments of Love; and *Scipio* passionate, and head-strong. But if the whole is Fiction, let it be Fiction according to Probability. Let the Writer take care that the Parts don't disagree, and contradict each other. Here, again, *Horace's* Maxim is of Force:

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[374] *Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, & audes  
Personam formare novam; servetur ad imum  
Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi constet.*

If your bold Muse dare tread unbeaten Paths,  
And bring new Characters upon the Stage,  
Be sure you keep them up to their first Height.

*Roscommon.*

To follow *Fame* in an honest Sense, and to form a good Poem out of History, requires much Art, and no small Invention. But a Poet that works wholly upon his own Stock, shews scarce less Art, but certainly more Invention. The latter is, in my Judgment, the more noble Task. As it is wholly new, it is sure to afford more Pleasure to the Audience, and Honour to the Writer: He may be said, in some Sense, to *create* his Materials, and is, therefore, in the most proper one, a *Poet*.

I am well aware, that what I have here advanc'd, seems to contradict the following Opinion of *Horace*:

[375] *Difficile est proprie communia dicere; tuque  
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,  
Quam si proferres ignota, indictaque primus.*

New Subjects are not easily explain'd,  
And you had better chuse a well-known Theme,  
Than trust to an Invention of your own.

*Roscom.*

But not to insist that the Authority of the best of Poets and Criticks is not to supersede Reason and Experience; it is to be observ'd, that dramatical Invention has been much improv'd since the Times in which *Horace* writ: And had he seen some of our late Tragedies, form'd upon Fiction only, he would, perhaps, have retracted his Opinion. It is a difficult Thing, I allow, to express COMMON Things in a proper Manner, that is, to change and heighten some noted<sup>[376]</sup> stale Subject, so as to give it a new Appearance, and make it the Writer's own; and the Observation is of great Weight: But, all Things consider'd, whether we regard the Difficulty or the Elegance, the Judgment or Ingenuity of each Composition; greater Glory seems to be due to him that produces a new Plan of his own Invention, than that changes, and gives new Life to an old one.

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According to the modern Criticks, every regular Play consists of three Unities, *viz.* of *Time*, *Place*, and *Action*. I have already spoke of the last: The first, I would observe, is very improperly styl'd an *Unity*. *Place* and *Action* may admit of Number; but *Time*, howsoever extended, does not cease to be *one*, with Respect to the *Action* which is continu'd by it. This Observation, I own, is

but of little Moment, since all that make use of the Term, sufficiently understand the Meaning of it, however inaccurately express'd.

As to *Time*, *Aristotle*, and after him the great *Vossius*, and others, will not allow it above the Compass of one Day; for which Reason, the *Heautontimoroumenos* of *Terence* is reckon'd faulty, because it takes up an entire Day, and part of another. But if we were to reduce Things to the greatest Exactness, the Action of the Drama ought not to be longer than Representation of it upon the Stage. This, no doubt, would be the compleatest Rule, could it be practis'd. But tho' it will rarely or never pass for a Probability, that so great Events should fall out in so short a Time, yet we ought to come as near to this Maxim as we can. To see the Ten Years *Trojan* War crowded into the narrow Limits of one Tragedy, about three or four Hours long, appears, at first View, not only improbable, but impossible, and will be rejected by the Audience as a monstrous Imposition on their Understanding.

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The Unity of *Place* ought to be preserv'd, for the same Reason I before alledg'd for the Unity of *Time*. The one supposes the other; for if *Place* is varied, *Time* must be so too. If the Action takes up but a few Hours, it is impossible it should be carried on in Places widely distant. On the other Hand, if it is transacted partly at *London*, and partly at *Oxford*, a few Hours will not be sufficient. But there's another Reason, with Regard even to *Place* itself, why this Rule, concerning the Unity of it, ought to be observ'd. What an Absurdity is it, for a Spectator to suppose himself one Minute at *Rome*, and the next at *Paris*? We cannot but despise a Poet, who is such a Bungler at Fiction, as, in a different Sense from that of *Horace*,

[377] —*Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*

Now places me at *Athens*, now at *Thebes*.

It is beyond the Power of any Magic to transport us into different Places, not only at the same Time, but even while we are in the same Place. The usual Limits of the Drama are within the Compass of one Town or City: This some think too great, others too narrow an Extent. Larger it certainly ought not to be: Nor is this probably too large. For tho' it may not seem very natural for the Audience to be carried from one End of the City to the other; yet it may be impossible, perhaps, to represent the Action itself, and some other Circumstances attending it, in less Compass; and, as we said before of *Time*, when we cannot come up to Truth, it must suffice to come as near to it as possible. For, as *Horace* says, upon another Occasion,

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[378] *Est quadam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra.*

What if of farther Progress you despair,  
'Tis somewhat, surely, to have gone so far.  
*Creech.*

However, they are much more in the wrong, who confine the general Scene within one Room, or Chamber; for it is ridiculous to suppose, that Persons of most distant Circumstances should meet, or Actions of the most different Kind be perform'd, in the same Place, or in so narrow an one. Truth, then, seems to lie, as it generally does, between both Extremes; and one House, perhaps, may be said to be the just Extent of the dramatical Scene. It ought not to be of greater Extent, because Persons of all Ranks and Qualities are, in Reality, contain'd under one Roof, and Actions of all Kinds perform'd in that Compass. It ought not to be of a narrower; because the Spectators, whether they sit in the Pit, or Boxes, may very easily conceive different Parts of the same House represented in the Scenes, since the Theatre is large enough to contain one House entire, and both the Persons of the Drama, and the Spectators themselves, may be suppos'd to move from one Side of it to the other.

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These Unities of Action, Time, and Place, ought very carefully to be observ'd. For tho' a Play, form'd upon the most regular Plans, will gain but little Applause, if it is destitute of the true poetic Spirit; so will it deserve as little, how much soever it may be set off with Decoration, if it offends against the Rules of the Drama. The former, with all its Regularity, is cold and lifeless; the latter, with all in Brightness, absurd and ridiculous. Let Rules be first the Basis of the Poem, and from a right Disposal of these, let the Ornaments arise naturally, and with Ease. Colouring in Painting, is, no doubt, an Excellence; but we are not to be so studious of it, as to neglect Proportion, and transgress the Laws of Optics. Besides, great Judgment and Caution must be us'd, that we don't adhere so close to one Rule, as to violate another. *Horace's* Observation is here undoubtedly just:

[379] *In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.*

Thus Fear of Erring, join'd with want of Skill,  
Is a most certain Way of erring still.  
*Roscom.*

A Misfortune, which, in this Case, it is very difficult to guard against.

To these three Unities, as they are usually reckon'd up, we may not improperly add a fourth: That of *Character*, which I just mention'd before, but now design to explain more fully. By a *Character*, I understand, that Assemblage of Circumstances which discriminates one Man from another; such as Age, Fortune, Manners, and Inclination. In this Respect, then, let each *Person* be *one* from Beginning to the End. Not that he is always to betray the same Sentiments, or one

Passion; this would be as absurd as it is tedious; but that he should never speak, nor act repugnant to his own *fundamental Character*. An old or young Man, for Instance, a King or Servant may, nay, ought, as Occasion serves, to shew the common Passions of Joy or Sorrow. But for an old Man to be introduced in the first Act; and to appear a young one in the second, is inverting Nature. Again, the Meek may sometimes sally into a Warmth, and the Breast of the Passionate be calm; a Change which often introduces in the Drama very affecting Variety: But if the natural *Disposition* of the former was to be represented as boisterous, and that of the latter mild and soft, they would both act out of Character, and contradict their Persons. The Temper of a Man, I own, is sometimes entirely chang'd; a vicious Disposition may be reform'd, and a good one corrupted: But this is a Change which cannot be wrought in so short a Time as the Action of the Drama takes up. It may be much doubted, therefore whether the unravelling of the Plot in *Terence's Adelphi* is agreeable to Truth and Nature, where *Demea*, from an old Miser, turns, of a sudden, profuse, and lays aside his Moroseness, for Good-nature; and *Micio*, who had hitherto liv'd single, and dreaded the married State as the greatest of Sins, in his old Age, at last, by the Persuasion of his Brother and Nephew, marries an old Woman, without a Fortune.

The *English* Drama differs in nothing more from the ancient, than in Narration and Action. Of both these Heads, *Horace* delivers himself thus:

*Twenty-first  
Lecture.*

[380] *Aut agitur Res in scenis, aut acta refertur.  
Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, & quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator: Non tamen intus  
Digna geri promes in scenam; multa que tolles  
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.  
Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,  
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;  
Aut in avem Progne mutetur, Cadmus in anguem:  
Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.*

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Some Things are acted, others only told;  
But what we hear, moves less than what we see:  
Spectators only have their Eyes to trust,  
But Auditors must trust their Ears and you;  
Yet there are Things improper for a Scene,  
Which Men of Judgment only will relate.  
*Medea* must not draw her murd'ring Knife,  
And spill her Children's Blood upon the Stage;  
Nor *Atreus* there his horrid Feast prepare:  
*Cadmus's* and *Progne's* Metamorphosis,  
(She to a Swallow turn'd, he to a Snake)  
And whatsoever contradicts my Sense,  
I hate to see, and never can believe.

*Roscom.*

We then have more Action, and less Narration, than the Ancients, who, in this Particular, are imitated in Tragedy, by the *French*, and most other Nations. But if our *British* Writers may presume to dissent from so great Authority, I would ask, Why may not Ladies of the first Rank be suppos'd to speak in Comedy; or Heroes sometimes combat, or even die upon the Stage, in Tragedy? There's no Absurdity in this; nothing contrary to Art or Nature; often much conducive to Terror or Compassion. No one, indeed, would bear to see *Atreus* represented boiling human Flesh; it is too ghastly a Spectacle to be expos'd to View; and, instead of Pity, or Terror, would excite Detestation. For the same Reason, *Medea*, killing her Sons, should not be exhibited. But there are still some images of Death less shocking, which may be well adapted to the Stage. I own, however, we are apt to introduce some Things publicly, which had better have been sunk in Narration, and some in Silence, if Regard were had to the inviolable Rules of Modesty, Decency, and Virtue. Upon the whole, then, the Ancients brought too little into Action, and we too much.

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Upon this Head, I would only observe farther, that I have one Scruple remaining from these Words, *incredulus odi*, in the Passage I above cited from *Horace*. Things that are not at all *incredible*, may, for several other Reasons, be improper to be represented, tho' they may make a very becoming Narration: And what exceeds all Belief, we shall no more bear to hear, than behold. And even those Instances which *Horace* mentions as improper to be represented, have nothing *incredible* in them, but upon *other Accounts* are not fit to be obtruded upon the Spectators. The Answer to this Objection is, that the Words *incredulus odi* are not to be taken separately, but jointly. Of the Sights *Horace* mentions, some are *odious*, others *incredible*; not *incredible* in the *Nature of Things*, for they are suppos'd to be Miracles exceeding all human Power; but *incredible* in *theatrical Representation*. Such monstrous Changes, as of *Progne* into a Bird; *Cadmus* into a Serpent; are too gross to be impos'd upon the Senses: They are Representations, therefore, not so much *odious*, as *ridiculous*.

There is one Fault which almost all the dramatic Writers, both Tragic and Comic, Ancient and Modern, have fallen into; that, I mean, of introducing a Person who has no other Business but to

hold out a Dialogue, and hear a Story. This, to omit other Examples, is the Case, in two of *Terence's* Comedies, the *Andria*, and *Phormio*. In the former of which, *Sofia* is introduc'd, that *Simo* may lay before him the whole Plot of the Play; afterwards we neither see him, nor hear a Word of him more. In the latter, *Davus* holds a Colloquy with *Geta*, only to hear the Amours of *Phædrria* and *Antipho*, which he has nothing to do with: Then he goes off the Stage, and never sets Foot upon it more: Whereas, all that support a Dialogue of any Moment, ought, in some Measure, to be interested in the Business of the Play, from one End to the other. But these adventitious Persons destroy the Beauty and Symmetry of it; which ought not, like Gothick Buildings, to be disfigur'd with Props and Buttresses, and other superfluous Out-works; but form'd rather according to the Rules of *ancient* Architecture, where all the Columns, and several Parts of the Fabrick, mutually support each other; where there's nothing but what is necessary, nothing but what is beautiful; and the whole therefore beautiful, because every Thing is necessary.

But farther; that all the Parts may rightly cohere together, some Reason should appear, why each Person goes out, and comes in. This is a Rule of great Moment, tho' generally over-look'd; and yet there is nothing in the whole Compass of the Drama, more elegant, or more difficult; nothing in which Art and Judgment are more nearly concern'd. *Exit* such an one, says the Poet; *enter* another: But a Reason may often be ask'd, both for one, and the other. It is not enough to answer, it was necessary, for the Author's main Design, that it should be so. The Audience ought to be appriz'd of the Business for which the several Persons come in, and go out, and on what Account the Stay of any of them would have been improper. With these Notices, every Thing will appear to them easy and natural; but Otherwise, forc'd, and inconsistent. As a Play is divided into Acts, so are the Acts into Scenes. The former the more ancient Division of the two. The Act concludes, when the Stage is left entirely empty; and a new one begins, as soon as one or more Persons come on again; the intermediate Time being taken up with Dancing or Music. The Scene changes as every Actor comes in, or goes out, according to the general Opinion; but in mine, I think a Play had better be divided into Acts only, without any Distinction of Scenes between the Acts: For the Place, during one Act, is always the same, and without intermission of Persons or Discourse. Thus, I say, it is, in all Performances, that are writ according to the true Rules of the Drama. But if any one shall maintain, that the Scene ought to change with every Actor's coming in, or going out, I shall not contend much about it, since it is a Dispute about Words, rather than Things. This, however, is certain, that what we call *broken* Scenes, ought to be totally avoided; those, I mean, where, in one and the same Act, the Play is disjointed, and the Stage, for some Time, left vacant. To omit the innumerable Instances I might give of this, among the Moderns, as well as Ancients, I shall mention *Terence* only, and one only of his Plays, the *Eunuch*. In the third Act, *Thais*, *Thraso*, *Parmeno*, *Gnatho*, and *Pythias*, make up the second Scene; and at the Conclusion of it they all leave the Stage. In the third Scene *Chremes* appears alone, and, for some Time, talks by himself; at length, *Pythias* comes in to him, and, after a few Speeches, both go out together: In the next Scene enters *Antipho*, he again alone. In the first Scene of the fourth Act *Dorias* comes in alone; she goes out, and then comes *Phædrria* alone. This incoherent Connexion of the several Parts of a Play, is not less disagreeable than it would be in Architecture. The different Parts of a Fabrick are to be divided; but in an artful and commodious Manner. The several Acts in a Play resemble the Wings of a Building; but broken Scenes are like gaping, disjointed Walls.

This leads me naturally to say somewhat of *Soliloquies*, too much in Use with *Terence*, and others. They are not, indeed, totally to be rejected, but very suitable to some sort of Matter, provided they are sparingly us'd; particularly, they serve to unload the Mind of too much Grief or Joy; but are of more especial Use in Speeches of the deliberative Kind. They are more adapted to Tragedy than Comedy; for it is most natural for Men to converse with themselves, when Matters of Moment and Concern lie heavy upon their Minds<sup>[381]</sup>. But *Terence* often introduces a Person, not to deliberate about Difficulties, but to relate what has pass'd. In which Case, the Narration must be made to the Audience, or the Walls; and it is hard to say which of the two is the more absurd Supposition.

*Donatus*, speaking upon this Subject of the Drama, lays it down for a Rule, as *Vossius* cites him, that *no Person ought to go off the Stage, above five Times*. And *Vossius*<sup>[382]</sup> himself says, immediately after: *That this Rule, tho' it holds good in Tragedy, where the Persons, as they are grave, so are likewise few; yet in Comedy is not always regarded*. No, say I, nor ought it to be regarded, either in Tragedy, or Comedy. And if I may be so bold as to dissent from so great a Name as *Horace*, I cannot see the Reason of that Rule of his, pretty much to the same Purpose:

[383] —*Nec quarta loqui persona laboret.*

And in one Scene no more than three shou'd speak.  
*Roscommon.*

What should hinder, but every one may go in or out above five, six, or even ten Times, either in Tragedy, or Comedy, if he pleases? Or where's the Impropriety of more than three Speakers upon the Stage at once? There are Maxims that have no Foundation in Truth, nor do they in the least promote the Order of the Drama, or the Pleasure of the Audience. They don't flow from the Nature of Things, but only from the arbitrary Will of the Directors. A Poet shackles himself to no Purpose, with these Fetters; and only makes his Performance appear stiff and lifeless, with the Severity of them. He might with as much Reason prescribe to himself the determinate Number of Lines his Play should consist of. In all these Things a Writer is left to his Liberty, and the only



Rule that can be given is, to observe none.

As little do I see the Reason of *Vossius's*<sup>[384]</sup> Rule, in regard to the Number of Actors: *That there should not be above fourteen.* To be sure there ought not to be more; and, if we except the Mutes, concerning whom there's no Occasion to lay down any Rule, there ought not, perhaps, to be so many. But for the Reasons I before mention'd, I cannot see any for fixing a determinate Number. Every Thing of this Nature is to be left entirely to the Discretion of the writer.

Nor is there any Necessity, from the *Nature* of the *Thing*, that there should be just five Acts in a Play, according to that of *Horace*,

[385] *Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu  
Fabula, quæ posci vult, & spectata reponi.*

Five Acts are just the Measure of a Play.  
*Rosc.*

After him, *Vossius*, and others, *In a Play there are neither more nor less than Five Acts.* So, indeed, the Ancients have determin'd, and Custom has prevail'd; and this, no doubt, is a very proper Division; but there's no Foundation for it in Nature, and even the Acts are now, and always have been, of uncertain Length. And *Vossius*, in the same Discourse<sup>[386]</sup>, observes, *Some think a Play may consist only of four Acts, provided it be of a proper Length, such as may be seen with Pleasure, and understood with Ease. And 'tis a Remark of Lambinus's that Tully, and some others of the Ancients, mention the third and fourth as the last Act, without any Notice of the fifth; so that the fourth may be understood the last. Nay, in his first Epistle to his Brother Quintus, the third seems to be the last Act. The Words are these: "Illud te ad extremum & oro, & hortor, ut tanquam poetæ boni, & actores industrii solent, sic tu in extrema parte & conclusione muneris, ac negotii tui, diligentissimus sis; ut hic tertius annus imperii tui, tanquam tertius actus, perfectissimus, atque ornatissimus, fuisse videatur. Lastly, I beg and intreat you to exert yourself in the Conclusion of your Office, as artful Poets, and good Actors use to do; that so this third Year of your Command, may be like the third Act of a Play, the most perfect and ornamental." Unless Tully meant no more than that as Poets have a chief Regard to the last Act, you should have the same for your third Year; which is to you, your last Act.*

I can by no means agree with the learned Author concerning the Distribution of the Business that is to be perform'd in each Act; who delivers himself in this Manner: "The first Act opens the Plot, but not the Event of it; because it would afford less Surprize, to be known before-hand. The second brings on the Design into Action. The third raises some Embarras. The fourth shews the Way by which all Difficulties may be remov'd. The last artfully removes them." I readily grant, the first Act ought to *open the Plot*. But this may be partly done in the second; nor is it necessary the *whole* of it should be laid open in the first. The first, likewise, as well as the second, may *produce it into Action*: The second, as well as the third, may *raise an Embarras*; and the fourth no less than the other two. The fourth ought not openly to discover how *Difficulties may be remov'd*, the Business, rather, of the fifth, which does that, and somewhat more. In this Case, then, (as I said before in another) Rules are arbitrarily prescrib'd, without any Foundation in Nature; but all these Things are to be dispos'd according to the free Discretion of the Writer. Were it otherwise, the Audience would, in some Measure, know before-hand what they are to expect in every Act. There's no Necessity that one or the other Part of Action should be peculiar to this or that Act; nor are any Rules requir'd about it, except those which we are now coming to, that relate to what are term'd *Protasis*, *Epitasis*, and *Catastrophe*.

The threefold Division of the Drama, into *Protasis*, *Epitasis*, and *Catastrophe*, or, as others, in the Terms of *Aristotle*, to the very same Effect, into *Prologue*, *Episode*, and *Exode*, seems very natural and easy; tho' neither of these Divisions is peculiar to any Act. By *Protasis* is meant that Part which is a Narrative of what has pass'd, and an Introduction to what is to follow: In the *Epitasis*, *Incidents* as they are call'd by the Moderns, arise; all Things are in Confusion, involv'd in Doubts and Difficulties; and the Audience *anxious, and trembling for the Birth of Fate*. The *Catastrophe* clears up every Thing; and is nothing else but the Discovery, or winding up of the Plot. But these Parts, as I said before, are not assignable to any particular ones of the Drama: There's no Necessity that all the *Protasis* should be contain'd in the first Act. The *Catastrophe*, indeed, has its peculiar Place; for it ought to be entirely contain'd, not only in the last Act, but even in the very Conclusion of it; and when the Plot is finish'd, the Play should be so too. The *Epitasis* runs thro' the whole, except the Beginning, and the Conclusion; the former is taken up entirely with part of the *Protasis*, or the whole of it; the latter with the *Catastrophe*. 'Tis the *Epitasis*, then, that supports the Weight and Burden of the Poem, upon which the Crisis of the Action chiefly turns. It far exceeds, therefore, the other two, in Extent; as it contains all the Revolutions of Circumstances, the sudden Changes, and surprizing Events, till, at length, we come to the *Catastrophe*, the last, and most surprizing Event of all.

If what we have now said is true, 'tis plain *Vossius* has not given a right Account of this Matter. "Of these Parts in Comedy, the *Protasis*, says he<sup>[387]</sup>, is contain'd in the first Act, and sometimes, likewise, in the second: The *Epitasis* in the second, sometimes the third, and fourth, but very rarely any Part of it in the fifth: The *Catastrophe* takes up sometimes the fourth Act, or Part of it, but always the whole fifth, or almost the whole. From whence it appears, that the

Division of the *Greeks*, into *Protasis*, *Epitasis*, *Catastrophe* and *Choricus*, is a better one than that of the *Romans* into five Acts: For the *Greek* Division distinguishes the Drama into Parts that differ in *Nature*; whereas the other Division into Acts, considers them only as different in *Quantity*, without regard to any internal Distinction." Now to pass over his mentioning *Comedy*, whereas Tragedy is equally concern'd in this Division, I allow it to be very true, that the *Protasis* is contain'd in the *first Act*, and *sometimes in the second likewise*; and I will add, sometimes in any other Act; tho' this seems to contradict *Vossius's* Opinion in another Place, where he says, *The first Act unfolds the Plot*, as if that was the peculiar Business of the first Act. I grant, also, that the *Epitasis* is contain'd in the second, the third, and fourth; but let me add, likewise, partly in the first, and partly in the fifth: For there's no Act to which the *Epitasis* is not suitable; and I must be so bold as to deny, what this learned Author asserts, that *there's rarely any Part of it in the fifth*; so far is this from being true, that some of it ought always to be in the fifth. Nor do I grant that the *Catastrophe* takes up *sometimes the fourth Act*, or Part of it, but always the whole fifth, or almost the whole. For the *Catastrophe* ought to turn, as we say, upon a Point, to start up, on a sudden; as soon as that is discover'd, the Play should conclude; and this End once obtain'd, all the Action cease: Otherwise, the Curiosity of the Audience will be pall'd, and what promis'd Pleasure, will then appear insipid and tedious. Nor had *Vossius* any good Reason to compare this Division of *Protasis*, *Epitasis*, and *Catastrophe*, with that of five Acts, as if these two Divisions were inconsistent<sup>[388]</sup>, whereas, from what has been said, it appears, they are very compatible, nay, I may say, include each other.

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*Scaliger*<sup>[389]</sup> defines the *Catastrophe* to be a *Turn of Affairs that were before embroil'd into an unexpected Calm*; and *Evanthius*, (as *Vossius*<sup>[390]</sup> cites him) a *Turn of Affairs to a happy Conclusion, after the Audience have been Witnesses to what has pass'd*. Both wrong: For (as the same *Vossius* well observes) both Definitions suit only a Comic *Catastrophe*, not a Dramatic one in general. His own Definition is just, That *it is the End of a Play, where Fortune is seen to terminate in good or ill Success*.

The great Care in the *Catastrophe* is, that the clearing up of all Difficulties may appear wonderful, and yet easy, simple, and natural. What *Cicero* says of Friendship, is true of the Dramatic Fable, it is a Knot that must be *untied*, not *cut*: And in such a Manner, that tho' all admire the Event, yet, at the same Time, are sensible within themselves, that the Stream of Affairs could scarce have taken another Course. This, I confess, is a difficult Task; indeed nothing can be more so, than to raise our Astonishment from the regular Effects of Nature. There are, however, some Instances of this Art, that can never be enough admir'd; among the modern Writers especially, and no where more than among those of our own Country; who, in the Conduct and Design of the Drama, in my Opinion, leave the Ancients very far behind them.

Another Thing the Poet should take Care of is, to conceal the Event from the Audience till the Conclusion of the Play. The Reason of this is so plain, that I need not assign any. I cannot, therefore, but wonder at the preposterous Artifice of some Writers, who shew the *Catastrophe* of the Play, in the very Title of it. We have an *English* Tragedy, truly excellent in all other Respects, entitul'd, *Venice Preserv'd; or the Plot discover'd*. How much better would this have become the last Page, than the first? Here one may apply the Words of a late ingenious Poet of our own, tho' in a little different Sense<sup>[391]</sup>:

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*Vestibulum ante ipsum, primoque in limine, FINIS  
Scribitur*

Too soon, undoubtedly, for the Author's Reputation, is *Venice preserv'd*; too soon *the Plot discover'd*, for the Reader's Diversion.

To these three Parts of the Drama, *Scaliger* adds a fourth; *viz.* the *Catastasis* which he defines to be<sup>[392]</sup>, *The full Growth of the Fable, while Things are at a Stand in that Confusion to which the Poet has brought them*. But I can't see how this differs from *Epitasis*, in which, according to his own Definition, *all Things appear involv'd in Confusion, or Uncertainty*.

What the Moderns call *Incidents*, are such Events as start up of a sudden in the Course of the *Drama*, that are concomitant to the main Design, and conduce to the bringing on the *Catastrophe* and yet are not of so great Moment as to constitute distinct, or even subordinate Actions. These are very serviceable in exciting Admiration; and the nicest Art is shewn in the proper Conduct of them to that Purpose.

There's one Fault, which both ancient and modern Writers are often guilty of, *viz.* of introducing entire Scenes, or the greatest Part of them, only that the Actors may have an Opportunity of making some fine Speeches, and the Authors of shewing their Wit; without contributing, in the least, to the main Business of the Drama: Whereas, in Truth, no Scene, of any Length, ought to be writ only for Decoration. There may, nay, must be many ornamental Parts; but no considerable one should be *nothing else* but Ornament. As, in Architecture, sumptuous Edifices are embellish'd with Entablatures, Relievo's, and Sculpture; but no Part of them, of any Bulk, or Weight, should be added, for nothing else but Embellishment. The Reason is, because the very Essence of Beauty consists in a genuine Simplicity; such as Nature shews in the wonderful System of the Universe.

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Among the Moderns, the chief, almost the only Subject of Tragedy, as well as Comedy, is *Love*; not so with the Ancients, who seem, in this Particular, to have judg'd better than we do. For tho' it must be allow'd *Love* is the most prevailing Passion of human Nature, and the great Businesses of the World, both public and private, are chiefly govern'd by it; yet there are others, as Ambition,

and Friendship, to name no more, which may either singly, or jointly, be the proper Subject of the Drama; tho' I own its Progress would be much facilitated, if predominant *Love* interven'd to accelerate the Springs of Action. This Passion, like the *Primum Mobile* in the ancient System, drives round the lesser Fires, as so many Stars, within its own *Vortex*; and is, therefore, by its active Power, far the most productive of Thoughts, Words, and Events; and the best adapted to excite Pleasure and Admiration. But, for that Reason, as it is an Attempt the most difficult, so is it the most noble, to please an Audience without this Ingredient, which both the Ancients and Moderns have sometimes very happily effected. All *Terence's* Comedies are upon the Subject of Love; not so those of *Aristophanes*: But, among the Moderns, I have not seen one without it. Tragedies there are many, absolutely free from it, especially ancient ones; as those of *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, which are adapted to infuse Terror, rather than Compassion; and don't so much aim at appearing soft and delicate, as grand and magnificent. And among the Moderns, especially our Countrymen, we have the Tragedies of *Sejanus*, *Catiline*, and *Julius Cæsar*, to name no more, who all meet their Fate without any Love to hasten it. But the Poets of the present, and foregoing Age, are full of Love, not only in their Tragedies and Comedies, but in every other Composition: That of *Terence*, tho' in a different Sense, may be applied to each of them, *amore abundas*; they *abound with Love*, or rather run over with it. But more of this, perhaps, when we come to speak of Tragedy and Comedy distinctly.

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To the same Place I must likewise postpone, what remains to be said of the *Chorus* of the Ancients, for this, as I once before hinted, they added over and above to the *Protasis*, *Epitasis*, and *Catastrophe*. I pass it over here, because it is not, like these I have now treated of, an essential Part of the Drama, and is totally laid aside by the Moderns, in my Opinion very deservedly. I shall, however, make some Observations upon it, in a proper Place, since it made a Part of the old Comedy, and was continu'd in all the Tragedies of the Ancients.

Nor shall I here draw a Comparison between the ancient dramatic Writers and the Moderns; this I shall attempt in the distinct Dissertations that are to follow. I would only observe, in a Word, that as we have more bad Plays than they, so have we more that are truly beautiful; they have fewer that deserve Censure, and fewer that merit Praise; they more correct, we strike out into brighter Excellencies.

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Thus much may suffice to explain the Definition we at first laid down, of a dramatic Performance, except what relates to the last Clause of it, that it is form'd *for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind*. Of the first, *viz. the Delight*, I have said enough already: And as to *Improvement*, it ought to be the End of all Poetry in general, but of the *Drama* more particularly, whose Business it is to set before our Eyes the different Courses of Life; the Virtues and Vices, Happiness and Misery, that attend Mankind in each of them. The Drama is so exact a Picture of Human Life, that sometimes we are said to copy That; according to that noted Saying, *Totus mundus agit Histroniam; The World is but a theatrical Entertainment*: Which Comparison is beautifully carried on by *Lucian* in his Dialogue, entituled, *Χαρων, or Επισκοπαντες*. It ought, therefore, to be an invariable Rule, which is but sometimes follow'd, to direct the Plot to some moral End, and upon winding up the Catastrophe, to leave it upon the Audience with some useful Precept. How little this has been observ'd, by the Poets of the last and present Age, I am asham'd to say; most of whose Writings, but Comedies in particular, are so full of Filth and Obscenities, that, far from serving the Cause of Virtue, they are the very Panders of Lust and Impurities. I could wish to see some Remedy applied to so great an Evil. In the mean Time, let all good Men shun the Contagion; and let not the Infamy of it fall upon Poetry itself, but upon her impure Professors.

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## LECTURE XXIII, &c. Of COMEDY.

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Having discours'd of the Nature and Genius of the Drama in general; the three great Unities, *viz. of Action, Time, and Place*; the Variety and Distinctness of the Characters; the Contrivance and Management of the Plot, and other Things of that Sort; Comedy comes next to be consider'd separately, as it falls under the general Rules of the *Drama* which are already mention'd, and as it is distinguish'd from Tragedy, which shall be treated of hereafter.

The Word *Comedy* is deriv'd from *Κωμη, a Village*, and *ωδη, a Song*; because, consisting only of a *Chorus*, and fram'd without Dialogue or Diversity of Characters, it was sung originally in *Villages*, and was therefore call'd a *Country Catch*; its first Appearance being entirely different from that Dress, which it afterwards assum'd, and still continues to wear: Or it was call'd Comedy from *kômos* and *ôdê*, because at Feasts (which were under the Care of the God *Comus*) it was usually one Part of the Entertainment.

When or where *Comic* Poetry had its Original, is a Question not to be determin'd, which *Aristotle* accounts for in this Manner;<sup>[393]</sup> Αι μεν ουν τες τραγωδιας μεταβασεις, και δι' ων εγενοντο, ου λεληθασιν. Η δε κωμωσια, δια το μη σπουδαζεσθαι εξ αρχης, ελαθεν. *We are*

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*acquainted* (says he) *with the Alterations and Improvements made in Tragedy, and with the Authors of them; but Comedy, because less Regard was paid to it at first, we know little or nothing of.* The Dignity of Tragic Poetry was the Reason why the *Greeks* began to improve it much earlier, and to take more Pains in it, and therefore its Rise and Progress is much better known. But altho' Tragedy was sooner refin'd, and brought under the Rules of Art, yet it is probable, that some rude Attempts in Comedy were more ancient: Because it seems natural to imagine, that Mankind, upon gathering in the Fruits of the Earth, and receiving the other Blessings of Providence, should be excited with Sentiments of Joy, affected with an innocent Gaiety, and led on to some festival Sports, before they could think of writing Poems upon the Miseries and Misfortunes of other Men; and because a Life plain, and without Shew, was more ancient than State and Magnificence<sup>[394]</sup>.

Before I divide my Subject, I shou'd now, according to the Rules of Method, define it, which I wou'd comply with, if the several Parts of it wou'd properly fall under any one Definition, that wou'd equally extend to all of them. But as there were three Sorts of Comedy, and the Definition, which I propose to give, takes in only the two last and best of them, which are now in Use, it may be proper to observe, before I offer any Definition, that these three Sorts of Comedy were the *Old*, the *Middle*, and the *New*.

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The *old* was of two Kinds, 1. There was the very oldest of all, of which not the least Remains are now left; but the Writers of it, as *Aristotle* tells us, were *Epicharmus* and *Phormis, Sicilians*; and *Crates the Athenian*. Their Performances were rough and artless, innocent and sententious. 2. There was, what we now more expresly call the *old* Comedy; the Masters in which were *Eupolis* and *Cratinus*, whose Works are lost, and *Aristophanes*, who was the last in that Way of Writing. It was sharp, and satirical, and extremely abusive; even Men of the first Rank, whether the Facts were true or false, if they were suspected only of any criminal Behaviour, were brought upon the Stage without any Disguise, call'd by their own Names, and us'd as severely as possible. This is what *Horace* alludes to in one of his Satires:

[395] *Eupolis, atque Cratinus, Aristophanesque Poëtæ,  
Atque alii, quorum Comœdia prisca virorum est,  
Si quis dignus erat describi, quod malus, aut fur,  
Aut mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui  
Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.*

*Cratin* and *Eupolis*, that lash'd the Age,  
Those old Comedian Furies of the Stage;  
If they were to describe a vile, unjust,  
And cheating Knave, or scourge a lawless Lust,  
Or other Crimes; regardless of his Fame,  
They shew'd the Man, and boldly told his Name.  
*Creech.*

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*Dignus erat describi*, deserv'd to be expos'd, *i. e.* in the Poet's Opinion; for we are not to imagine, that all Persons who underwent that theatrical Discipline, did really deserve it: It is well known, how ill *Aristophanes* us'd the very best of the *Athenians*, the almost divine *Socrates*. Besides, it might, and probably did often happen, that a Man who had in Justice deserv'd Correction, might be too much a Sufferer in the Measure of it. But, however, to point its Satire in plain Terms against the greatest Men, and the greatest Crimes, was a Liberty which this old Comedy assum'd; an unreasonable Liberty upon all Accounts, and not to be endur'd. For Men of the first Rank, and Crimes of the blackest Die, are not the proper Characters or Objects of Comedy, as will be shewn more at large hereafter: And in writing Satire directly to name Men, whatsoever Rank they are of, is inconsistent with all the sober Rules of Poetry: As, in the Comedy of the *Clouds*, *Aristophanes* brings *Socrates* upon the Stage by Name, as one of the Persons of the *Drama*. Indeed, this Liberty of Abuse and Defamation, was allow'd chiefly to the *Chorus*, and was most in Use during the Democracy of the *Athenians*, especially in the Time of the *Peloponnesian* War. But when the Thirty Tyrants had seiz'd the Government, they thought proper to make a Law against it. This *Horace* speaks of, in his Art of Poetry:

[396] *Successit vetus his Comœdia, non sine multa  
Laude; sed in vitium libertas excidit, & vim  
Dignam lege regi; Lex est accepta, Chorusque  
Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.*

Next these, old Comedy did please the Age,  
But soon their Liberty was turn'd to Rage;  
Such Rage, as Civil Pow'r was forc'd to tame,  
And by good Laws secure Men's injur'd Fame.  
Thus was the *Chorus* lost, their railing Muse  
Grew silent, when forbidden to abuse.  
*Creech.*

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The most learned *Gerrard Vossius* has oblig'd us with so good an Account of the Rise and Progress of the two other Sorts of Comedy, I mentioned, that I am capable of giving it no Improvements; it is as follows: <sup>[397]</sup> The Government, for fear of being too freely us'd, took away the *Chorus*, which was generally extremely abusive. Instead of it, succeeded *παρεκβασεις*, or

Digressions, which, like the old *Chorus*, were Breaks in the Action, but design'd chiefly to censure or expose the Poets: If any other Persons were struck at, it was not done rudely, but in a modest and decent Manner. The Vices of all the Citizens, were, without Exception, brought under the Lash, but no Body was nam'd: Or if any particular Person was pointed at, it was covertly, and in Disguise. And this Sort of Comedy, after the third was invented, was call'd the *Middle Comedy*; introduc'd between the Old and New, but had a greater Resemblance with the Old. The most celebrated Authors of this Middle Comedy at *Athens*, were *Philiseus* and *Stephanus*; as is mention'd in the *Prolegomena* to *Aristophanes*. It was a Rule with them to name no Body, but Gentlemen of their own Profession; a Liberty which others were very willing to allow them: In this, alone, they follow'd the Old Comedy, which did the same Thing." Most, if not all the modern Comedies, are of this Sort, except in the last Particular, especially those of our own Country; as will be very evident, from what we have to offer upon this Subject hereafter. Such, then, was the *Middle Comedy*, and was succeeded by the *New*, which we have the History of from the same Hand.

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"Afterwards, in the Reign of *Alexander the Great*, to expose the Vices of great Men, even without naming them, was look'd upon as an Offence to the Government. Comedy, by this Means, entirely lost its ancient Privilege of Correction, and a new Way of Writing was introduc'd, to work up an imaginary Story, and instead of *Chorus's*, or *Digressions*, to make Use of Prologues." *Vossius* then gives us a long Account of the Writers of this new Comedy, which we don't think proper to repeat; and observes, "That *Menander's* Character was universally allow'd to be superior to all of them. In these Comedies the Liberty of Scandal, and all the Bitterness of Abuse, was in great Measure laid aside: The *Chorus* (as before observ'd) was entirely dropp'd, and the new Invention, *Prologue*, now succeeded. Comedy, at its first Appearance, was nothing else but a *Chorus*; afterwards, Variety of Persons and Characters were introduc'd, and the *Chorus* taken away: So that it was first of all a *Chorus* only, without Dialogue; and then Dialogue, without a *Chorus*. This new Comedy differ'd very much from the old; the Plots in the old Comedy were chiefly taken from real Stories, in this always from fictitious ones; that was abusive, this had its pointed Satire, but no scandalous and unmannerly Reflections. Nor were the Parts of it divided in the same Manner, or into the same Number of Acts. There was a great Variety of Measures in the old Comedy, but only *Trochaic*, or *Iambic*, in the new: And, lastly, the Style of this was more correct and elegant than the old, whose Language, as it was more elevated, so was it less regular and uniform." This new Comedy was the only Sort that ever appear'd upon the *Roman Stage*, introduc'd thither by *Livius Andronicus*, the Author of Dramatic Poetry among the *Romans*. *Plautus* and *Terence* proceeded upon the same Plan, especially *Terence*; for *Plautus's* Way of Writing has a greater Resemblance of the *Middle Comedy*. And therefore, tho' *Aristophanes*, considering when he liv'd, and the Nature of his Poetry, was so much, and so justly celebrated; yet, rejecting utterly the old Comedy, the two last Sorts are such only as ought to be included in the general Idea of Comic Poetry: Or, perhaps, by uniting both the last together, a just Notion of Comedy may be better form'd, which, I think, may be defin'd in this Manner: *Comedy is a Sort of Dramatic Poetry, which gives a View of common and private Life, recommends Virtue, and exposes the Vices and Follies of Mankind in a humorous and merry Way of Writing.*

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This Idea of Comedy, is what arises rather from joining both Sorts together, than what properly belongs to either of them: For neither, taken separately, come up to it. Virtue had not its just Commendation in the *Middle Comedy*, nor Vice its due Correction in the *New*: There was too much Mirth in one, and Gravity in the other. This, therefore, is the Definition of a perfect Comedy, not as it *always*, or indeed *generally is*, but as it is *sometimes*, and *always ought* to be. "Comedy (says *Vossius*) is divided by some *Greek* and *Roman* Criticks into the *Moral* and the *Merry*: The first gives a natural and sober View of common Life; the other is all over Pleasantry and Ridicule." And this was undoubtedly a very convenient Division, because it takes the Case as it really is. Of the first Kind, are *Terence's* Comedies, of the last *Plautus's*: But both of them had been more perfect, if they had fallen a little more into each other's Way of Writing; if *Terence* had endeavour'd more to make us laugh, and *Plautus* to be more serious.

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Comedy is defin'd by *Scaliger*<sup>[398]</sup>, to be a *Dramatic Poem, representing the Business of Life, whose Event is fortunate, and Style familiar*. But to represent the Business of Life, belongs to the *Drama* in general, and may equally be applied to Tragedy or Comedy; and therefore ought not to make Part of the distinguishing Character of either of them. Comedy, indeed, ought always to end fortunately, and the Style should be familiar: But both these are included under that Branch of our Definition which says, it must be *in a humorous or facetious Way of Writing*. Mirth and Raillery, tho' essential to this Sort of Poetry, are not taken Notice of in *Scaliger's* Definition, and, in *Vossius's* Opinion<sup>[399]</sup>, are not at all necessary in the Idea of it. But is it possible to have any Notion of Comedy, where Mirth and Humour have no Place in it? *Scaliger* says, in another Place<sup>[400]</sup>, tho' not very consistently, that it was common, both in Tragedy and Comedy, to have the Play sometimes *conclude with a Mixture of Grief and Gladness*. He seems to have forgot his own Definition of Comedy, where he would have it *always end successfully*. He mentions, indeed, many Comedies<sup>[401]</sup>, *where there is a Mixture of Mirth and Sorrow in them*; and the Observation might have been as true of all the rest. For it is scarce, if at all possible, that all the Persons concern'd in an Action should rejoice in the most fortunate and successful Conclusion of it; because, where-ever any Emulation or Competition rises, it is impossible that every Body should succeed: And were it possible, it would be improper; for Vice should always receive its Punishment, and Virtue its Reward. It is therefore to no Purpose to give us the Instances of *Thraso* in *Terence's Eunuch*, of *Chremes* in his *Phormio*, or of others, who at the End of the Play go off in some Concern. For (not to observe that their Sorrow is very much soften'd in the

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Conclusion) to make the Event prosperous, it is enough, that in general, and in the main Point, it turns out successfully, and that all the Audience, tho' not all the Persons concern'd in the Action, are dismiss'd in good Humour. What *Scaliger* says of Tragedies, (which we shall speak of hereafter) is very true, that the *Catastrophe* neither is, nor always ought to be unfortunate. But certainly a Comedy ought always to end cheerfully. And this may serve, by way of Answer, to what *Vossius* has observ'd about the double *Catastrophe* of some Comedies, which, with regard to different Persons, *are joyful and unfortunate*<sup>[402]</sup>.

*Vossius* defines Comedy in this Manner,<sup>[403]</sup> *A Dramatic Poem, copying the Actions of the principal Citizens, and common People, in a familiar Style, not without Mirth and Raillery.* He therefore manifestly contradicts<sup>[404]</sup> himself, when he affirms, afterwards, that Mirth is not *essential to Comedy*. Having given us this Definition, he proceeds thus: "But if we consider Comedy, as it *has generally been* written, we might call it, *a Representation not only of public, but private Life.*" Yes, truly, if we consider Comedy as it *ought to be* written, we may venture to say, that it is a Copy of the Actions of *private Men*, and not of the chief *Magistrates*. For by the Actions of the *principal Citizens*<sup>[405]</sup> he means (as it appears plainly afterwards) those, who are concern'd in the Government, and in the Administration of Public Affairs, which are by no Means a proper Subject for Comedy.

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But we said Comedy was a View of *common and private Life*: Not that the lower Sort of People only are to be represented in it; for Gentlemen, and even Nobility, not only may, but ought sometimes to be introduc'd, if they do not appear in a public Character; but by no Means Princes, or Monarchs, or even Persons of lower Station in Government, as concern'd in public Affairs; Circumstances which are proper for Tragedy, not at all for Comedy. Much less should a Deity be introduc'd; for which Reason, *Aristophanes*, in his *Plutus*, and *Plautus*, in his *Amphitryo*, break thro' the Rules of Comic Poetry, by bringing *Jupiter* and *Mercury*, and other Deities, upon the Stage. There is, indeed, as Comedy has been manag'd, two Sorts of it, the *Genteel*, and the *Low*; the one consisting of Persons of Character and inferior Life both together; the other of the Vulgar only; and is not properly Comedy, but Farce, nor so suitable to my Definition of it. For this gives a View but of *one Side* of private Life, and that the least creditable. Nor yet are Persons of Condition only to be represented, because we should still see but *one*, tho' the better Side of Life; and because by this Means we should want Mirth and Raillery, and the true Comic Spirit; which are all best kept up by Persons of low Degree, or rather by a mix'd Conversation between those of different Circumstances. Thus *Terence*, who, in *Cæsar's* Opinion, wanted somewhat of this *Vis Comica*, would have had scarce any of it, if we had been entertain'd only with the grave Appearance of his *Chremeses* and *Simo's*, *Phædria's* and *Antipho's*; and all the lower Characters of *Davus*, *Parmeno*, or *Geta*, and such merry Fellows had been omitted.

Twenty-  
fourth  
Lecture.

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An Image of common and private Life takes in the Virtues, Vices, and Follies of Mankind; and represents them in their true Colours; Virtue as amiable, Vice as odious, and Folly as ridiculous. Nor does this at all contradict their Definition of Comedy, which *Aristotle* has given; where he seems to determine, that whatsoever is truly valuable, and worthy of Commendation, is by no means a proper Subject for Comedy.<sup>[406]</sup> Ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία, ἐστὶν, ὡσπερ εἰπομεν, μιμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, οὐ μὲντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοιῶν μορίου. *Comedy, as we said, is an Imitation of the worse Part of Mankind, but not thro' all the Enormities of Vice; for it is only some Degree of it that is ridiculous.* In this Definition, *Aristotle*, according to his usual Manner, gives a short and succinct Account of his Subject, not a full and perfect Explication of it. And I may venture to say, that I have offer'd nothing that is inconsistent with this Description, by affirming that *Virtue*, as well as *Vice* and *Folly*, is a proper Subject for Comedy. For when he tells us, that the Characters in Comedy are to be copied from the more ignominious Part of Mankind, he does not say, they are to be copied from them *only*: Nor does he mean, that none else are to be represented in it, but that none else are to be *expos'd*, and turn'd to *Ridicule*. And Vices will always appear the more odious and ridiculous, when they are plac'd in full Light against their opposite Virtues.

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Mons. *Dacier*, who has given us a Translation, and Notes upon this Part of *Aristotle*, affirms, that *Ridicule is the only Subject of Comedy*<sup>[407]</sup>; which is neither true in Fact, nor agreeable to his Author's Meaning. I am sensible that the *chief* Business of Comedy is Ridicule, but not the *only* one. *Aristotle* intimates, indeed, what we not only grant, but contend for, that great and scandalous Enormities, as they raise some Degree of Horror in our Minds, and are proper for Tragedy, are not so for Comic Writers. But they may bring lesser Failings upon the Stage, and perhaps some which are rather odious than ridiculous: Nor does that great Philosopher advance any Thing to the contrary: For in those Words, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοιῶν μορίου, he only shews, what we readily allow, that the *chief* Subject of Comedy is Ridicule: And he plainly insinuates, that scandalous and great Crimes are not proper for it, when he defines it *an Imitation of the worse Part of Mankind, but not practising every Kind of Vice*. And yet Mons. *Dacier* defends *Aristophanes*, and other Writers of the old Comedy, who (as *Horace* observes, in the Verses before mention'd) expos'd the worst Sort of Crimes upon the Stage, tho' he insists, at the same Time, that nothing is to be admitted in Comedy, but what is the Subject of Ridicule. He attempts, indeed, to reconcile their Practice with this Opinion, by observing, that those old Poets painted even the greatest Enormities in that Light which made them rather ridiculous than detestable, and that the Audience were to consider them only in that View: But it is very evident,

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that horrid and abominable Vices (such were some of those which *Horace* mentions, and these Writers expos'd) as Murder, for Instance, can by *no sort* of Colouring be ridiculous, nor, in the Nature of Things, become the Object of Jest and Merriment. I own there may be some Circumstances attending the greatest Crimes, which may excite rather Contempt or Laughter, than Horror or Detestation, as may be observ'd in the Instances of *Theft* and *Adultery*, which *Horace* mentions: Nor do I deny, that, *in this View*, they may have a Place in Comedy, provided they are but seldom, and with great Caution, represented: Tho', notwithstanding all the Caution that is possible, they had better be omitted. For, upon *the whole*, all Things consider'd, such Actions are shocking, and can never be so truly ridiculous, as they are detestable. However, to let them make the most of this Concession, it can never be admitted as an Excuse for those Poets who represent Things and Persons as ridiculous, which are in no Respect whatever the Objects of Ridicule. I mention Persons, as well as Things: For Mons. *Dacier* defends *Plautus* for introducing Kings and Gods upon the Stage in his *Amphitryo*, and yet, notwithstanding, pronounces it to be true Comedy, for this Reason, forsooth, because *the Subject* (says he) *in itself tragical, is by the Poet turn'd into Ridicule*. Which is so far from being a just Vindication of him, that it is the very Fault he stands accus'd of. For what is this, but inverting the very Nature of Things? It is not *Poetry*, but *Buffoonry*; nor can the Author of such Dramatic Performances be consider'd as a *Poet*, but a *Droll*. Such Prodigies may possibly occasion a Laugh among the Vulgar, who think nothing *marvellous*, but what is *monstrous*; but Men of Taste, and Judgment, will always treat them with Contempt and Aversion. To return, then, from Persons to Things. If we restrain Comedy from meddling with enormous Vices, do we not seem to contradict *Horace's* Judgment, who says,

[408] — *Ridiculum acri*

*Fortius & melius magnas plerumque secat res:  
Illi, scripta quibus Comœdia prisca viris est,  
Hoc stabant, hoc sunt imitandi.*

Great Faults are rounded off with oily Sneer,  
Not mall'able by Strokes the most severe.  
This was the Drift of all those ancient Plays,  
In this they may be follow'd, and with Praise.

*Great* Faults may, I own, but not the *greatest*: *Follies* the greatest, if you will, and sometimes great *Crimes*, which (as was observ'd before) may have something ridiculous in the Manner of their Commission. Nor did the Writers of the old Comedy *always* expose the greatest Crimes, but Crimes of a less Note, and Follies of the first Magnitude, and are in *this Respect worthy of Imitation*. But notwithstanding the ingenious and refin'd Observations of the *French* Translator, *Aristotle's* Rule will for ever stand in Opposition to his Sentiments, and exclude such abominable Characters from being introduc'd in Comedy, under Pretence of exposing them. [409]

Το γὰρ γελοῖον ἐστὶν ἀμαρτήμα τι, καὶ αἰσχρὸν ἀνωδύνον, καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν. Οἷον, εὐθύς, τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρὸν τι, καὶ διεστραμμένον ἀνευ οὐδυνῆς.

*What we laugh at, is only lesser Failings, some Immorality that is not shocking, and attended with no fatal Consequences: As, to use an obvious Instance, a ridiculous Face is ugly, and ill-shap'd, but without any Appearance of Calamity.*

And is this Description of Ridicule ever to be reconcil'd with the most heinous Crimes, such as the Writers of the old Comedy have sometimes expos'd? Do such black Offences affect us with no Sorrow; are no fatal Consequences occasion'd by them? I don't then plead the Practice of these Poets against *Aristotle's* Opinion, (which yet is a Difficulty Mons. *Dacier* endeavours to guard against) but from the Nature and Reason of the Thing I arraign their Practice: Tho' were the Point to be decided by Authority, I should always have a greater Reverence for the Judgment of *Aristotle*, than the Example of *Aristophanes*. [Pg 287]

Crimes, then, of this Stamp, can never agree with Comedy; not that we are for running into the other Extream, and asserting (as I observ'd before) that Ridicule is the only, because it is the principal Subject of it. *Inferior* Crimes, of the more *odious* Kind, may properly enough be introduc'd upon that very Account, because they are *odious*: Tho' those that are equally odious, and ridiculous, are much more *proper* for it; as Avarice, Arrogance, Superstition, and the like. And others, of a different Turn, if represented in private Life, may, nay, ought to be expos'd on the Comic Stage, as Luxury, and the preposterous Affectation of appearing great without a Fortune, provided this is done in a merry Way, and the Humour is not lost in the Discipline. But Murder, Rebellion, ambitious Thirst of Power, and other Vices of that Strain, belong only to Tragedy. But the *Follies* of Mankind (as they are usually term'd) that are not so much *Crimes*, as *Imperfections*, that offend against the Rules of *Decency* rather than *Morality*, are *merely*, and in *every View*, ridiculous; and, upon that Account, furnish the *most proper* Matter for Comedy.

But here it is necessary to observe, that all the Virtues, Vices, and Follies, we have been speaking of, take in the Passions of every Kind: For it is a very great Mistake to imagine that Comedy should be from one End to the other, a continu'd Scene of Gaiety and Mirth: Some Parts of it may be grave, sententious, and even sorrowful. Nor will any one, I believe, who is a Judge in this Way of Writing, ever find Fault with *Terence*, who, in the *Andria*, (to omit many other Passages) brings *Pamphilus* on the Stage under all this Concern. [Pg 288]

[410] *Hoccine est humanum factum, aut inceptum? hoccine officium patris?*

Was there ever such a Thing done, or thought of yet by Man? Is this the  
Tenderness of a Father?

And a little afterwards,

—*Sed nunc quid primum exequar?*  
*Tot me impediunt curæ, quæ meam animum divorce trahunt:*  
*Amor, misericordia hujus, nuptiarum sollicitatio,*  
*Tum patris pudor, qui me tam leni passus est animo usque adhuc*  
*Quæ meo cunque animo libitum est facere; eine ego ut advorser? hei mihi!*  
*Incertum est quid agam.*

But, as the Case now stands, where shall I begin first? So many Difficulties cumber and distract my Soul at once; on one Side, Love, Pity for that dear Creature, and the pressing Importunities I am under to marry: On the other, the Reverence due to my Father, who has hitherto indulg'd me in all that Heart could wish; and shall I now turn Rebel to him at last? Mine is a wretched Situation; which Way to turn, I know not.

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And tho' the Style of Comedy is generally familiar, yet it is sometimes capable of the *Sublime*. So *Horace* observes, in his Art of Poetry:

[411] *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit,*  
*Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.*

Yet Comedy sometimes may raise her Voice,  
And *Chremes* be allow'd to foam and rail.  
*Roscom.*

Where Interpreters are of Opinion, that *Horace* alludes to that Passage in the *Heautontimorumenos*:

[412] — *Non si ex capite sis meo*  
*Natus, item ut aiunt Minervam esse ex Jove; ea causa magis*  
*Patiar, Clitipho, flagitiis tuis me infamen fieri.*

No! had you sprung out of my very Brain, as they say *Pallas* did from *Jove's*, I wou'd not bear to see myself disgrac'd by your Debauches.

But there is a wide Difference between that Distress, which prevails in Tragedy, and that which occasionally appears in Comedy. The one is like a Storm in Winter, which covers the Sky all over with Clouds and Darkness, only a few transient Gleams of Light interspers'd: The other is like a Summer's Day, which is generally serene and bright, and sometimes, tho' seldom, a little over-cast.

The whole Compass, then, of our Passions, may be represented in Comedy, as well as Tragedy; but in a *Manner* intirely different, on account of the Difference of the Characters from which they arise. For it is certainly true, on the one Hand, that the Foundations of human Happiness and Misery, all the Springs and Sources of our Affections, are, in the main, the same, and common to all Mankind: But, it is as evident, on the other, that every Man, according to his Station in Life, expresses those Affections in a different Manner, and with peculiar Images. Thus, in a human Body, the several Parts are in all Men nearly the same; but the great Variety in their Condition, Education, and Ways of living, makes the same Variety in their Appearance and gives a different Turn, even to their Countenance. A Monarch may be as merry as any of his Subjects; but how different is the Air of his Mirth, from that jovial Rusticity with which the merry Peasant overflows! A Shepherd, or Swain, may feel all the Anguish and Distress of Love; but how unlike are his Complaints to those which a Prince or Sultan would pour out upon these Occasions! Nay, and the lowest Part of Mankind are not without *Ambition*; but how widely distant is it from the high and boundless Views with which Monarchs are affected!

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But tho' every Passion may be properly represented in Comedy, yet the first Place must always be assign'd to Ridicule; that should be, thro' the whole, the prevailing Turn. But how difficult it is for an Author to succeed in *just Ridicule*, is very obvious, not only to them who have attempted it, but to every Body who has duly consider'd this Way of Writing. It is no easy Performance to rally the Follies of Mankind in an agreeable Manner; and to *laugh with a good Grace*, is no vulgar Attainment. But most of the Moderns seem to be quite of another Opinion, and think, that nothing is more easy, than to *make a Man ridiculous*. And it must be own'd, that *Laughing*, in their Way, is one of the easiest Things imaginable, with whom a wry Face is a Joke, and every Joke a certain Mark of Wit: But *Horace* and *Terence* were unluckily of another Way of thinking Our Witlings, whilst they divert themselves with the Follies of others, expose their own; and the Laughter they are so ready to raise, returns upon themselves. But, to say the Truth, our present Taste for Ridicule is itself ridiculous, and that not only in Comedy, but many *other Compositions*, especially in *Prose*, which have met with great Approbation from many; with whom, to invert the Nature of Things, and misrepresent with trivial Gestures, and low Mimickry, is reckon'd a Proof of a great Genius. Sometimes, indeed, there may be a great deal of Wit in this Sort of Burlesque, in describing Heroes and great Actions in ludicrous and low Images, and setting off Trifles with the Air and Majesty of the Sublime: But if this is coarsly done, the Composition languid, and over-run with Foppery, nothing is more nauseous. To trifle in a sprightly Manner, is exceeding

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pleasant; but nothing more odious than an affected Dulness, and being downright foolish: Which is too often the Case with these Wits, who are wonderfully pleas'd with their own most ingenious Compositions; who are dealing perpetually in Ironies, and making Sport (as they imagine) with others. There is, indeed, a peculiar Beauty in an easy and well-turn'd Irony, which these toothless Snarlers know nothing of; but to utter a heavy and palpable Falsity, under the Shew of it, is mere Stupidity.

*Res est severa voluptas—*

True Pleasure's sacred Name revere;  
Itself is solid, and its Laws severe.

A Maxim, which, if all Writers would remember, the best Judges would be more agreeably entertain'd in reading them.

It may be ask'd, Whether Writers, who would professedly expose the Follies and Vices of Mankind, ought to make their Figures larger than the Originals, or describe them exactly as they are, without Addition or Improvement. Each Side of the Question is not without its Authorities. *Plautus* is alledg'd in Favour of the first Opinion, and *Terence* of the last. But granting that *Aristophanes* and *Plautus*, among the Ancients, and most of the modern Comic Writers, have taken too much Liberty in this Point; yet it is an allow'd Privilege to Poets, as well as Painters, not to be confin'd, either in Panegyric, or Satire, to the strict Rules of Truth. Such Heightnings are no more than meer *Hyperboles*; nor do those write, or these paint, *contrary* to Truth, but *above* it. The Strokes must be daring and strong, if you would draw Men, or Characters, to the Life: It is not enough barely to draw the Outlines of Vice and Folly, if you intend to make the one ridiculous, or the other detestable; some Colourings must be added, both by the Painter, and the Poet.

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*Prologues* were anciently made use of only before Comedies; but with us they are equally suited to them and Tragedy. They who have a Mind to know the several Sorts of them, may consult *Vossius*. The Ancients had no *Epilogue*, which is intirely modern, and us'd in common both to Tragedy or Comedy. *Terence's* Prologues have no Wit, and very little Fancy in them; which cannot be said of our Prologues and Epilogues, full, as they often are, of the most lively Entertainment.

They who wou'd be acquainted with the *Chorus*, the *Cantica*, and the *Pantomimes* of the Ancients, must consult *Vossius* and *Scaliger*, and such Writers: For these Particulars belong rather to the History of Poetry, than to any Branch of Critic. The Use of them, especially the *Pantomimes*, was to relieve the Audience, that it might not grow weary of the Play: A Practice which can never be mention'd to their Honour: For it is a certain Evidence of a bad Taste, when an Audience cannot bear to sit out a dramatic Entertainment, without being reliev'd by such low Diversions: But we have the less Reason to wonder at this, who have seen in our own Time and Nation, Rope and Ladder-Dancers, and other wonderful Artists of that Class, not only admitted upon the Stage, but (to our Shame be it spoken) receiv'd there with the utmost Applause. The Age, indeed, even of *Augustus*, fell into much the same Depravity, which *Horace* thus rallies for it:

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[413] —*Media inter carmina poscunt  
Aut ursum, aut pugiles.*

Let *Hockley-hole* Diversions grace the Stage,  
And Dog with Bear, *Stokes* with his Wife engage.

They, surely, must be of very low Genius, that cannot be content with a Comedy, unless it is disgrac'd with somewhat lower, a ridiculous Farce.

From what we have said of the Nature and Turn of this Kind of Poem, that it is a Representation of common and private Life; some Persons will, perhaps, imagine it to be a Work of Amusement, compos'd without much Difficulty, or Genius. But this is so far from making it easier, that it increases the Difficulty of writing it. Take *Horace's* Opinion,

[414] *Creditur, ex medio quia res arcessit, habere  
Sudoris minimum; sed habet Comœdia tanto  
Plus oneris; quanto veniæ minus.*

As Comedy takes all its Characters  
From common Life, 'tis thought a Work of Ease;  
Yet where the less Indulgence is allow'd,  
The greater Pains and Judgment are requir'd.  
*Ch. Carthy.*

Nor yet do we, therefore, affirm in general, that Comedy is a Work of greater Difficulty or Genius than Tragedy, which was the Opinion of *Antiphanes*, a Comic Poet, as *Vossius* tells us<sup>[415]</sup>, whom the Reader may consult for the Arguments and Replies on both Sides.

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The Language of Comedy is by that learned Author<sup>[416]</sup> consider'd in two Lights; in general,

with regard to its Elegance; and more particularly, as it relates to the Stage. "As to Elegance, he says, that the Language of *Aristophanes*, and other Writers of the old *Greek Comedy*, was more correct and beautiful than *Menander's* and other Writers of the new. Among the *Latins*, *Terence*, for Beauty, and Purity of Style, is superior to all; *Plautus* is honour'd but with the second Place, tho', in *Varro's* Judgment, he deserv'd the first." But no Body has been so indulgent to *Varro's* Opinion, as to approve of it<sup>[417]</sup>. *Horace* thought very differently, whose Sentiments of *Plautus* appear from the Verses already quoted. He proceeds, "If we consider the Language with regard to the *Drama*, it must be suitable to the Subject, and not at all sublime; but, on the contrary, easy and familiar, and not set off with too many Ornaments." It is needless to say more upon this Subject, because I have already observ'd, in a former Lecture, that the Style of Comedy is not properly poetical, but an elegant Kind of Prose.

The Names of the *Greek Comic Poets* have been taken Notice of already. Among the *Romans*, the most distinguish'd were two, whose Works are lost, *Cæcilius*, and *Afranius*; and two, which we now have, *Plautus*, and *Terence*. *Horace* has observ'd of them,

[418] *Vincere Cæcilius gravitate, Terentius arte.*

Compar'd in Character, *Cæcilius' Part*  
Is Gravity, and *Terence's* is Art.

The latter Part of this Observation is clear and obvious, but what that Gravity was, in which *Cæcilius* excell'd *Terence*, and which itself seems in him to superabound, is difficult to guess. By *Art*, says *Acro*, as *Vossius* quotes him, is meant, the Propriety of Language, in which *Terence* was superior to all other Poets. But I should rather think, as *Vossius* does, that by *Art* is meant the Management and Disposition of the Plot; in which he far excell'd *Plautus* also. In Comedy, as the same learned Author observes, the *Romans* are much inferior to the *Greeks*; and he cites *Quintilian*<sup>[419]</sup> in Support of his Opinion, who has deliver'd his Thoughts of *Terence* with great Freedom. *Miratus sæpius ego sum, qui tanta fuerit populi Romani gravitas atque constantia, tantusque latinæ dictionis amor, ut Terentianis fabulis capi potuerit; in quibus tam pauci risus, usque adeo rara scommata, &c. Sed agnosco tempora: Vivebant tum Scipiones; Catonesque erant in pretio: Et incrementa fiebant tum temporis illius imperii. Moribus populi in voluptatem prolabantibus, oratio facta est solutior.* "I have wonder'd," says he, (and I am no less surpriz'd at the Man's wonderful Way of Thinking) "that the *Romans* should have so much Gravity and Composure in their Tempers, such a violent Affection for the Elegancies of their own Language, as to be fond of *Terence's* Plays, where there is so little Mirth, scarce a Joke to be found. But it was the Turn of that Age: The *Scipio's*, and *Cato's*, were their Men of Taste, and in high Esteem: They were all Gravity, and their Thoughts ran only upon Conquests, and Increase of Power. But as the Morals of that People grew less severe, their Writings had in them more Gaiety and Pleasure." This is *Quintilian's* Opinion, as partial, as it is severe. The Verses which *Cæsar* wrote upon *Terence*, and *Suetonius* has handed down to us, are so well known, that it might be thought an unpardonable Omission, when we are treating upon this Subject, to take no Notice of them:

*Tu quoque, tu in summis, ô dimidiata Menander,  
Poneris, & merito, puri sermonis amator;  
Lenibus atque utinam dictis adjuncta foret vis  
Comica, & æquato virtus polleret honore  
Cum Græcis, neque in hac despectus parte jaceres:  
Unum hoc maceror, & doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.*

And thou, who mak'st *Mænander's* Beauties thine,  
Shalt foremost in the List of Writers shine;  
Correct in Language, chaste in ev'ry Thought,  
In all the Rules of Art without a Fault.  
Oh! did thy gently-pleasing Scenes impart  
As much the Force of Nature, as of Art,  
Did but those Strokes of Wit attend thy Lines,  
Which thro' the *Grecian* Page distinguish'd shines,  
Thy Works with Rapture wou'd be studied o'er,  
Nor *Roman* Elegance have wish'd for more.

But granting that *Terence* was no way remarkable for his Talent at Wit and Repartee, yet (with Submission to so great a Judge) so sharp and severe a Censure seems more than he deserves. For there are many, and those of the best Taste, who are more pleas'd with a Writer, that perpetually keeps up an agreeable Smile, and an easy Cheerfulness; than one, who is every now and then throwing them into Fits of Laughter, and violent Emotions.

Our modern Comedy, as I observ'd before, has a much greater Resemblance with what the Ancients call'd the *Middle Comedy*, than either the *Old*, or *New*. It is much graver, and less satirical than the first, and has more delicate Touches of Wit and Raillery than the last. *Terence* seems neither by Genius, nor Inclination, to have had the least Turn for the sharp and satirical Way of Writing: His Excellency lies rather in copying the common Characters of Human Nature, and drawing them in the exactest Manner, and truest Light; than in painting any of its Extravagancies, whether in Vice, or Folly. The modern Comedies have certainly more Wit and Humour in their Composition, than the ancient; more Art in working up, and unravelling their Plots; and a greater Variety of Persons concern'd in them: And especially in genteel Comedy, our

Characters have more good Breeding, and Politeness; and even in Low Life, our comical Figures are more ridiculous. But then, on the other Hand, the Language of *Terence* is more pure and correct, more expressive and elegant than ours: He has drawn his Characters more natural, and more accurately observ'd the Rules of Art. But to give the Moderns an absolute Superiority in this Way of Writing, they have nothing more to do, than to prune and retrench some Excrecencies, without studying for any further Improvements: Let them abate of their Luxuriancy, and the Business is done at once. Nay, they seem to me already superior to them in all other Respects, except (which I am asham'd to own) in that intire Regard to Modesty which is preserv'd in all *Terence's* Characters. If we compare the modern Comic Writers in the several Parts of *Europe*, Mons. *Rapin* tells us, that the *Spaniards* have one or two, but one, especially, that is considerable; the *Italians* have none worth taking Notice of. The Dispute, therefore, will lie betwixt the *French* and us. And who has more Wit and Humour, is more elegant in Style, or natural in his Characters, than *Moliere*? Tho', in general, if we are not too partial to our own Performances, we are in this, as in all other Parts of Poetry, superior to the *French*; but the Superiority is no where so disputable.

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As to our *English* Comedies, which are written in Prose, if any over-nice Critic questions whether they can be justly reckon'd poetical Compositions, because in the Definition of Poetry, which we have already given, some Sort of Numbers are made essential to it; the plain Answer is this: If we keep close to the Terms of that Definition, our Comedies may justly be consider'd as Poems, in every other Respect but this: The Definition is form'd upon the universal Practice of the Ancients, who are, and ought to be our great Masters in this Art; and it is more reasonable to continue, than alter it, in Compliance with the Practice of modern Writers. But the Question, whatever Way it is determin'd, is only an idle Controversy about Words, and of very little Moment: For the Verses of the ancient Comedies differ'd so little from Prose, that the nicest Ear could not always distinguish them: They had their proper Measures, but so loose and uncertain, that it is often difficult to determine which is the true Way of scanning them: And in Comedy more regular and confin'd Measures had been ridiculous. How inexcusable, then, is the Practice of the *French* Poets, who have written whole Comedies in Rhyme, and Heroic Verse? Rhymes are ridiculous enough in Tragedy; but that an easy and familiar Conversation, such as Comedy is suppos'd to be, should be all in Rhyme and Epic Verse, has something in it so extravagantly absurd, that I am surpriz'd a Nation, so remarkable for Wit and good Sense, could bear with it.

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The Source of those agreeable Reflections, that Comedy supplies us with, is so obvious, that it needs no Enquiry. Mirth is always pleasing, and so is a lively Representation of Human Nature, of the Incidents of common Life, and those Characters which are every Day before us. Nor is the Cause of that ill-natur'd Pleasure less easy to be assign'd, which arises from Satire, and Ridicule: Every Body is so civil to himself, as to suppose he is not the Person aim'd at. Who, upon these Occasions, ever thinks of *Horace's* Observation?

[420] — *Quid rides? mutato nomine de Te  
Fabula narratur.*

What, dost thou laugh, and think that thou art free?  
Fool, change the Name, the Story's told of thee.

The Images, then, of the Vices and Follies of other Men, flatter that Pride, which is too natural to Mankind; who are apt to think their own Characters rais'd, by the Ruin of others: This is such a Pleasure as we ought to be asham'd of. But some there are, of a quite different Turn, who are as much delighted with the Moral of the Play, the Success of Virtue, and the Punishments or Disappointments which Vice meets with in it: And others have no Regard to any Character but the Poet's, are taken only with the Turns of Wit, and the Genius of the Writer. But *Errors* and *Imperfections* are the great Source of Delight in all Dramatical Performances, especially in Comedy, which has, in general, more Friends and Admirers than Tragedy: Because there are few Persons of so great a Genius, or so refin'd a Taste, as to be sensible of those generous and agreeable Emotions, which arise from Tenderness, and Compassion, and even Distress itself. Scenes of Mirth are pleasing to every Imagination, those of Sorrow only to a few. I can only wish, that these different Passions which arise from the Gravity of Tragedy, or the Gaiety of Comedy, were made useful and instrumental to Virtue; and that our Theatres were not more frequented for the Amusements they supply us with, than for the Lessons of Morality and good Sense instill'd in them.

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## LECTURE XXVI, &c. Of TRAGEDY.

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In discoursing upon the Drama in general, I have already mention'd the Origin of Tragedy. The Word is deriv'd from τράγος, a *Goat*, and ὠδή, a *Song*: because a Goat was the Reward propos'd to the Competitors in this Art; as *Horace* has plainly intimated:

[421] *Carminē qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum.*

The first Competitors in Tragic Strain,  
When a poor Goat was all the Victor's Gain.

For they deserve no Regard, who would derive τραγωδία, as if it were τρυγωία, from τρυξ, *the Lees of wine*; because the Actors, before *Æschylus* invented the Use of Masks, discolour'd their Faces with Wine Lees. This Etymology is harsh, and unnatural<sup>[422]</sup>; the other is easy, and agreeable to the Rules of Analogy, without changing so much as one Letter, as the other does. [Pg 302]

[423] Their Opinion, who think it was call'd τραγωδία, as if it were τραχία ὠδή, a *rough Song*; has still less Countenance from the Analogy of that Language, or the Nature of the Poem. But it is not worth While to dwell upon these Trifles.

*Aristotle*, whose Discourse on Poetry is employ'd chiefly on this Subject, defines Tragedy in this Manner,<sup>[424]</sup>

Ἔστιν οὖν τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαιᾶς, καὶ τελείας, μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένω λόγῳ, χωρὶς ἐκαστοῦ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων, καὶ οὐ δι' ἐπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ δι' ἔλεους, καὶ φόβου, περαινούσα τὴν τῶν τοιοῦτων παθημάτων καθάρσιν.

*Tragedy is the Imitation of a serious, entire, and important Action, in an agreeable Style, the different Sorts of which Style must be regularly varied in the several Parts; and not by Narration, but by the Means of Terror and Pity purging the like Passions in us.*

All I would observe of this Definition, at present, is, that there are two Parts of it which want some Explication. The first is, χωρὶς ἐκαστοῦ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων; that is, says<sup>[425]</sup> *Vossius*, "That the several Sorts of Style should not be mix'd together, but brought in separately in their several Parts. For *Aristotle* adds, immediately after, *Some Parts are perform'd in Metre only, some with Music*<sup>[426]</sup>. "This Clause, therefore, of the Definition, can belong only to the ancient Tragedy, and not to our modern, which is entirely without a Chorus. The other Difficulty is, in οὐ δι' ἐπαγγελίας. *Vossius* and *Dacier* are both of Opinion, that this Part of the Definition was added for no other Reason, but to distinguish Tragedy from Epic Poetry, which is form'd, not upon Action, but Narration. But still there is a Doubt left, which neither of them attempt to clear up: Must we, therefore, exclude all Sort of Narration from Tragedy? Has not *Horace*, and all the Poets and Critics after him, made a proper Distinction between Things represented and related in the Drama? [Pg 303]

[427] *Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.*

Some Things are acted, others only told.  
*Roscom.*

The Answer to which Question, I think, is this; That there is undoubtedly a Dramatic Narration, but always related by some Persons in the Play, not by the Poet himself, as in Epic Poetry; and this latter Sort of Narration is what *Aristotle* meant in the Definition before us. There is no Occasion to explain the several Parts of it any further, since *Vossius* has express'd the Substance more clearly, and fully, in the following Definition.<sup>[428]</sup> *Tragedy is a Dramatic Poem, imitating some great, but unfortunate Event, in a grave and majestic Style:* To which, says he, if you please, you may add, *to raise the Passions, and purge the Mind from them.* All this is intelligible, and to the Point: But I wonder this learned Writer should think the last Clause rather not impertinent, than essential, by that negligent Introduction, *that you may add it if you please;* which, as *Dacier* observes with great Judgment, is much the best Part of *Aristotle's* Definition, and deserves, of all others, to be most accurately explain'd. He should also (as *Aristotle* has done) have particularly mention'd the two prevailing Passions of *Pity* and *Terror*, which are the proper Objects of Tragedy, and chiefly affected by it: And further, in Imitation of the same great Author, the Beauties of the Style should not have been intirely forgot. I shall therefore, from these two Definitions, endeavour to form a third, much clearer than *Aristotle's*, and more compleat than *Vossius's*. *Tragedy is a Dramatic Poem, imitating some great, but unfortunate Event, in a grave, majestic, and entertaining Style, to raise the Passions, especially those of Pity and Terror, and to purge the Mind of them.* [Pg 304]

This Definition, expresly, or by Implication, contains these several Parts; *the Argument, or the Subject Matter, the Sentiments, the Language and Versification, the Characters and Manners, and, lastly, the Moral, or the propos'd Effect.* All which agree in this, that they ought to be great and sublime; for with Regard to all these, Tragedy is the noblest Kind of Poetry, except one.

The Subject is always some serious and important Event, as the Expulsion of a Tyrant, the Death of a Hero, and the like; which Event turns, and depends intirely upon some violent Passion, either good or bad; as Ambition, Revenge, Friendship, and especially Love, (for Love, as I have before observ'd, is the chief Subject of the modern Drama, whether Tragedy, or Comedy;) or else upon the divine Justice, which gives either to Virtue, or Vice, or to both at once, their proper Retributions. It is likewise necessary, that the Manners, the Thoughts, the Language, (for these are so nearly allied, that they are much better consider'd jointly, than separately) should be grave, sublime, and magnificent. Hence *Horace*, in his Art of Poetry, after laying down Rules for the Style of Comedy,

[429] *Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult,*

goes on thus,

*Indignatur item privatis, & prope socco  
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ.*

A Comic Subject loves an humble Verse:  
*Thyestes* scorns a low and Comic Style.  
*Roscom.*

And again:

[430] *Effutire leves indigna Tragœdia versus,  
Ut festis matrona moveri jussa diebus,  
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.*

For Tragedy shou'd blush as much, to stoop  
To the low mimic Follies of a Farce,  
As a grave Matron wou'd, to dance with Girls.

And *Ovid*:

[431] *Omne genus scripti gravitate Tragœdia vincit.*

In Majesty the Tragic Muse excels.

I am entirely of [432] *Vossius's* Opinion, who says, "that Tragedy is nearly allied to Epic Poetry, nay, often superior to it, in the Choice of Words, and Majesty of Expression." Which makes *Horace* say of it,

[433] *An Tragica desævit & ampullatur in arte?*

Or swell with noble Rage the Tragic Style.  
*Ch. Carthy.*

Not that all the Persons in Tragedy are suppos'd to speak with equal Dignity, which is as inconsistent with the Nature of Things, as of Men; nor should the Language of a Messenger, or a Nurse, be as sublime as that of a Monarch, or a Deity: Tho' great Care ought to be taken, that nothing mean or trifling appear in these lower Characters, much less like Joke or Repartee, (a Fault which modern Writers, especially those of our own Country, are shamefully guilty of) lest Tragedy should sink below itself. A judicious Tragic Poet will be less concern'd at the Hiss, than the Laugh of an Audience.

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Nor should the highest Characters talk *always* with equal Majesty, for that is as great an Absurdity; much less should they fall into Expressions of Low Life, improper for Tragedy, even when they are talking about Things of no Moment: For even in them there is a Sort of Dignity, inseparable from Kings and Heroes. Mr. *Dryden*, therefore, has well observ'd, that in *Seneca's Hippolytus* the Poet very judiciously makes *Theseus* order his Servants to open the Door (a very familiar Circumstance) in pompous Words:

[434] *Reserate clusos Regii postes Laris.*

Unbar the Portals of the Royal Dome.

In expressing Grief, when void of Anger, (for Anger is insolent in all Circumstances, and in great Men always swelling) the Style of Tragedy abates something of its Majesty, and descends almost into the Ease and Freedom, not of Comedy, (as [435] *Vossius*, less accurately, expresses it) but of familiar Conversation. "Especially if Heroes are introduc'd fallen from the Height of Fortune; whose Spirits are less rais'd, and their Language, of Course, is less tragical." As Anger, therefore, raises the Style of Comedy; Sorrow sinks that of Tragedy: Both which *Horace* observes, in these Words:

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[436] *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit,  
Iratuque Chremes tumido delitigat ore:  
Et Tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri;  
Telephus, & Peleus, cum pauper, & exul uterque,  
Projicit ampullas, & sesquipedalia verba,  
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.*

Yet Comedy sometimes may raise her Voice,  
And *Chremes* be allow'd to foam and rail:  
Tragedians too lay by their State, to grieve:  
*Peleus* and *Telephus*, evil'd and poor,  
Forget their swelling and gigantick Words,  
If they wou'd have Spectators share their Grief.  
*Roscom.*

The Reason of which is too plain, to want Explication. By *Sermo pedestris*, the Poet means a more familiar Style, but without Meanness; not quite degenerating into Prose, much less into what is vulgar, rude, or scurrilous: Tho' plain, it should be elegant; tho' humble, and complaining, yet graceful, and truly poetical. The Thoughts may, and often ought to be great, even when the Language is far otherwise. For there is a Sort of majestic and heroic Humility; and tho' Kings and Queens don't express their Grief in pompous and sonorous Words, yet there is some Difference betwixt theirs, and vulgar Sorrows. There is the same Distinction of Style, as in the Habit of Mourners. The Monarch may exchange his Purple for Sable, yet, in his Behaviour, in his Looks, there is such a Reserve of Majesty, as will easily distinguish him from a private Person in the same Attire.

As we observ'd elsewhere, there were two Sorts of Satire, the one of a lower Kind, and less confin'd; the other of a graver and severer Turn, and more sublime: So the former is suited to Comedy, the latter to Tragedy: For it is the Business of the one to ridicule the Follies of Mankind, and of the other to lash Vices, and Crimes of a deeper Dye. Hence *Juvenal*, a Writer of the sublimer Kind of Satire, seems to propose the Tragic Style for his Imitation.

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[437] *Grande Sophocleo carmen bacchamur hiatu.*

The Satyr in a Rage,  
Struts in the Buskins of the Tragic Stage.  
*Dryden.*

Nor is it less the Province of Tragedy to improve Virtue, than correct, and expose Vice; Virtue, I say, and that heroic too: For Tragedy is a Sort of heroic Drama; no Kind of Poetry is more sacred; none, to which the noblest and best Sentiments are so suitable; none, in which more exalted Precepts of Virtue are, or, at least, may be deliver'd.

Tragedy, therefore, is, in all Respects, adapted to the Sublime: But if it should be ask'd, how I can reconcile this to Nature, that Men, of what Quality and Rank soever, should be suppos'd, in their private and common Conversation, to make such solemn Speeches, of so much Art and Elegance; when, in Fact, they rarely, if ever, talk in such Language: I must ingenuously own, that this Objection lies stronger against those Poems in which Actions are represented, than in which they are barely describ'd; and therefore, in this Respect, Tragedy must give Place to Epic. It may be observ'd, however, that even in Comedy, (which is suppos'd to be less concern'd in this Objection) it is impossible to imagine, that Persons should really support a Conversation, as they are represented to do, upon the Stage, and that it is full as natural to ascribe this Sublimity of Style to Kings and Heroes, as those smart Repartees, and fine Turns of Wit, to Persons of inferior Rank. But, upon the whole, the true Apology to be made for both, is, that these are *probable* Circumstances, if not *true ones*: It is enough, if they bear a near Resemblance to Truth, or if, as *Horace* has well express'd it,

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[438] *Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris.*

What was for Pleasure feign'd, be near the Truth.

For it is impossible that any Degree of Fiction should be the very Truth. Poets, as well as Painters, are allow'd to go beyond the Life: Nay, this is the very Point that shews their Skill most. When these imaginary Touches affect as strongly as real Truths; if we can be agreeably deceiv'd, even in spite of Conviction, how great is the Art, and how just the Triumph of the Deceiver? And this is what *Horace* means, in the following Lines:

[439] *Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur  
Ire Poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter augit,  
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,  
Ut magus, & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*

I freely own, that Poet seems to shew  
The greatest Force of Genius, and of Art,  
Whose pow'rful Images can fill the Soul  
With Terrors not her own; can Pity raise,  
Or Joy, or soft Complacency diffuse:  
Who, by the wond'rous Magic of his Pen,  
With strong Deception on my Fancy plays,  
Now fixes me at *Athens*, now at *Thebes*.  
*Ch. Carthy.*

But I must just take Notice, that what we have advanc'd concerning the Sublimity of this Drama, is applicable to all Tragedies, but not equally to all. For as (what I have before observ'd) there are two Sorts of Comedies; the one taken from Characters of a higher Rank, the other perfectly low: So there are two Sorts of Tragedies, the one quite sublime, the other of a more humble Nature; the first representing Kings and Heroes, and the latter, Men of private Life, but of considerable Character and Station in it. This, indeed, is intirely modern; the Punishments or Misfortunes of Tyrants, and Princes, being the only Subjects of the ancient Tragedy. We said, that tho' it is form'd upon the

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Calamities of private Men, yet of such whose Authority and Station in Life make them considerable; because, tho' the Afflictions of common People afford Matter for Compassion, yet not for Tragedy, their Fortunes, and their Manners, being far below the Spirit of this Sort of Poetry, and the Dignity of its Style and Versification. Some of the best Performances of our own Writers, are of this Sort, affecting us not so much with Terror, as Compassion; in exciting which, the Moderns seem far superior to the Ancients.

Tragedies, likewise, admit of another Distinction, with Regard to their Event, either fortunate, or unfortunate. It is sufficient to be true Tragedy, that Incidents of Distress and Sorrow are carried on thro' the whole, tho' the principal Persons come off fortunately at last: I say, the *principal Persons*; because even in this Species, that ends happily, it is necessary that some Characters should be unhappy in the Conclusion, especially the worst, or rather they only. For I can by no means approve of those Tragedies of ours, in which Persons of equal Innocence and Virtue, of the same Rank and Eminence, are punish'd and rewarded promiscuously. It is so, I own, in human Life; but a single Dramatic Piece is not design'd to give us an intire View of it: Let it therefore be truly one, and entirely consistent. It may, indeed, very justly leave the best, and most distinguish'd Characters, in Distress at last; which (as shall be observ'd hereafter) is the most affecting Sort of Tragedy. But if *some* innocent and virtuous Persons are fortunate, let them be *all so*, and the bad only left miserable; otherwise the Drama will be inconsistent: And these opposite Agitations of Mind will weaken and destroy each other. Let the Audience go home either in a pleasant or melancholy Humour; if you attempt both, you succeed in neither.

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But to return to the twofold Division, we observ'd, of this species of the Drama. "In Tragedies (says<sup>[440]</sup> *Vossius*) that are truly tragical, the first Scenes are usually more sedate, and the last dreadful. Thus, what a terrible Conclusion has the *Phœnissæ* of *Euripides*, where *Oedipus*, with his Eyes put out, is by *Creon* banish'd from *Thebes*, of which he had once been King? So, again, in his *Hecuba*, we see *Polymestor* in the same Distress; *Hecuba* bewailing the Murder of her Son, and the blind *Polymestor* relating the Calamities which the Oracle had denounc'd against *Hecuba*, *Agamemnon*, and *Cassandra*.<sup>[441]</sup> But if *Orestes* and *Ægisthus*, who were determin'd Enemies, had been reconcil'd, and parted without Blood-shed, the Tragedy had been less perfect. For, as we observ'd, Tragedy, in this respect, differs from Comedy, because this always ends happily, the other generally unhappily. *And such should be the Conclusion of a Tragedy, according to the Rules of Art; but sometimes an unexpected Happiness arises from the greatest Distress: when this is the Case, the Poet departs from the Rules of Art, in Compliance with the Taste of his Audience, who had rather go home chearful, than melancholy.* In the *Electra*, both of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, the Plot takes this prosperous Turn, tho' *Sophocles* has shewn much greater Skill in the Conduct of it. *Sophocles's Philoctetes in Lemnus*, concludes in the same Way; as does *Euripides's Iphigenia in Aulis*; his *Iphigenia in Tauri*; and *Alcestis*; where, by *Hercules's* Assistance, *Admetus* has his Wife restor'd. And so his *Orestes*; for when *Pylades* and *Orestes*, incens'd at *Menelaus*, because he would not assist them against *Tyndarus*, had determin'd to put *Helena*, and his Daughter *Hermione*, to Death; *Helena*, by the Favour of the Gods, is taken up into Heaven, and *Hermione* (*Menelaus* coming first to her Relief, and *Apollo* interposing, to end the Controversy) is, by the Direction of that God, married to *Orestes*, who now expiated from his Mother's Blood, is made King of *Argos*. And his *Helena* again, concludes happily; where she, having artfully escap'd from *Theoclymenus*, returns to her Husband *Menelaus*, and sails, with a prosperous Gale, into *Greece*. So, likewise, his Tragedies of *Hippolytus*, *Rhosus*, and *Ion*. Even *Ezekiel*, the *Jewish* Tragic Poet, (as *Clemens Alexandrinus* calls him, *Strom.* Book I.) was the Author of a Drama, which he entituled, Εζαγωγή, or the *bringing out*; from whence *Eusebius* has transcrib'd no small Part into his *Evang. Præp.* Book IX. Chap. IV. And what Event could be more joyful, than the bringing that People out of *Ægypt*? *Nor does Tragedy lose its Name*, (as *Vossius* further observes) *tho' the Conclusion is fortunate; because a melancholy Catastrophe is no Part of its Essence. Otherwise great Part of the Tragedies of Euripides, that are come to our Hands, would cease to be Tragedies. Wherefore, in Respect to the Essence of this Poem, it is sufficient, if it has upon the whole the real Appearance of Distress.* So that the distinguishing Property of it may appear, in representing the doubtful and disastrous Fortunes of great Men. Tho' I cannot deny, (says he) but that such Tragedies borrow something from the Nature of Comedy. For the Nature of Tragedy is to be mournful, which is undeniable, since Terror and Commiseration are the chief Ends propos'd by it. When it is otherwise, it is only, as we said, in Compliance with the Taste of the People. Hence *Aristotle* says, that Poets fall into this Way of Writing, δια το τωv θεαυρον ασθενειαν that is, to humour the wrong or weak Judgment of an Audience. But as the Populace are mutable, and inconstant, sometimes approving one Thing, sometimes another; the best Way is to keep close to the Nature of Tragedy, and not without great Necessity to depart from it."

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Thus that great Man, whose Sentiments I should entirely approve of, if they did not seem, in one Particular, a little inconsistent. He says, it is not essential to Tragedies to end unhappily, which is certainly true; and yet is of Opinion, that such as do not end so, borrow something from the Turn of Comedy, because the very Nature of Tragedy is mournful. If by Nature he means the most distinguishing Property, his Opinion is, indeed, indisputable, but his Consequence is not just; because (as appears already, from both our Dissertations upon this Subject) Sorrow may be the prevailing Passion in a Drama, which, nevertheless, may conclude successfully. For every Scene of it, from the first to the last, may supply us with proper Objects of Terror and Compassion. If by Nature *Vossius* understands the whole Essence of Tragedy, he is not only mistaken, but plainly contradicts<sup>[442]</sup> himself; as appears from the Passages already quoted. The best Way, therefore, of determining this Point, seems to be, that *both* these Sorts are *true Tragedies*, but the one *more tragical* than the other.

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However, that which is least tragical, and ends happily, requires more Art to write, and is read with more Advantage. With Regard to the first Particular, I shall beg Leave to cite the Authority of Mr *Dryden*.<sup>[443]</sup> Neither is it (says he) so trivial an Undertaking, to make a Tragedy end happily; for it is more difficult to save, than it is to kill. The Dagger, and the Cup of Poison, are always in Readiness; but to bring the Action to the last Extremity, and then, by probable Means, to recover all, will require the Art and Judgment of a Writer, and cost him many a Pang in the Performance." As to the Advantage, the Rewards and Punishments, by this Means, are more equitably adjusted: Which, indeed, may be tolerably affected in those Tragedies, which end unfortunately; For there, the chief Characters, being generally wicked, meet with that Punishment they deserve, and so strike a Terror into the Audience, which is accompanied, likewise, with some Mixture of Pity; for it is not necessary they should be notoriously wicked, to merit Punishment. Besides, sometimes they *repent* before they go off the Stage; as we have seen in two or three *English* Tragedies lately publish'd, which have met with that Applause they justly deserv'd: And even the Punishment of Robbers and Assassins, how justly soever they may deserve it, raises some Degrees of Compassion in us. I may add, farther, that in this Kind of Tragedy the *Under-characters*, which are innocent and virtuous, may at the Conclusion be rewarded for those Virtues, whatsoever Misfortunes they have struggled with before. Upon the whole, from comparing what has been said, it is plain, that even in those Tragedies which end unhappily, there is a *Possibility* that poetical Justice (as it is call'd) may be preserv'd: Tho' the other Sort is *better* adapted to this Purpose, where the *chief Characters* receive their proper Reward, the Virtuous made happy, and the Wicked miserable.

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Terror is chiefly excited in us by a Representation of bad Men punish'd with Misfortunes; Pity with a Mixture of Terror, by a View of good Men under the same Circumstances; both Passions indifferently, by those who are not remarkable either for their Virtues, or their Vices. I have put the Case of good Men punish'd with Misfortunes, for it is consistent with the exactest Justice of the Drama, to make the most innocent meet the most disastrous Fate; a Sort of Tragedy the most tragical, of which our own Stage supplies us with many Instances. This Practice, I say, must be consistent with poetical Justice, which is strictly so with the divine. It was, indeed, less equitable upon the ancient Stage, when the Heathens knew very little of the Rewards and Punishments of a future State: But with us *Christians* the Case is entirely different.

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But tho' it is no Injustice to represent good Men labouring under Distress, even at the last; yet the Wicked should never come off in real Triumph, and Satisfaction: They should always, at least, be so far Sufferers, that if Death is not inflicted on them, nor any other external Punishment; yet they should feel the Anguish of their own Minds, and not enjoy any secret Satisfaction in their Vices. On the other Hand, tho' good Men, to raise our Compassion, are sometimes put to Death; yet we should, even then, see them supported by a just Consciousness of their own Innocence, and the Hopes of a better Life: For tho' the Things of this World are dispos'd of in so dark and uncertain a Manner as to make us often lament the Condition of the best of Men; yet Poets, like Preachers, should not fail to remind the Audience, that there certainly will be eternal Punishments and Rewards hereafter.

"*The best Tragedies* (says<sup>[444]</sup> *Vossius*) *are those where the Characters are neither perfectly virtuous, nor extremly wicked.*" If this Rule is to be confin'd to some of the Characters only, it is just; but will not hold, if extended to all of them. "For the Design of Tragedy is to raise Terror and Pity." No Doubt of it. "But when the Wicked are unfortunate, we are not much dispos'd either to be terrify'd, or touch'd with Compassion at it. For *who* (as *Tully* says) *is ever mov'd at the Punishment of a Traitor, or a Parricide?* It should rather raise a Sort of Satisfaction in us, to think that Justice has overtaken those that have so well deserv'd it?" But, with Submission to the great Names of *Cicero* and *Vossius*, all good and generous Minds are affected with *Compassion* at the Execution of Rebels and Traitors; and nothing can be more *terrible* than the Punishment inflicted upon some of them. "Nor should they be Characters of unblemish'd Virtue; for Calamities of a good Man raise a secret Indignation; and it looks like a Sort of Inhumanity to suppose that the best of Men may be most miserable; to which I may add, that such a Representation may have some Influence in deterring weak and unthinking Minds from Virtue." There might be some Reason to believe so, if there was no other Life but the present; otherwise 'tis a weak Suspicion. Besides, is there no other Occasion to introduce good Characters upon the Stage, but to *make them miserable?* Has not he himself already<sup>[445]</sup> determin'd, that there are some Tragedies which end unhappily, and others happily? What he has farther advanc'd upon this Subject, is generally right. "Therefore the *properest* Characters for the Stage, are those of a middle Nature, between the two Extreams of Virtue and Vice; whose Errors, rather than Crimes, make them unfortunate; as *Oedipus* in *Sophocles*: Or who are reduc'd, by Necessity, to commit some wicked Action, it being the last Expedient; as *Medea* first kills her Brother *Absyrtus*, and afterwards her own Children. Not that these Characters are always requisite; for *Ægisthus* and *Clytæmnestra* are unpardonably wicked; *Electra* is good; *Orestes* rather virtuous, than not; *Agamemnon* cannot be said to be bad, for tho' he sacrifices *Iphigenia* in *Aulis*, it is only in Obedience to the Oracle, and against his own Inclination. Nor can *Hercules* be said to appear in an indifferent Light, but rather in a good one. Wherefore we are not to conclude that those Tragedies must be entirely condemn'd, which are not in all Respects agreeable to *Aristotle's* Rules; but rather, that those are the best, which are conformable to them." The *most tragical* (with Submission to the learned Author) rather than the *best*, if the Rules he speaks of are really *Aristotle's*. For I am not satisfied, I confess, that they are his, nor does *Vossius* direct us where to find them<sup>[446]</sup>. Otherwise I am entirely of his Opinion in the rest I have quoted from him; except that I do not perfectly understand how it is possible for Men to act wickedly, *ratione summa*<sup>[447]</sup>.

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We are come now to the Conclusion of the Definition; in the last Clause of which, expressing the Invention of Tragedy, after these Words, *to raise the Passions, particularly those of Pity and Terror*; we have the following, and *to purge the Mind from them*. It remains, therefore, for us to shew, by what Means Tragedy *purges the Passions*, and that by putting them in Motion, which seems to promise a quite contrary Effect: And when that is done, just to point out whence that Pleasure arises, which we receive from Tragedy; or from what the Causes discoverable in the inmost Recesses of our Nature, our Minds are delighted with Sorrow, and feel a pleasing Anguish, even from Terror and Commiseration. To these Enquiries, I shall, at present, content myself with a short Answer, which shall be enlarg'd hereafter, in a Work that will be publish'd in our own Tongue, a few Months hence, and which has already had the Honour of being encourag'd, by the Subscriptions of several Gentlemen in this Body; to whom I here return my publick Acknowledgments. The Work I mean, is an *English Translation of Virgil's Æneis*: Where, in some Observations upon the fourth Book, this nice and difficult Point shall be discuss'd at large. In the mean Time, the Nature of my present Design makes it necessary for me just to touch upon it here.

Are the Passions, then, to be purg'd, even by their being put in Agitation? Yes; and why not? Bile and Phlegm, and other Humours in the Human Body, cannot be carried off, unless they are first fermented, and put in Motion: Nay, Humours are often expell'd by Medicines of the same Nature and Temperament; as Acids by Acids; Bitters by Bitters; and so of the rest. Some of the Passions, therefore, are purg'd by themselves, as Terror, and Pity; others, again, by the Means of these two. Terror and Pity, as I have said, have this Effect upon themselves; because such dramatical Representations make us more accusom'd to miserable and dreadful Objects; on which Account they become more familiar to us, and, consequently, affect us with less Misery and Terror. "By this Means, (says<sup>[448]</sup> *Vossius*) Tragedy is said περιαινειν την των τοιουτων παθηματων καθαρισιν, to purge and relieve the Mind from such Perturbations; just as (to mention one Instance out of many) the View of those Calamities, which have formerly been the Lot of great Men, teaches others to bear their present Afflictions with Patience. To which Purpose, *Athenæus* has quoted some elegant Verses of *Timocles*, at the Beginning of his sixth Book." And in another Place, says *Vossius*,<sup>[449]</sup> The Design of Tragedy is to strike a Terror in the Audience, εκπληζαι, as *Polybius* expresses it in his second Book, where he is discoursing against *Phylarchus* of the different Ends which Historians and Tragic Poets have in View. The Audience feel this Emotion from a View of the Calamity before them, and the Anguish is still heighten'd by the Dignity of the Sufferers. But the Design of this Emotion is to purge the Mind from those very Passions. For, as a Veteran Soldier, or Physician, by being often conversant with Objects of real Misery, have this Advantage, that they make no greater Impression upon them, than they ought; so, in Tragedy, by seeing the violent Effects of the Passions, the Mind is taught to restrain them within due Bounds. Hence it is plain, why *Aristotle* says, as we observ'd, that the End of Tragedy is to *purge the Passions*; in which he differs entirely from *Plato*, who look'd upon Tragedies as the Inflammatories of them, *Aristotle* as their proper Correctives."

To which I may add, that when the Passions have been long exercis'd with imaginary Distress, their Strength is so much abated, that they have the less left to exert upon real Misery. The Observation which *Simo* makes in *Terence* about deceiving *Davus* with the Appearance of a Wedding, may be almost as justly applied to the Excess of Passion (for the Excess is what we speak of, since the Passions are in themselves good).

[450] *Simul sceleratus Davus, si quid consili  
Habet, ut consumat nunc, cum nihil obsint doli.*

Taking the Question, then, in this View, the Passions may be sometimes purg'd by the Violence of their own Agitations: As Wind, which is nothing else but Air in a more rapid Motion, carries off those noxious Vapours that are mix'd with it, and would otherwise be the Occasion of Diseases.

The Passions, therefore, of Terror and Pity, are purg'd by their own Operations, and the rest by their Means. For Tragedies not only give us a Representation of violent and licentious Love, of Anger, Ambition, Revenge, and the like; but the Audience, by the Impressions of Terror and Pity, are made to feel the Effects of them. Yet there seems to be a Sort of Fallacy in this. Are not some Passions rais'd to enormous Heights, and a wild Licentiousness, even by their being represented; especially that of Love, which seems to be the whole Business of our modern Tragedies. Have not such Ideas so strongly impress'd more Influence upon the Imagination, than the poetical Medicines can carry off, which are not applied till after the Fit is begun, only by describing the criminal Excess, or fatal Consequence of these Passions? As human Nature is but too prone to indulge the Extravagance of them, may it nor be justly said,

*Sponte sua properant, labor est inhibere volantes?*

The Coursers of themselves will run too fast,  
The Art must be to moderate their Haste.

*Addison.*

Are they not more inflam'd by the Representation, than corrected by the Remedy? To these, and all other Scruples of this Sort, this seems to be the proper Answer: That these Effects are, or are not to be expected, just according to the Nature and Manner of the Performance. As the Case, in Fact, is, an Audience is more likely to receive ill Impressions, than Instruction, from modern Tragedies: It is one Thing to shew the Passions by their *Symptoms*, (to use the Language of the

Physicians) *i.e.* by their *Appearances* and *Effects*; another to represent and *excite* them by all the Methods of *Insinuation* and *Allurement*. In this the later Tragedies, especially those of our own Country, are scandalously faulty: Not so the ancient, nor the *Grecian* Writers, who shame us *Christians*, by making the Glory of Chastity their own. But Tragedies that are form'd upon the Plan of Reason, and of Virtue, please the Mind without corrupting it: They furnish the Imagination with agreeable Images, without conveying any dangerous Poison under the Cover of them; they unbend the Mind, without debasing it to Softness, and Effeminacy: They describe and represent the Passions, as they are seated in all the tumultuous Disorder in the Soul; but this is so far from exciting us to the same Extravagance, that it is the sure Way to deter us from it. There is, I own, something pleasant in such Descriptions; but the Pleasure rises from no vicious Source, from no bad Principle; but from the Imitation, the Elegance, and the Art of the Poet, which strikes out such lively Images of human Nature; and, lastly, from the pleasing Anguish which Terror and Compassion raise within us: Which suggests to me the other Enquiry, that of accounting for the secret Causes of this Pleasure.

*Vossius* seems by no Means to give a full Solution of this Difficulty. "It may be a Question (says he<sup>[451]</sup>) how Tragedy can supply us with Delight, which is the End of all Poetry, since it represents Sorrow and Distress; and the Misfortunes, especially those of great Persons, can give no Satisfaction to a virtuous Mind. In Answer to this Difficulty, we may observe, that the Pleasure arises not from the Calamities of others, but from the Art of the Poet. How much does the Sight of real Dragons and Monsters fill us with Terror! but the Pictures of them give us Pleasure, because we are entertain'd with the Skill of the Painter. Besides, it is some Satisfaction, to be acquainted with such Misfortunes, because they may make us more cautious and prudent." What *Scaliger* has said, is much to the same Purpose. "But here (says he<sup>[452]</sup>) it may be objected, that Delight is included in the very Definition of Poetry: But, in Tragedy, how can the Anguish of Sorrow, Mourning and Distress, be entertaining? The Reason is, because Pleasure does not flow from Joy only, but from acquiring any Sort of Learning. Now the Spectator has the Benefit of making such an Acquisition; thus we behold Pictures with Pleasure, and are delighted with the most hideous Forms." But neither of these Answers come up to the Point: Undoubtedly great Part of the Pleasure that is given us, arises, as we before observ'd, from the Skill of the Poet, but from Nature a much greater, which *Vossius* and *Scaliger*<sup>[453]</sup> take no Notice of. Indeed, we may learn, and our Prudence may, and ought to be improv'd by these Representations: But the Mind, in the Pleasure it receives, has no Regard to these prudential Considerations. The Pleasure, therefore, of Pity, seems to arise, first, from hence, that if Things go well with us, another Man's Miseries, plac'd in View before us, make us more sensible of our own Happiness, and teach us to feel the Value of it: According to *Lucretius's* Observation, so often quoted:

[454] *Suave, mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,  
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;  
Non quia vexari quæquam est jucunda voluptas,  
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.*

'Tis pleasant, when the Seas are rough, to stand  
And view another's Danger safe at Land:  
Not 'cause he's troubled, but 'tis sweet to see  
Those Cares and Fears, from which ourselves are free.  
*Creech.*

If we are in Affliction, the Representation of the like Miseries makes our own more supportable. In both these Cases, the Pleasure arises from the Comparison, a Principle to which great Part of the Misery and Felicity of human Life is owing. It is commonly said, that *no Body is miserable but by Comparison*; and it may be as truly said, that *no Body is happy but by Comparison*. But perhaps it may be here observ'd, that this Solution does not reach the Difficulty: Pity has no Relation to ourselves, but to others; I should rather think it has to both: And how much soever we apply it to others, the Estimate is made from ourselves. Nor is this alone sufficient to explain fully the Point in Question: Another Cause of this Pleasure is, the Operation of the Mind upon itself, or (what the Schools call) its *reflex Act*. It contemplates that generous and humane Disposition, which inclines it towards others, and is conscious that this Commiseration does, in some Measure, arise from it. Perhaps it may be objected, that these two Principles are not consistent, since the one is an Evidence of Self-love, the other of a great and generous Mind: I shall take another Opportunity, as I have said, of shewing the strict Alliance there is between these two Principles; and that Self-love, taken in its full Latitude, ought to be allow'd as the Source of all our Passions, and the great Principle of human Actions<sup>[455]</sup>. As to Terror, the Delight it gives us in Tragedy, comes from hence; at first, (so rapid is the Current of our Ideas) we are affected with this Appearance of Distress, as if it was real; and then, by an agreeable Turn of Thought, we recollect, that this is all imaginary, and that there is no Danger. There are other Circumstances<sup>[456]</sup>, which I shall take no Notice of at present, nor stay to enlarge upon those Hints I have given, because I shall examine them more at large in the foremention'd Dissertation.

*Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, the only *Greek* Tragic Poets that we have now left, are well known.

If we compare the ancient and modern Writers of Tragedy, the latter are much superior in forming and unravelling the Plot. The former have shewn a good deal of this Contrivance in their Comedies, but in their Tragedies very little; the Moderns in both. The chief Design of the ancient

Tragic Poets was, to raise Terror, rather than Pity; of the Moderns, Compassion rather. The former excel in the Greatness and Magnificence of their Sentiments; the latter in the Variety, and passionate Parts of them. In one you have more Excellencies, in the other fewer Faults. Among the Moderns, none deserve any Comparison but the *French* Writers and our own: They, indeed, are elegant, ingenious, exact in observing Rules, and fond of imitating the Ancients; but want Spirit, Vigour, and poetic Fire:

*Non spirant tragicum satis, aut feliciter audent.*

The *English* are not to be charg'd with this Defect; nor does the Impetuosity of their Genius hinder their having a Regard to the Rules of Art. Mons. *Rapin* allows that they excel all the Nations in *Europe*, except his own: Whence we may be allow'd to conclude, that there is no great Reason for that Exception.

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## LECTURE XXIX, &c. Of EPIC, or HEROIC POETRY.

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We are, at length, by just Degrees, advanc'd to the last, as it is the best, and most perfect Kind of Poetry: And no Wonder we should finish our Dissertations here, where the utmost Bounds are set to human Compositions. What *Scaliger* said of *Buchanan*, tho' in a Strain of excessive Flattery, when applied to a *Man*; may be justly true of a *Thing*, of Epic Poetry in particular:

*Namque ad supremum perducta Poetica culmen  
In te stat; nec quo progrediatur, habet.*

Nature's great Efforts can no farther tend,  
Here fix'd her Pillars, all her Labours end.

For Mr. *Rapin* has very justly observ'd, An Epic, or Heroic Poem, properly so call'd, is, undoubtedly, the greatest Work which the Soul of Man is capable of performing. We have already observ'd, in our first Lecture, that all the other Branches of this divine Art are summ'd up, and included in this one: And in a Dissertation which I have written in another Language<sup>[457]</sup>, I have attempted to give a short Account of the Reason of it. What I have now to say upon this Subject, which is so much superior to all others, for the Excellence and Extent of it, is not so much as the Dignity of it deserves; because I have already enter'd into many Particulars, which belong to it, as the Nature of the Subject, I undertook to discuss, made it necessary; particularly, when I gave a View of Poetry in general, and the several particular Branches of it; when I treated of the *Poetic Style, the Beauty of its Thoughts, or the Elegance and Sublimity of them, of the Drama in general, and Tragedy*, a Species of it. For these Sorts of Poetry have many Things in common:

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—*Alterius sic  
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.*

And several Things, which have a Relation to this Subject, I have consider'd more at large elsewhere, in another<sup>[458]</sup> Language. What I mean, will, perhaps, be better understood in the Progress of this Discourse; for nothing, Gentlemen, can be more disagreeable to you and me, than a needless Repetition of the same Things, and saying what has been said a thousand Times over.

Mons. *Bossu*, a *French* Gentleman, and an excellent Critic, has given us a Discourse upon Epic Poetry, in his own Language, which is well known; a Treatise every Way worthy of the Applause which the Learned have bestow'd upon it. But it had been no Derogation to its Merit, if some Parts of it had been a little more concise: For the Author, how eminent soever for Penetration of Thought, Soundness of Judgment, and Variety of Erudition; seems to pursue his Observations too minutely, and gives us Distinctions without End. And too many Distinctions must obscure, rather than explain the Meaning of a Writer. An Epic, or Heroic Poem, may be thus defin'd: *It is a Poem express'd in Narration, form'd upon a Story partly real, and partly feign'd; representing, in a sublime and flowing Style, some glorious and fortunate Action, that is distinguish'd by a Variety of great Events; to form the Morals, and inflame the Mind with the Love of heroic Virtue.* This Definition is more regular in Form, and more comprehensive, as to the Matter of it, than Mons. *Bossu*'s: He, following the Method of his own Definition, divides his whole Work into six Books; the first treats of the Nature of an Epic Poem, which includes the Fable; the second, the Matter, or the Action of the Poem; the third, the Form, or the Narration; the fourth, the Moral, or the Characters of the Persons concern'd; the fifth, the Machinery, or the Appearance and Influence which the Gods have in it; the sixth, concludes with the Thoughts, and the Style.

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He pursues each of these Articles at large, and discusses them with a great deal of Wit, Learning, and Judgment; but the Method he has chosen, seems not so proper. The *Nature* of the

Thing defin'd contains all the Particulars of it, and therefore ought not to have been a distinct Branch of his Division, which should (as is usual) have been so form'd, as to have distinguish'd only three different Parts of the Definition, namely, the Matter, the Form, and the End: The *Matter* includes the Action and the Fable, under which are rang'd the Incidents, Episodes, Characters, Morals, and Machinery; the *Form* comprehends the Way, or Manner of the Narration, whether by the Poet himself, or by any of the Persons introduc'd, whose Discourses are related: To this Branch, likewise, belongs the moving of the Passions, the Descriptions, Discourses, Sentiments, Thoughts, Style, and Versification; and beside these, the Similes, Tropes, Figures, and, in short, all the Ornaments and Decorations of the Poem. The *End* is to improve our Morals, and increase our Virtue, which is of itself so plain and obvious, that there is no Occasion to say much about it.

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I thought it requisite just *to mention* the several Parts of Epic Poetry, tho' I do not design to *enlarge* upon all of them: Because, in the Course of these Lectures, I have already touch'd upon several of them, as they fell in with Arguments of the same Kind; many of them have been particularly consider'd, *viz.* the Action, and the Fable, (for these are almost the very same, both in Epic and Dramatic Poetry) the Morals, Characters, the different Kinds of Narration, the Passions, Descriptions, Sentiments, the Sublimity of Style and Thought, the Versification, Comparisons, Tropes, Figures, and all the other Embellishments of Poetry: What remains, therefore, is only to offer some scatter'd Observations upon those Heads, which relate more especially to Epic Poetry, with such Remarks, as have not yet been taken Notice of. And, after all, this will look more like the Gleanings, than the Harvest. When I have done this, I propose to translate one Chapter of *Bossu* where he explains the Nature and Origine of Epic Poetry. It is a short one, but remarkable for its Elegance and Perspicuity. And, lastly, I shall add some Reflections upon the most celebrated Writers of Epic Poetry, both ancient and modern.

*Aristotle*, in his Book of Poetry, the only one that is now left, has allotted only two Chapters for the Consideration of Epic separately; tho' he often mentions it, in shewing the Relation it bears to Tragedy: The Reason of which is very evident, because most of what he said of the one, might be applied to the other; and therefore, in those two Chapters, he has done very little more than adjust the Rules of the Drama to Epic Poetry, observing, all along, that Distinction between these two Sons of Poetry, which the Nature of them required; and interspersing, now and then, the Praises of *Homer*. I might (if you would excuse the Comparison) say the same Thing of these Dissertations, which is one Reason why I have not treated this Subject more at large.

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There is the same Difference between the Fable and the Action, both in Epic and Tragic Poetry, namely, the Action is an Achievement of some eminent Person, which produc'd some great and memorable Event. The Fable is the Complication of all those Incidents, Episodes, and other Circumstances, which promote the Action, and carry it to its proper Period, or else which serve to illustrate, or to embellish and adorn it. Episodes are either absolutely necessary, or very requisite: All Episodes are not Incidents<sup>[459]</sup>, tho' all Incidents are Episodes; because some Incidents are not *adventitious* to the Action, (which, as the Etymology of the Word implies, is essential to an Episode) but make up the very Form and Series of it: Or (to use a more harsh and inelegant Expression) they are not *collateral*, but *direct* Parts of it; these, and many other Particulars of this Sort, for the Reason so often mention'd, will not be enlarg'd upon at present.

The Action, in Epic Poetry, must, of Necessity, be *one*, as well as in Tragedy; tho' it may, and ought to be more comprehensive. As to the Place of Action, there is no confining it to any certain Bounds; Epic has certainly a much larger Range than Tragedy; but the more it keeps within Compass, the more perfect and entire the Action seems to be. *Aristotle* expressly says, that as to Time, there is no fixing it to any determin'd Period. *Homer's Iliad* does not contain above the Space of forty-seven Days<sup>[460]</sup>; the *Odyssey* (as *Bossu*<sup>[461]</sup>, and, after him, *Dacier*, are of Opinion) takes up eight Years, and six Months; the *Æneid* almost seven Years. But, in this Point, these great Critics seem not to have made so just a Determination; for not every Thing that is related by the Poet, or the Persons he has introduc'd, makes, strictly speaking, a Part of the Action, but that, only, which is perform'd by the Hero, and his Associates, from that Place, where you enter upon the Poem, to the Conclusion of it. For Instance; the Action of the *Æneid*, in a strict and proper Sense, does not begin at the building of the wooden Horse:

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—*Fracti bello, fatisque repulsi.*      Æn. II. 13.

But from the Time that *Æneas* set Sail from one of the Ports of *Sicily*:

*Vix è conspectu Siculæ telluris in altum.*      I. 38.

And taking the Question in this View, Mons. *Segrais*, in the Preface to his admirable *French* Translation of the *Æneid*, has demonstrated, that the Action of that divine Poem falls within the Compass of one Year. And we may observe almost the same Thing of *Homer's Odyssey*.

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I think *Dacier* has mistaken the Meaning of *Aristotle* in another Place, tho' there, also, he follows *Bossu*; and that is, with Regard to the Actions or Adventures of the Persons. Epic (says that Philosopher) is *μῦθῳ σπουδαίῳ*, which *Dacier* translates thus; *the Imitation of the Actions of illustrious Persons*, not of illustrious Actions. And perhaps that is not amiss: But I cannot be of his Opinion, when he declares, that if the Persons are illustrious, it is of no great Moment, whether the Actions are so, or not. He very justly affirms, that the most glorious Actions of private Men are not a proper Subject for an Heroic Poem; but then the other Point must be given against him, that it is necessary, that *not the Person only, but the Action, should be illustrious*. All the Actions, even of *Alexander* or *Cæsar*, *Achilles* or *Æneas*, are surely not proper

for Epic. I agree, therefore, that *Aristotle* must be understood to mean the Actions of Heroes; but then he would also imply, the Actions of Heroes, as Heroes. And, no doubt, *Horace* was of the same Opinion, (tho' *Dacier* brings him in as an Evidence on his Side) when he says,

[462] *Res gestæ regumque, ducumque.*

*i.e.* considering them as Kings and Generals; for the Words immediately following, which *Dacier* takes no Notice of, are,

—& *tristia bella.*

What *Bossu* further advances<sup>[463]</sup> in Support of his Opinion, is of no great Moment, *viz.* that the little Enmities in the *Iliad*, and in the *Odyssey* the Return of an Exile into his Country, are Actions equally suitable to private Men and Heroes. I confess, (and so does he) that *Æneas's* restoring his Country, as it were, and laying the Foundation of a new Kingdom; are much more heroic: But even those above-mention'd, as they are set off by *Homer*, with their heroic Circumstances, could not but have been great, tho' they had been done by private Men. In the *Iliad*, indeed, and more especially in the *Odyssey*, some Things are related below the Majesty of Epic; as for Instance, what the Poet tells us of *Ulysses's* Herdsman and Swineherd; which *Ovid* has thought fit to copy in *Penelope's* Epistle to that Chief:

[464] *Hoc faciunt custosque boum, longævaque nutrix,  
Tertius immundæ cura fidelis haræ.*

Thus the old Nurse, the Hind, and Hogherd pray,  
True Servants all, and faithful in their Way.  
*Rhymer.*

These, I own, are not represented as the Actions of the Hero himself; but still are unworthy to be mention'd in an Heroic Poem. The Simplicity of ancient Times is alledg'd, in Excuse for Things of this Nature; and, for my Part, I am willing to admit it: But, certainly, let the Men live in what Age you please, they stood in Need of some Excuse. *Virgil* has nothing of this Kind; who has a much better Right than *Homer* to that Encomium of *Horace*<sup>[465]</sup>,

—& *Qui nil molitur inepte.*

Throughout the *Æneid* there is nothing mean, nothing dishonourable, nothing that is not truly heroic. As to the forming of a Hero, he is not to be represented adorn'd with every Virtue, as a Character entirely perfect, because there is no such Thing in Nature; but he may advance as near as possible to that Perfection. *Ulysses* and *Æneas*, indeed, are at no great Distance from it; but what Sort of a Hero is *Achilles*!

[466] *Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,  
Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.*

Impatient, rash, inexorable, proud,  
Scorning all Judges, and all Laws, but Arms.  
*Roscommon.*

These are heroic Virtues, no doubt! an admirable Image of a Demi-god! But more of this in another Place.

There are two Things which chiefly distinguish Epic from Tragedy, the *Manner of the Representation*, and the *Event*, or *Catastrophe*. As to the former, it is certain, that Tragedy is form'd upon Action, and Epic upon Narration. For what *Aristotle* says of Epic,<sup>[467]</sup> ὅτι δει τοὺς μυθoὺς καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαῖς συνιστάναι δραματικούς, *that the Fable, as in Tragedy, ought to be dramatical*, it is plain, from the very Words, must be understood of the *Fable*, which ought to be active, *i.e.* lively, full of Motion, and growing warmer, as it comes nearer the Conclusion; and has no Relation to the *Form*, or *Manner of representing*, or *imitating*, which, as every Body knows, in Heroic Poetry is, and always was, narrative, and not dramatic.

They differ, also, in the Event, or Conclusion. In Tragedy, the Conclusion is *generally* unfortunate, but *never* so in Epic; the Reasons of which Rule are, *First*, The Examples of *Homer*, and *Virgil*, who are, and ought to be our Guides, and Masters; even *Achilles*, the Hero of the Poem as he is, tho' very undeservedly, comes off with Success; and much more should *Ulysses* and *Æneas*. In this Particular these Writers have been universally follow'd by all, who would be thought Epic Writers; for which Reason, *Statius* (as *Bossu* has observ'd) rather chose to break the Unity of the Action, than make his *Thebais* end unfortunately, after the miserable Fratricide of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*. And not only the Authority of these Poets, but the very Reason of the Thing, supplies us with Arguments for this Rule. *First*, Altho' in Tragedy (where the Action is much shorter, more simple, and finish'd, as it were, at a Heat) an unfortunate Conclusion may be so far from displeasing, that it may be agreeable to the Audience; yet in Epic, after such a Series and Variety of Adventures, after sustaining so many, and so great Difficulties, the Reader must be out of Humour with the Poet, unless the whole should conclude happily at last. *2dly*, The chief End of Tragedy is, to purge the Passions, especially those of Terror and Pity, by a short and brisk Emotion; but the Design of Epic Poetry is, by more slow and leisurely Operations, to remove bad

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Habits, and restore good ones; to subdue Vice, and recommend Virtue; which would be done with a very ill Grace, if the Hero of the Poem, or the Prince endu'd with heroic Virtue, (for such he either is, or ought to be) should come to a deplorable End. *3dly*, An Epic Poem, properly so call'd, is, and always must be written in Honour of the Country, or the Religion of the Author; between which, and the Hero, there is a near Relation; and therefore he ought to come off in Triumph at last. *Bossu* inclines to this Opinion, nay, *expressly* determines, that this is the *truer* Conduct. I have ventur'd to advance a Step further, being of Opinion, for the Reasons now alledg'd, it is not only proper, but essential to Heroic Poetry; and, in Consequence of that Opinion, have made a happy Conclusion Part of the Definition. The two Differences, therefore, that we spoke of, between Tragedy and Epic, are (as the Schools term it) *specific* Differences, the others are only *accidental*; those are Differences in *Nature*, these only in *Degree*, *Extent*, or *Greatness*.

The Moderns seem to mistake that Part of Epic and Tragedy which contains the τὸ θαυμασόν, or the *wonderful*, confounding the *wonderful* with the *improbable*, and using those two Words promiscuously. If it was really so, the τὸ θαυμασόν would always be faulty; for that is always faulty, which is improbable. These poetical Prodigies would be improbable, if they were represented to be perform'd by any human Power: But the Case is quite different. The Divine Power, and the Agency of the Gods, make all this agreeable to Reason. Thus, in *Homer*, that the Horses should speak; and, in *Virgil*, that the Myrtle Roots should drop Blood, is wonderful, but not improbable: For our most ingenious Translator of *Homer* seems to be mistaken, when he asserts, that these were perform'd without the Interposal of the Gods. As to the latter, *Virgil*<sup>[468]</sup> expressly declares it to be a Prodigy:

Thirtieth  
Lecture.

*Horrendum, & dictu video mirabile monstrum.*

And a little after,

[469] — *Nymphas venerabat agrestes,  
Gradivumque Patrem, Geticis qui præsidet arvis,  
Rite secundarent visus, omenque levarent.*

I implore the rural Nymphs,  
And *Mars*, who o'er the *Getic* Field presides,  
The Omen to avert, and grant Success.

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But plainer still, in what follows:

[470] *Monstra deum refero.*

As to *Homer*, he, in express Terms, asserts, that *Juno* made the Horse speak<sup>[471]</sup>:

Αυθεντα δο εθηκε θεα λευκωλεν Ἴηρη.

Then, strange to tell, (so *Juno* will'd) he broke  
Eternal Silence, and portentous spoke.

*Pope.*

In such Cases as these, whatsoever is possible, is probable: If you determine otherwise, Poetry is depriv'd of one of its best Ornaments, its greatest Fund of Surprize. And the same Observation extends to some Parts of the wonderful, which are not accounted for by a divine Power: As in the Instance of *Polyphemus*, and the other *Cyclops*, in *Homer* and *Virgil*. That there were really Giants, is an Opinion, which not only the Ancients believ'd, but the Scriptures have confirm'd: But whether *such* Giants were ever in Being, as are there describ'd, is a Point of no Moment. Therefore *Virgil's* Description of *Polyphemus* is very injudiciously censur'd by some Critics:

[472] — *Graditurque per æquor  
Jam medium, nec dum fluctus latera ardua tinxit.*

Then stalk'd along  
Thro' the mid Ocean; nor did yet the Waves  
Tinge his tall Sides.

And afterwards:

[473] *Clamorem immensum tollit; quo pontus, & omnes.  
Intramuere undæ, penitusque exterrita tellus  
Italia, curvisque immugiit Ætna cavernis.*

He rais'd a hideous Yell; at which the Sea  
Trembled, and all its Waves: *Italia* quak'd;  
And *Ætna* bellow'd thro' its winding Caves.

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This is so far from being improbable, or carrying the Hyperbole too far, that nothing can be more elegant and sublime; especially if we consider the Nature of Fear, which always enlarges what is

great, and raises a Train of Horrors upon one another. It is, indeed, very hyperbolic; but the Nature of the Thing describ'd, not only excuses, but demands that Boldness. I own *Homer* has a few Examples of the improbable; and there is one Instance of this Kind in *Virgil*; I mean where *Camilla* is describ'd in those most elegant Verses,

[474] *Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret  
Gramina, nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas;  
Aut mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumentis  
Ferret iter, celeres neque tingeret æquore plantas.*

She o'er the Tops of untouch'd Corn wou'd fly,  
Skimming along, nor hurt the tender Grain;  
Or run, supported on a swelling Wave,  
Thro' the mid Sea, nor tinge her nimble Feet.

The Lines are exceeding beautiful, and therefore the more is the Pity that the Thing is impossible.

In my Definition of Epic Poetry, I inserted this Clause, *that it must be form'd upon a Story partly real, and partly fictitious*: For both these are equally necessary. In Tragedy, which is so much shorter, the Performance may not only be excusable, but commendable, tho' the whole Fable should be fictitious: But in a long Work, such as an Heroic Poem is, the Reader will be tir'd, unless he has the Pleasure of finding some Truth interwoven with the Fable. Besides, an Heroic Poet writes, or ought to write after the Examples of *Homer* and *Virgil*, in Honour of the Country he belongs to, or the Religion he professes; and then it must be necessary that he should have some Regard to popular Opinions, or true History. This is requisite, at least to the well-being, if not the very being of an Heroic Poem.

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Little need be said about the Machinery, which, among the ancient Heathens, was the Agency of their false Gods, and of Angels and Demons among us *Christians*; its Beauty and Magnificence being well known. The Dignity of an Heroic Poem would scarce be kept up without it, especially since the τὸ θαυμαστόν or the Marvellous, depends upon it. I shall say no more, but refer the Reader to the fifth Chapter of *Bossu*.

The Versification of Heroic Poetry is what no Body is a Stranger to, which, among the *Greeks* and *Romans* consisted of Hexameters. This Kind of Verse is so peculiar to Epic, that when it is us'd upon other Occasions, it is commonly call'd Heroic Verse. It is needless to observe how numerous, and sublime, and beautiful, in all Respects, it is, and how much it has tended to ennoble those Languages: Our *English* Verse comes nearest to it, both in Gravity and Majesty, but at how great Distance? which yet, is, at least, both in Strength and Energy, far superior to the *French* and *Italian*.

I have made these few scatter'd Reflections upon Heroic Poetry, and propose to add no more, at present, for a Reason I have hinted before. As to the Nature and Origin of it, I shall only offer the following clear and succinct Account from the second Chapter of the first Book of the learned *Bossu*.

"The most considerable Difference my Subject presents me with, between the Style of the Ancients and Moderns, is, that our Way of Speaking is plain, proper, and without Circumlocution; whereas theirs was full of Mysteries and Allegories: The Truth was generally conceal'd under those ingenious Inventions, which, for their Excellence, are call'd *Fables*, or *Sayings*; as if there was as much Difference between those fabulous Discourses of the Wife, and the ordinary Language of the Vulgar, as there is between the Language proper to Men, and the Sounds which Beasts use, to express their Passions and Sensations.

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"The first Use of Fables was to speak of the divine Nature, according to the Notions they had of it. This sublime Subject caused the first Poets to be styl'd *Divines*, and Poetry *the Language of the Gods*. They divided the divine Attributes, as it were, into so many Persons, because the Weakness of the Human Mind could not well conceive or explain so much Power and Action in a Simplicity so great and indivisible, as that of God is. And perhaps they were jealous of the Advantages they receiv'd from such excellent and refin'd Learning, which they thought the vulgar Part of Mankind were not worthy of.

"They could not tell us of the Operations of this Almighty Cause, without speaking, at the same Time, of its Effects: So to *Divinity* they added *Physiology*, and treated of it in the same Manner, without quitting the Umbrages of their allegorical Expressions.

"But *Man* being the chief, and most noble of all the Effects which God produc'd, and nothing being so proper, or so useful to *Poets*, as this Subject, they added it to the former, and treated of *Morality* in the same Way that they did of *Divinity* and *Physicks*. And from *Morality* thus discours'd of, Art has form'd that Kind of *Poem* and *Fable* which we call *Epic*.

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"The Poets did the same Thing in *Morality*, which the *Divines* did in *Theology*. That infinite Variety in the divine Actions and Operations, so much above our Understanding, forc'd them, as it were, upon dividing the single Idea of the one, and uncompounded divine Essence, into several Persons, under the Names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Neptune*, and the rest: On the contrary, the Nature of *Moral Philosophy* being such as never lays down Rules for any particular Thing, has oblig'd the *Epic Poets* to unite in one single idea, in one and the same Person, and into one Action, which appear'd extraordinary, all that look'd like it in different Persons, and in different Actions, which might be thus contain'd as so many *Species* under their *Genus*.

"Therefore, when *Aristotle* says<sup>[475]</sup>, φιλοσοφωτερον, και σπουδαιοτερον ποιησις ιστοριας ισιν, *That Poetry is more philosophical, and more serious, than History*, he says this, not so much to magnify the Excellence of this Art, as to explain the Nature of it. *Poetry*, says he, *teaches Morality, not by a bare Recital, as an Historian, who tells us what Alcibiades did, or suffer'd*, (which is *Aristotle's* own Instance;) *but by proposing all that a Person, let the Poet call him by what Name he pleases, ought either necessarily, or most probably to have said, or done, upon such an Occasion*. It is in this Manner, that it lays down either the unhappy Consequences of ill-judg'd Designs, and wicked Actions; or else the Rewards of good Actions, and the Satisfaction one receives from a Design form'd by Virtue, and conducted by Prudence. Thus in *Epic*, according to *Aristotle*, let the Names be what they will, yet the *Persons* and the *Actions* are feign'd, *allegorical*, and *universal*, not *historical* and *particular*.<sup>[476]</sup> Ἡ μὲν Ποιησις μάλλον τακαθολου ἢ δ' ιστορια τα καου ἑκαστον; λεγει, i.e. *Poetry represents Things rather in general, but History in particular*. *Horace* is likewise of the same Mind, who is not satisfy'd with saying, that Poets teach *Morality* full as well as *Philosophers*; but prefers *Homer* to all of them:

[477] *Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,  
Plenius, ac melius Chrysippo, & Crantore dicit.*

Who has what's base, what's decent, just and good,  
Clearer than *Crantor*, or *Chrysippus* show'd.  
*Creech.*

"The Reason why *Poets* excel *Philosophers* in this Respect is, that every Sort of *Poem* is an *Imitation*. Now *Imitation* is extremely natural, and pleases every Body; and therefore nothing is more likely to engage the Passions, and the Attention, of an Audience. Besides, *Imitation* is Instruction by Examples, and Examples are the most proper Methods of Persuasion; because they prove that such or such a Thing is feasible. In short, *Imitation* is so much the Essence of Poetry, that the Art it self, as *Aristotle* informs us, owes its very Original to it. And *Horace* recommends it very particularly to the Poet, which he is forming:

[478] *Respicere exemplar vitæ, morumque, jubebo  
Doctum imitatore, & veras hinc ducere voces.*

Those are the likeliest Copies, which are drawn  
By th' Original of Human Life.  
*Roscommon.*

"But tho' the *Poets* become *moral Philosophers*, they do not cease to be *Divines*; on the contrary, the *Morality* they treat of, does indispensably oblige them to have a Vein of Theology run thro' all their Works: Because the Knowledge, the Fear, and the Love of God, in a Word, Piety and Religion are the chief, and most solid Foundations or the other Virtues, and of all *Morality*.

The *Presence of the Deity*, and the Superintendence which so august a Cause has over the Action, obliges the *Poet* to represent this *Action* as great, important, and manag'd by *Kings* and *Princes*. Hence *Horace*:

[479] *Res gestæ regumque, ducumque.*

To write of great Commanders, and of Kings.  
*Roscommon.*

Upon the same Account he is oblig'd to think and speak in an elevated Way, above the Vulgar, and in a Style that may, in some Measure, keep up the Character of the divine Persons he introduces. To this End serves the poetical and figurative Expression, and the Majesty of *Heroic Verse*. As *Horace* again:

[480] —*Cui mens diviniior atque os  
Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.*

No, he alone can claim that Name, that writes  
With Fancy high, and bold and daring Flights.  
*Creech.*

"But all this being divine and marvellous, may quite ruin all *Probability*, without which an Action is not likely to persuade. Therefore the Poet should take special Care, as to this Point, since his chief Business is to instruct Men, and *form them to Virtue*.

"To all this the *Poets* are oblig'd, by the very Nature of these Things, which they propose for the Subjects of their Poems and Instructions. The Manner of teaching them usefully and methodically, has likewise oblig'd them to add several other Rules.

"*Epic Poetry* is directed to the *Morals* and the *Habits*, rather than the *Passions*. These rise on a sudden, and their Heat is soon over; but the *Habits* are more calm, and come on, and go off more leisurely: Therefore the *Epic Action* cannot be contain'd in one single Day, as the *Dramatic*. It must have a longer, and more just Space allow'd it, than the Action of *Tragedy*, which is directed to the *Passions*.



"This Distinction makes *Tragedy* and *Epic* differ very much: The Violence of *Tragedy* requires a great deal more lively and brisk Representation than a bare *Recital*. It is all Action, the Poet never speaks, as he does in *Epic*, where there are no Actors.

"But if, in this Respect, *Epic* is inferior to *Tragedy*, yet it is superior both to *Philosophy* and *History*; because it is a great deal more active than bare *Philosophy*, and the Recitals of *History*: And tho' it does not, like *Tragedy*, represent the Action to the Eyes of the Spectators, yet it ought, more frequently than *History*, to break off the Narration, by intermixing the Speeches of the Persons represented. This *Aristotle* directs, when he says, that *the Narration of Epic ought to be dramatic, i.e. active.*" [I differ from the learned Author in the Meaning of this Passage, and agree with *Dacier*, as I said before: But it is a Matter of no great Moment. The Speeches of the Persons may be included in this Rule of *Aristotle's*; but it seems more applicable to the *Fable*, which is the Matter of the Poem, than to the *Form*, which is the Way of representing it. But *Bossu* adds,]

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"*Epic* has, likewise, its *Passions*, which give it no small Advantage over *Philosophy* and *History*; but in this it is still inferior to *Tragedy*: For tho' it has a Mixture of all the *Passions*, yet *Joy* and *Admiration* are the most essential to it. These, indeed, contribute most towards the making us wise Men: *Admiration* and *Curiosity* are the Cause of *Sciences*; and nothing engages the Mind so forcibly as *Pleasure*; so that these two *Passions* must never be wanting in a Work invented with a View to teach us what we are indispensably oblig'd to know.

"To conclude: Because Precepts ought to be concise, that they may be more easily understood, and more strongly retain'd in the Memory; and because nothing can be more effectual to this Purpose than the proposing one single Idea, and collecting all Things so well together, that they may be present to the Mind at once; the *Poets* have reduc'd all to one single Action, under one and the same Design, and in a Body whose Members and Parts should be homogeneous. Hence arise two of *Horace's* Rules: The one,

[481] *Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta  
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.*

Let all your Precepts be succinct and clear,  
That ready Wits may comprehend them soon.  
*Roscom.*

the other,

[482] *Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat, & unum."*

Be what you will, so you be still the same.  
*Roscom.*

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This is *Bossu's* Account of the Origin and Nature of Epic Poetry.

Under this Head there is very little Room to make any Comparison between the Ancients and the Moderns; for these latter Ages have scarce produc'd any Thing that deserves the Name of an Epic Poem. We know our Countryman, Mr. *Dryden's* Judgment, about a Poem of *Chaucer's*, truly beautiful, indeed, and worthy of Praise; namely, that it was not only equal, but even superior to the *Iliad* and *Æneid*: But we know, likewise, that his Opinion was not always the most accurate, nor form'd upon the severest Rules of Criticism. What was in Hand, was generally most in Esteem; if it was uppermost in his Thoughts, it was so in his Judgment too. I am sure, the Opinion is too monstrous to deserve a serious Refutation. But even among the Ancients themselves, if you except *Homer* and *Virgil*, you will scarce find one that is truly an Epic Poet. The heroic Laurels are due to them only; nor has the World produc'd *two more such Heroes*, no, nor one. How far a Comparison is to be made between this immortal Pair, and what, in my Opinion, is to be determin'd, *with Regard to their different Merits*, I have declar'd at large in another Place<sup>[483]</sup>, and given some Reasons for my Sentiments; namely, that *Virgil* is much indebted to *Homer*; but that *Homer's* Works are inferior to *Virgil's*.

*Thirty-first  
Lecture.*

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The Poems of *Lucan* and *Silius Italicus*, are rather historical, than heroic; their Actions are *real*, not *fictitious*; *particular*, not *universal*: But partake, in some Measure, of the Nature of Epic; as they are Poems of a considerable Length, express'd in Narration, and written in Heroic Verse; each of them have their Heroes; the Thoughts and Language are sublime, or they would have us think so, and there are some Degrees of Fiction interwoven with Truth. They are reducible, therefore, to this Class, and their Authors have a Right to be mention'd in it. *Lucan*, however liable to Censure in some Things, is, upon the whole, far from being a mean Writer, and deserves a very considerable Character. He is sometimes harsh, and over-stoical; sometimes cold, and too nearly allied to Prose; and, again, on the other Hand, he is swelling, bombast, and affects a Way of Expression ridiculously lofty; and yet, in many Things, very elegant and sublime, and full of an heroic Spirit. As to *Silius Italicus*, *Pliny*, in one of his Epistles<sup>[484]</sup>, has given the following Character: *Scribebat carmina majore cura, quam ingenio. Virgilii natalem, religiosius quam suum, celebrabat; Neapoli maxime, ubi monumentum ejus adire, ut templum, solebat* "He wrote Verses with more Pains, than Genius; he observ'd *Virgil's* Birth-Day more religiously than his own, especially at *Naples*, where he us'd to frequent his Monument as if it had been a Temple."

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And since he lov'd *Virgil* so passionately, that he almost ador'd him, it is strange he should not have come nearer to his Style. The same may be said of *Lucan*. How much unlike to *Virgil*'s! It is, also, as evident, that *Statius* rather admir'd *Virgil* than imitated him. He therefore says very justly,

[485] —*Nec tu divinam Æneida tenta.*

But what follows is not so well:

*Sed longe sequere, & vestigia semper adora.*

For this, with an Appearance of Modesty, insinuates, that he follow'd *Virgil*: But at how great a Distance! with what unequal Steps! How unlike is his Way of Writing, and Thinking! But even *Statius* is not without his Beauties, tho' his Poem is not properly Epic; for the Heroes of his *Thebais* are too much upon a Level, no one is superior to the rest; and, besides, there are two Actions, one unfortunate; and the other happy. *Tasso* is, indeed, truly heroic, and has justly attain'd no small Esteem. But, to pass by other Particulars, he is too full of Magic, Enchantments, Machinery, and aerial Personages. Of the same Fault our Countryman *Spencer* is still more remarkably guilty, who treads almost perpetually upon enchanted Ground, and the greatest Part of whose Characters are Fairies, Ghosts, Magicians and Giants. He is all over Allegory, pursues not one Action but several, and such as have so little Relation to each other, that it is difficult to see any Connection. But, in other Respects, this most ingenious Writer was born a Poet, if any one ever was. If we consider his Versification, and especially his Copiousness of Invention, he is justly celebrated, among the Poets of the first Class.

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If *Milton* did not write an Heroic Poem, properly so call'd, yet he certainly wrote an excellent one, such as deserves, or rather is above all Commendation. He is no slavish Imitator of *Homer* and *Virgil*, he opens a Way entirely new, and entirely his own: In Fruitfulness of Invention, Sublimity of Genius, in the Weight and Lustre of his Thoughts and Words, and, lastly, in the Perfection of his Judgment, he is, perhaps, equal to either of them, tho' he wrote in a Language much inferior to both theirs, especially *Homer*'s; and is particularly much less correct than *Virgil*. Let other Moderns imitate *Milton*, by imitating *Homer* and *Virgil* less: Let them improve and form themselves, as much as possible, by their Genius, their Judgment, and their Way of Writing and Thinking: To do this, is to imitate; but to transcribe their Poems, or, at least, a great Part of them, into their own, is not Copying, but Stealing.

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[486] *Nec circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem  
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus  
Interpres.*

Nor think it essential to an Heroic Poem, to describe the Anger of some great General, the Return of a King into his own Country, a Colony transplanted from one Region to another, the Description of *Æolia*, and the Winds, the solemn Celebration of Funeral Games, a Descent into Hell, or a Hero furnish'd with celestial Armour: But rather avoid these, and many other Subjects, which are treated of by *Homer* and *Virgil*; and for that very Reason, because they are so. Whoever attempts an Heroic Poem, must form a new Plan, and guard against the Stroke of *Horace*'s Satire:

[487] *O imitatores, servum pecus.*

Let him strike out with that noble and daring Spirit of *Lucretius*;

[488] *Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante  
Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fontes,  
Atque haurire; juvatque novos decerpere flores,  
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,  
Unde prius nulli velarunt tempora Musæ.*

I feel, I rising feel poetic Heats,  
And now inspir'd, trace o'er the Muses Seats,  
Untrodden yet: 'Tis sweet to visit first  
Untouch'd and Virgin Streams, and quench my Thirst.  
I joy to crop fresh Flow'rs, and get a Crown,  
For new and rare Inventions of my own.  
So noble, great, and gen'rous, the Design, }  
That none of all the mighty tuneful Nine }  
E'er grac'd a Head with Laurels like to mine. }  
*Creech.*

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Besides the Writers I have mention'd, there are many others of an heroical Genius, tho' they never wrote an Heroic Poem. Among the *Latius*, *Claudian*, a Writer of the middle Age, is the most eminent; upon whose Beauties and Defects I have already made a few Observations: And among those of our own Country, the late Mr. *Dryden*; besides others now alive, who, for that Reason, cannot so well be mention'd without Offence.

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## CONCLUSION.

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I have now gone through the several Particulars I propos'd to treat of in the Course of these Lectures: What I have too lightly touch'd upon, or entirely omitted, I leave to my Successors to discuss more fully, who will supply my Defects, and correct my Errors. Nothing now remains, but to return to you, Gentlemen, my heartiest Thanks, and to testify my sincerest Wishes for your Prosperity. I should quit this Office with more Regret, did I not consider, that, at any Time, to have receiv'd Marks of your Favour, will for ever remain to me those of Honour. Nothing is in my Power to return for them, but my most ardent Prayers for the Welfare of this University, that as it daily receives fresh Ornaments in Buildings, so it may make new Acquisitions (if there is Room for any) in Learning and Virtue, and in its Reputation for both; and that you may be as secure from the Attempts, as you are above the Reproaches of your Enemies. And, surely, unless we are much deceiv'd in our Hopes, and our Wishes bias us with too fond Credulity, we may esteem as fresh Omens of our Happiness, those numerous Towers that rise sacred to the Muses, even in the most difficult Times; insomuch, that if we retire from the University but a few Months, we are almost Strangers to it upon our Return, and verify the old Saying, tho' from a very different Reason, *Oxonium quærimus in Oxonio*, we seek for *Oxford* within her own Walls. It is amazing, then, that Men, who boast of the greatest Zeal for their Country, should hate and despise that which is the distinguishing Ornament of it. It would be blind Partiality in us, if, in other Respects, we pretended to excel the whole Earth. Brave, as we are, yet so are the *French*, so the *Germans*. Are we powerful by Sea, and rich in Commerce? the *Dutch* are also: And it would be the Height of Arrogance, to claim to ourselves the Laurels, in Point of Learning and Ingenuity. But that the *English* Universities are not to be parallel'd, is the Confession and Admiration of all the World: Even one of them, the less of the Two, I need not say equals, but exceeds all Foreign Ones together. This Glory is our peculiar Property, which yet some endeavour to extinguish, who would be thought strenuous Defenders of their Country. If you ask me the Reason for it, I know of none but what the old Saying in *Terence* supplies me with, *Mala mens, malus animus*, Bad Principles produce bad Designs. To such I wish true Repentance. As to myself, Words are too weak to express the Sentiments of my Heart for that Candour and Affection with which you have honour'd me with your Attendance, have pardon'd my Mistakes, and accepted my weak Endeavours. May the *Oxford* Muses flourish, for ever flourish, more and more; and may you, the Encouragers and Promoters of them, go on to promote them, and, by your Increase in Poetry, and all other Arts and Sciences, in Virtue and Learning, afford to Poets perpetual Subjects of Praise.

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## *FINIS.*

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### *Addenda & Corrigenda.*

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**Page 15. I. 3.** *Vossius's* Definition is short as it makes the Essence of Poetry consist solely in Imitation. *Add this Note*, The Author of *Observations on Poetry occasioned by the late Poem on Leonidas*, p. 71. finds the same Fault with *Aristotle*; who "by this, says he, excludes all descriptive Poetry; and accordingly he (*Aristotle*) directs the epic poet to introduce his characters, and write in dialogue, as much as possible, for this reason, that when the poet speaks himself, he is not an imitator. *Plato* has more justly distinguish'd, that some kinds of Poetry consist wholly in imitation, as tragedy and comedy; some in narration only, where the poet speaks in his own person, as odes; whereas some, as the epic, contain a mixture of both." For my Part, I cannot think it any great Violence put upon Words to allow that *Description* or *Narration* is *Imitation*. It is certain *Aristotle* uses the Word *Imitation* in this Sense, c. 3. και ναρ υ τοις αυ τοις και αιτα μιμε αθ αι ισιν, οτι μεν απαγγελιο, η ετιρον τε γιγιμενοις, *A Poet may imitate the same Things either by Narration, or by assuming the Character of some other Person*: And c. 22, 23. he distinguishes περι της οιτε ορθειν μιμησιως, and περι της δραγεαστικης, between *Dramatic Imitation*, and *Narrative*: and c. 2. & 4. he mentions the *Dithyrambics* and *Nomi*, Hymns in Honour of *Bacchus* and *Apollo*, and other Odes, as Instances of Poetic Imitation. Now, I need not observe, that if in these Hymns and Odes, Actions, as *Dacier* contends, were *imitated* by Description or Narration, other Things may likewise. Nay *Plato* himself has omitted *descriptive* Poetry, as well as *Aristotle* if it is not included under *narrative*.

But still, if it is, the ingenious Author will not allow it to be *Imitation*, upon the Authority of *Plato*. Now as to *Plato*, *Dan. Heinsius* long since observed, that tho', with *Dr. Pemberton*, he sometimes speaks of *Imitation* as a *Species* of Poetry, yet at other times he agrees with *Aristotle*,

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in making it the *Genus*. In short, these two Philosophers are agreed, that All Poetry is Imitation; but Dramatic Imitation, or that which is supported by Dialogue, is more peculiarly so.

Next let us see if Dr. *Pemberton's* own Account of Poetry will not lead us to think *Description* to be *Imitation*. He observes, **p. 75.** *That it is the peculiar Office of the Poet, in Opposition to the Prose-writer, to exhibit continually sensible IMAGES of things.* Now *Images* are surely *Likenesses* or *Imitations*; and whether these are the genuine Images of the Poet's Subject, or adventitious ones fetch'd in to illustrate it, still 'tis all Imagery: *Imitation* is his distinguishing Character. Again, **p. 98.** he observes, *The language of comedy receives its poetic Air not by departing from the ordinary forms of speech, but by keeping more close to them.* So that where we almost lose Sight of Poetry, the Traces of it are preserved by Imitation. Upon the whole 1. we see *Plato* and *Aristotle* use Imitation in a larger Sense than Dr. *Pemberton* was aware of; and 2. the Doctor naturally falls into the Sentiments of both, while he opposes one of them.

*Vossius*, it seems, and *Dacier* go farther, and suppose that *Aristotle* makes *Poetry* consist in the Imitation of *ACTIONS* only. But the Words, **c. 2.** as Dr. *Trapp* observes, very well bear another Sense, *πειδη μιμενται ου μιμουμενοι πορθοντας*, &c. *Since Imitators, or Poets imitate Actions, i.e. as well as other things; or possibly thus, joining ποθητοιδαζ to μιμουμενοι, since those that imitate Actions are Imitators,—such Actions, he goes on, must be either good or bad.*

As to *Dacier*, I cannot well make him consistent with himself: *Aristotle*, says he, **c. 2. rem. 1.** *lays it down as an undoubted Principle, that ALL those that imitate, imitate Actions; and indeed it is so, for there is nothing else but Actions which can be imitated.* And yet upon *Aristotle's* saying that Music is Imitation, he observes, that *whatever employs means to shew and represent ANY SUBJECT as naturally as may be, whether it DOES REALLY EXIST or no, is called Imitation.* Does he by *Actions* above mean *Effects*? *Aristotle*, it must be own'd, instances in *Actions* as the Objects of Poetic Imitation, being to treat of Epic and Dramatic Poetry particularly. But he ascribes the Rise of Poetry in general to the Desire of Imitation, and the Pleasure we take in comparing the Likeness of Copies with their Originals. And this Faculty surely is exercised not only in viewing the Description of a Man, but of a Mountain; not only in representing the Conflicts of Passion, but

*A painted Meadow and a purling Stream.*

**P. 154. l. 10, 11, r. thus**

*Tartuffe* in *English* freely I resign;  
*The Excrement is his, the Food was mine.*

**P. 303. l. 2.** *add this Note, I make no Doubt, but for υπαγγελιαζ the former being never used for Narration, the latter more than once by Aristotle, as c. 2. απαγγελιαζ, and c. 6. οτε μεν απαγγελλοντα*

**P. 333.** Note † change [*thus*] *Bossu* distinguishes very clearly, and to the same Purpose with Dr. *Trapp*, between the Narration the Poet himself makes, and that which he represents the Hero to make. In the former View, the Action of the *Odyssee* takes up Eight Years and six Months, and the *Aeneid* almost seven Years. But in the latter, *Bossu* reduces the *Odyssey* to fifty eight Days; and the *Aeneis* either to a Year and somewhat more, or else to a single Campaign, beginning where Dr. *Trapp* does. See *Bossu* Book II. ch. xviii. and Book III. c. xii.

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## ***Just Published.***

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*Selectæ e profanis Scriptoribus Historiæ, quibus admista sunt varia honeste vivendi Præcepta, ex iisdem Scriptoribus deprompta. Editio altera.*

Mons. *Rollin*, in his *Method of Studying the Belles Lettres*, Vol. I, p. 84, concludes a very advantageous Character of this Work in the following Words:

"I know of no Book, which may be more useful, and at the same time more agreeable to Youth. It contains excellent Principles of Morality, collected with great Order and Judgment, with very affecting Passages of History upon every Article."

### ***Transcriber Notes:***

1. All footnotes are treated the same. The above reference to symbols and letters no longer applies.
2. All footnotes are simply in numerical order.
3. The relatively arbitrary use of capitals letters by the author throughout the text, is preserved, as is the original spelling.

**FOOTNOTES:**

- [1] The Dean and Chapter of *Durham*.
- [2] The Reverend Dr. *Fitzherbert Adams*, Prebendary of *Durham*.
- [3] It is a known Saying, Ὁ Θεος γεωμετρει, — *God performs the Office of a Geometrician*.
- [4] Pro Arch. Poeta, c. v.
- [5] The Reverend Dr. *William Lancaster*, S. T. P. Head of *Queen's College*, and at that Time Vice-chancellor of *Oxford*.
- [6] Voss. de Art. Poet. &c. p. 21.
- [7] Περὶ ποιητικῆς, cap. 2.
- [8] cap. 1.
- [9] De Art. Poet. V. 33.
- [10] Ποιεῶ, in the *Doric* and *Æolic* Dialects is writ ποεῶ, whence Ποητεῶ, *Poeta*. See *Chishul's Inscript. Sigea*, § ult. A *Maker* in our own Language under Queen *Elizabeth*, was the common Appellation for a Poet, agreeably to the *Greeks*, with whom, likewise, the Verb ποιεῶ simply signified to *make Verses*. See *Taylor's Lysias*, Ed. 4to, p. 27.
- [11] In Aristot. Poet. c. 1.
- [12] De Art. Poet. p. 7, 8.
- [13] P. 13.
- [14] See Voss. de Art. Poet. p. 11.
- [15] De Art. Poet. v. 333.
- [16] De Art. Poet. p. 78, 79.
- [17] P. 80, 81.
- [18] Art. Poet. ¶ 408.
- [19] Ov. Trist. 1. El. 1.
- [20] Take a remarkable Instance from Mr. *Dryden's Love for Love*, where, from making use of a seeming Metaphor, he is drawn into a false Thought:
- Her Words were like soft Flakes of falling Snow,  
Which MELTED as they fell.*
- If her Words died away, as Snow *melts*, neutrally, 'tis no great Recommendation of them. But the Idea that should be conveyed to the Reader is, that they *melted* the Hearer, as they fell; and then the Comparison is spoil'd, and may more truly be applied to the Conception of the Poet, which melts away by the Force of Reason, as Snow does by the Approach of the Sun.
- [21] Hor. & Virg. passim.
- [22] Æn. I. 323.
- [23] Geor. I. 512.
- [24] Sat. VIII. 58.
- [25] Hor. L. 1. Od. 25.
- [26] Lib. 2. Od. 4.
- [27] Od. 3.
- [28] Lib. 1. Od. 5.
- [29] Lib. 2. Od. 2.
- [30] Lib. 2. Od. 8.
- [31] Lib. 1. Sat. 4. ¶ 62.
- [32] Lib. 2. Od. 10.
- [33] Geor. I. 45.
- [34] Geor. II. 34.
- [35] ¶ 540.
- [36] Æn. XI. 1.
- [37] II. 50.
- [38] Eclog. II. 8.
- [39] Eclog. I. 83.

- [40] Geor. I. 43.  
[41] Eclog. VII. 47.  
[42] Geor. I. 7.  
[43] Geor. II. 108.  
[44] Hor. 1. Od. 6.  
[45] L. 2. Od. 9  
[46] L. 2. Od. 9  
[47] Lib. 2. Od. 8.  
[48] 'Tis the Business of the Poet to give *Life, Motion, or Sound* to almost every Thing he describes, which in Oratory would be ridiculous: Thus, for Example, put into Prose, *Juvenal's*—*jam tum mihi barba sonabat*, or *Virgil's* Description of an Oak grafted on an Elm,—*Glandemque sues fregere sub ulmis*; with these lively Images you would gain the Reader's Smile, not his Admiration.  
[49] Geor. I. 471.  
[50] Æn. IV. 1.  
[51] ¶ 65.  
[52] ¶ 77.  
[53] ¶ 82.  
[54] ¶ 462.  
[55] VI. 595.  
[56] Geor. II. 47.  
[57] ¶ 51.  
[58] ¶ 332.  
[59] Æn. VII. 793.  
[60] XII. 283.  
[61] Metamorph. I. 292.  
[62] II. 521.  
[63] ¶ 522.  
[64] L. VI. 193.  
[65] L. III. 424.  
[66] ¶ 463.  
[67] Geor. II. 32.  
[68] ¶ 69.  
[69] Metam. L. VI. 223.  
[70] Geor. I. 84.  
[71] Geor. II. 73.  
[72] Geor. IV. 506  
[73] Eclog. III. 45.  
[74] Ec. ¶ 82.  
[75] Æn. V. 481.  
[76] ¶ 169.  
[77] ¶ 211.  
[78] ¶ 216.  
[79] ¶ 270.  
[80] Geor. I. 281.  
[81] Æn. IV. 361.  
[82] ¶ 486.  
[83] ¶ 498.  
[84] ¶ 505.  
[85] ¶ 115.  
[86] Geor. IV. 493.  
[87] L. III. 539.  
[88] Æn. I. 55.  
[89] Æn. VII. 25.

- [90] Metam. II. 112.
- [91] Geor. III. 494.
- [92] ❧ 520.
- [93] Psal. cxxxvii.
- [94] Metam. I. 468.
- [95] L. II. 9, 10.
- [96] ❧ 122.
- [97] ❧ 229.
- [98] What can be said for them, see in Mr. *Pope's* Preface to the *Iliad*.
- [99] ❧ 273.
- [100] Æn. III. 658.
- [101] L. VIII. 621, 622.
- [102] VIII. 364.
- [103] IX. 205.
- [104] VIII. 729.
- [105] Æn. II. 298.
- [106] Art. Poet. ❧ 93.
- [107] Æn. II. 601.
- [108] ❧ 608.
- [109] ❧ 620.
- [110] XII. 697.
- [111] L. III. Od. 3.
- [112] De Tertio Consulat. Honorii.
- [113] In Probin. & Olybr. Consulat.
- [114] De rapt. Pros. L. I.
- [115] In Eutrop. L. II.
- [116] Equus Max. Domit.
- [117] L. I. Od. 3.
- [118] Od. 7.
- [119] Hor. Serm. I. L. 1.
- [120] Epist. I. L. 1.
- [121] Am. L. I. Eleg. 1.
- [122] Met. L. I. 204.
- [123] Mr. *Addison*, not far from this Place, sinks in his Translation too much in the same Manner:
- Mean while, the restless Horses neigh'd aloud,  
Breathing out Fire, and *pawing where they stood*.
- [124] L. II. 167.
- [125] ❧ 171.
- [126] L. IV. 144.
- [127] L. II. 447.
- [128] L. VII. 148.
- [129] Eclog. III. 25.
- [130] ❧ 90.
- [131] Geor. I. 476.
- [132] ❧ 481.
- [133] Lib. I. Sat. IV. 45.
- [134] Lib. I. Ep. II. ❧ 40.
- [135] Æn. VI. 869.
- [136] Æn. V. 273.
- [137] Geor. IV. 359.
- [138] Art. Poet. ❧ 309.
- [139] See the Preface to Monsieur *Boileau's* Works.
- [140] Act 1. Sc. 1.
- [141] Æn. II. 554.

- [142] Lib. VII.
- [143] Anthol. Poem. Ital.
- [144] *Boileau*.
- [145] Lib. VIII. Epig. 21.
- [146] Lib. IV. Od. 5.
- [147] Lib. XI. Epig. 92.
- [148] Περὶ ὕψους, **Υ** 43.
- [149] Virg. Eclog. II. **Υ** 46.
- [150] **Υ** 54.
- [151] Περὶ ὕψους, **Υ** 8.
- [152] Geor. II. 475.
- [153] Περὶ ὕψους, **Υ** 8.
- [154] **Υ** 45.
- [155] **Υ** 77.
- [156] **Υ** 98.
- [157] Ovid. Epist. II. **Υ** 49.
- [158] Met. L. VII. **Υ** 9.
- [159] **Υ** 9.
- [160] **Υ** 20.
- [161] **Υ** 25.
- [162] **Υ** 305.
- [163] **Υ** 362.
- [164] **Υ** 412.
- [165] **Υ** 419.
- [166] **Υ** 373.
- [167] **Υ** 425.
- [168] **Υ** 380.
- [169] **Υ** 492.
- [170] Περὶ ὕψους, § 15.
- [171] Ibid.
- [172] Ibid.
- [173] Æn. IV. 469.
- [174] **Υ** 465.
- [175] II. VI. 466.
- [176] See his Note on the Place, **Υ** 595.
- [177] Æn. VIII. 630.
- [178] **Υ** 8.
- [179] L. IV. **Υ** 93.
- [180] Met. L. III. **Υ** 654.
- [181] Æn. L. IV. **Υ** 663.
- [182] **Υ** 456.
- [183] Lib. II. Epig. 58.
- [184] P. 56.
- [185] **Υ** 407.
- [186] Sat. III. 236.
- [187] Sat. X. 218.
- [188] **Υ** 387.
- [189] See, more especially, Mr. *Waller's* Poems.
- [190] Περὶ ὕψους, § 32.
- [191] Ovid. Ep. IV. 1.



- [192] Metam. IX. 529.
- [193] Ep. XIX. 97.
- [194] Lib. II. Epist. 1.
- [195] Æn. XII. 435.
- [196] Lib. XI. ¶ 419.
- [197] Geor. IV. 488.
- [198] ¶ 354.
- [199] ¶ 47.
- [200] Ovid. Ep. XV. 39.
- [201] Lib. de Spect. Epig. 3.
- [202] Ep. III. 7.
- [203] Lib. VIII. Epig. 19.
- [204] Andr. I. 3.
- [205] Sat. X. 122.
- [206] Metam. L. II. ¶ 627.
- [207] De Art. Poet ¶ 270.
- [208] Περὶ ὕψους, § 35.
- [209] Lucret. Lib. I. ¶ 73.
- [210] Æn. III. 571.
- [211] Æn. XII. 634.
- [212] ¶ 861.
- [213] ¶ 867.
- [214] De Art. Poet. ¶ 9.
- [215] *Vossius's* Division is here hinted at, but, I think, not clearly express'd: Epigrams, says he, are twofold,
1. When a Person, Fact, or Thing, is simply describ'd.
  2. When somewhat is inferr'd from what was laid down, whether from its being greater, less, equal, or contrary.
- [216] Lib. I. Epig. 39.
- [217] Lib. I. Epig. 19.
- [218] Lib. III. Ep. 57.
- [219] Lib. IV. Ep. 18.
- [220] Thus applied, more out of Humour, than an ill Opinion of a certain Person's Success:
- Fortune, we yield to thy capricious Will:  
A Drop of *Ward's* can cure, a Drop of Water kill!
- [221] Lib. VIII. Epig. 65.
- [222] Lib. V. Epig. 75.
- [223] This has since been done in a Book intituled, *Carmina Quadragesimalia*, printed at *Oxford* 1723, 8vo. reprinted at *London* 1741, 12mo.
- [224] Too *poetical* often in another Sense, when they give Characters absolutely false; from whence the *French* have a witty Saying, *Il ment comme une Epitaphe*, He lies like an Epitaph.
- [225] P. Bouhours, Entretiens d'Ariste & Eugene, Dial. ult.
- [226] Geor. IV. 6.
- [227] ¶ 83.
- [228] Art. Poet. ¶ 77.
- [229] L. I. Od. 33.
- [230] Ov. Amor. L. III. El. 9.
- [231] De Art. Poet. 75.
- [232] Amor. Lib. II. Eleg. 12.
- [233] Lib. I. Eleg. 9.
- [234] L. I. El. 9.
- [235] Amor. L. III. El. 1.
- [236] L. I. El. 3.
- [237] Amor. L. III. El. 8.
- [238] L. I. El. 3.

- [239] Eclog. X. 72.
- [240] Eclog. X. 17.
- [241] Eclog. II. 60.
- [242] Mr. *Fontenelle*, and Mr. *Pope*, in their Discourses on Pastoral Poetry, are of *Scaliger's* Opinion. But I might observe, in Favour of Dr. *Trapp's*, that the most ancient *Greek* Poets, whose Names are preserv'd, are not supposed to have been Pastoral Writers. The *Greeks* seem to have been persuaded that their Hymns were the first Productions in Verse:  
See *Spanheim's* Notes on *Callim.* p. 2, 3, &c.
- [243] See Bull. Primitiv. & Apostol. Tradit. p. 20, 21.
- [244] Eclog. IV. 34.
- [245] ¶ 44.
- [246] ¶ 35.
- [247] Virg. Eclog. IV. 50.
- [248] VII. 1.
- [249] VIII. 37.
- [250] Eclog. II. 28.
- [251] Eclog. VII. 65.
- [252] ¶ 59.
- [253] Met. L. I. ¶ 415.
- [254] Lib. I. Ep. X. 21.
- [255] Lib. II. Sat. VI. ¶ 56.
- [256] Eclog. X. 9.
- [257] A small Mistake, which, I suppose, *Joannes Antonius Viperanus* led our Author into, tho' *Vossius* expresly guards against it. *Inter Latinos unum habemus Virgilium—quem liceat imitari*, says *Anton. Viperanus*; from whence *Vossius* imagines he never saw those two Bucolic Writers, (which is more than his Words necessarily imply) and takes Care to let us know, we have four Eclogues of *Nemesianus*, and seven of *Calpurnius*. Mr. *Fontenelle* gives no disadvantageous Character of both of them, and, in some Particulars, prefers *Calpurnius* to *Virgil* himself. *Fabricius* mentions seven or eight Editions of these two Poets, and they may be seen in the *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum*, publish'd in our Author's Time.
- [258] Sat. XIV. ¶ 47.
- [259] Hor. L. I. ¶ 25.
- [260] Mr. *Pope* has since struck out a new Scheme of Ethic Poems, in which he has deserv'd as much of the Moral World, as Sir *Isaac Newton* did of the Natural.
- [261] Virg. Æn. L. I. 746. & Georg. II. 479, &c.
- [262] Georg. I. 86.
- [263] Lib. I. ¶ 6.
- [264] Æn. VIII. 429.
- [265] Mus. Angl. Vol. I. & II.
- [266] Geor. II. 416.
- [267] Geor. I. 104.
- [268] ¶ 111.
- [269] ¶ 291.
- [270] ¶ 155.
- [271] ¶ 193.
- [272] ¶ 125.
- [273] ¶ 147.
- [274] Geor. III. 66.
- [275] Geor. I. 415.
- [276] *Nemesianus's Cynegeticon*, I suppose, is omitted, as being still of a later Age, tho' he had the good Fortune, as *Vossius* observes, to be read in the Schools in the Time of *Charles the Great*; and may still bear to be read in better Times than when Emperors could not write their own Name.
- [277] *Boileau*.
- [278] Earl of *Roscommon*, and Mr. *Pope*.
- [279] *Difficilia quæ Pulchra*.
- [280] Geor. III. 8.

- [281] Hor. Carm. Lib. I. Od. 12.
- [282] Son of *Sirach*, *Ecclus* xliv, 5.
- [283] *Deut.* xv.
- [284] Lib. III. Od. 1.
- [285] Lib. I. Od. 3.
- [286] Lib. II. Od. 13.
- [287] Lib. III. Od. 29.
- [288] Lib. IV. Od. 2.
- [289] Mr. *Edmund Smith*, of *Christ-Church, Oxon.*
- [290] Mus. Angl. Vol. II.
- [291] Hor. Lib I. Od. 32.
- [292] Lib. I. Od. 31.
- [293] Lib. I. Od. 1.
- [294] *Henry Purcell.*
- [295] Dr. *Croft.*
- [296] Art. Poet. ¶ 83.
- [297] Lib. I. Od. 6.
- [298] Lib. III. Od. 3.
- [299] Lib. II. Od. 1.
- [300] Lib. III. Od. 4.
- [301] Lib. IV. Od. 4.
- [302] Lib. II. Od. 3.
- [303] *Ibid.*
- [304] Od. 14.
- [305] Od. 2.
- [306] Lib. II. Od. 16.
- [307] Casimir. Lib. I. Od. 1.
- [308] *Ibid.*
- [309] Od. 5.
- [310] Hor. Carmen Seculare.
- [311] De Art. Poet. ¶ 220.
- [312] Instit. L. I. c. x.
- [313] L. I. Sat. X. 66.
- [314] Prafat. in Horatii Satiras, De Orig. & Progressu Satiræ Romanæ.
- [315] Mons. *Dacier*, who borrow'd the Observation from *Is. Casaubon*, should have mention'd some Authority for this Expression of *Leges Saturæ*; because *Vossius*, who allows the like Use of the Word, yet questions the Grammarians in this Instance. *Festus* cites, *Imperium, quod Plebes per saturam dederat, id abrogatum est.* Again, *Dein postero die, quasi per saturam sentiis exquisitis, in deditionem accipitur, "ubi per saturam valet collectim ac raptim. At non video, says Vossius, ut hinc colligi possit, fuisse Romanis legem ullam, quæ satura diceretur."*
- [316] Sat. I. 85.
- [317] Lib. II. Epist. I. ¶ 155.
- [318] Lib. I. Sat. II. ¶ 62.
- [319] *Casaubon* expresly says, that *Horace* imitated *Lucilius*; his Point was not to prove that *Lucilius's* Satires were of a different Kind from *Horace's*, but from *Ennius's*. Mons. *Dacier*, on the contrary, maintains, that the Satires of *Horace*, *Lucilius*, and *Ennius*, were all of the same Species. And yet, I think, very hardly reconciles his Opinion with Antiquity. He produces *Quintilian: Alterum illud & prius Satiræ GENUS, quod non solum Carminum varietate mistum condidit Terentius Varro. Quintilian*, says he, did not suppose that *Varro* liv'd before *Lucilius*: What then? why he imitated *Ennius's* Satire, which was *alterum & prius GENUS*, a different and prior *Kind* to that of *Lucilius*.
- [320] *Lucilius* made use, in the same Poem, of different Sort of Verses: *Ennius* of different Sort of Verses, but not in the same Poem: *Varro*, of Prose and Verse together: *Horace* kept to one Metre throughout his Satires.
- [321] Sat. X. 347.
- [322] ¶ 363.
- [323] Sat. II. 61.
- [324] He says no more than *Quintilian*, l. x. as cited before, *Satira quidem tota nostra est*; and even *Horace, Græcis intactum Carmen.*
- [325] De Orig. & Progr. Satiræ Rom.
- [326] Hist. Poet. L. II. c. ix. p. 41.

- [327] ¶ 225.
- [328] Instit. Poet. Lib. III. c. 9, 41.
- [329] *Vossius's* Opinion seems to be the Result of his Enquiry into the Original of Satire, which he observes to have arose out of the old Comedy. From whence he maintains, that the chearful bantering Humour should be still kept up, and not be forfeited for Moroseness: And for the same Reason, the Style should be near allied to Prose. In both which Particulars, and indeed in all the others which he mentions, he sets *Horace* for an Example.
- [330] Sat. I. ¶ 114.
- [331] P. 40.
- [332] Ibid.
- [333] Lib. I. Sat. IV.
- [334] P. 43.
- [335] P. 44.
- [336] Ibid.
- [337] I don't see how *nihilo inornata* would make more for *Vossius's* Sense. But do not *Horace's* Words imply, that a Writer of Satires should CHIEFLY use common Words, tho' he allows he is not always oblig'd to use no other? A common Style is the general Rule, tho' there may be some Exceptions to it.
- [338] P. 40, 41.
- [339] Sat I. ad finem.
- [340] Lib. II. Sat. I. ¶ 1.
- [341] ¶ 2.
- [342] Lib. I. Sat. I.
- [343] Lib. I. Ep. I.
- [344] Sat. I ¶ 1.
- [345] ¶ 17.
- [346] ¶ 19.
- [347] ¶ 158.
- [348] Modern Satires will always appear with an Advantage, which the Ancients want, *viz.* we are better acquainted with the Characters; which is a Reason why they will please best, not of their real Excellence.
- [349] *Oldham.*
- [350] *Boileau.*
- [351] De Art. Poet. ¶ 180.
- [352] Hor. De Art. Poet. ¶ 3.
- [353] Instit. Poet L. II. c. 7.
- [354] Virg. Eclog. VII. ¶ 5.
- [355] And yet it seems to be an agreed Point among many of the Learned, that the Plays of the Ancients were acted in a Kind of Recitative set to the Flute. See this proved by *Crusius*, in his Lives of the *Roman* Poets, in the Introduction to Dramatic Poets, § IV. Dr. *Bentley*, in his Preface to *Terence*, takes it for granted. See, likewise, *Cic. ad. Brutum*, § 55. The Objections which Dr. *Trapp* makes against it, would hold, in some Degree, against Chanting: And perhaps both may be accounted for, from the same prudential Reason, *viz.* That the Voice, when continued for some Time very elevated, naturally falls into a Tone, and yet it was necessary it should be very elevated in the ancient Theatre, which was very large, as well as in Cathedrals. To prevent the Disagreeableness of this, it was regulated by a sort of Music.
- [356] Hor. De Art. Poet. ¶ 322.
- [357] Juv. Sat. III.
- [358] *Æn.* L. VI.
- [359] Juv. Sat. III.
- [360] Lib. II. c. II.
- [361] L. II ¶ 380.
- [362] ¶ 139, —¶ 155.
- [363] De Art. Poet. ¶ 126.
- [364] The forecited Author, Mr. *Crusius*, thinks them to have been of great Use and Expediency to the Ancients; Their Stage being very large, and their Plays acted by Day-light, the natural Features of the Face, at such a Distance, and without the Help of false Lights, could not appear distinguishable enough, to express the several Characters. Besides the adapting Masks to each Character, very much contributed to the

Entertainment of the Audience; since hereby they could better imagine they saw the Persons represented in the Play, than we can, who are still apt to lose the Character in the Player; not to mention this other Disadvantage of the same Face appearing in the different Characters of Prince and Pimp, Hero and Villain, old and young." *Ibid.* Sect. III. So that what they lost in expressing the Variety of Passion, they gain'd in the Variety of Character.

- [365] De Art. Poet. ¶ 23.
- [366] ¶ 99.
- [367] ¶ 112.
- [368] *Shakespear.*
- [369] Horat. ad Aug. ¶ 166.
- [370] De Art. Poet. ¶ 131.
- [371] ¶ 119.
- [372] *John Earl of Rochester.*
- [373] *Nat. Lec.*
- [374] ¶ 125.
- [375] ¶ 128.
- [376] *Materiam vulgarem, notam, & e medio petitam.* But *Roscommon* above, and, I think, most of the Commentators, make *communia* to be the same with what follows, *ignota indictaque*, i.e. *common*, till you took them, such as were no-body's Property before. In this Sense, *Horace*, as Dr. *Trapp* says, contradicts his Opinion of new Subjects being better than old.
- [377] Ad Aug. ¶ 213.
- [378] Lib. I. Ep. I. 32.
- [379] De Art. Poet. ¶ 31.
- [380] ¶ 179.
- [381] Besides, in the ancient Tragedy the Chorus justified Soliloquies, who were supposed to be humane By-standers, where the Scene was laid: Among the Rules given to the Chorus in *Horace*, one is, that they should keep secret what they heard, *Ille tegat commissa*, Ar. Poet. ¶ 200.
- [382] Instit. Poet. Lib. II. cap. 5.
- [383] De Arte Poet. ¶ 192.
- [384] Instit. Poet. Lib. II. c. 5.
- [385] De Art. Poet. ¶ 189.
- [386] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. 5.
- [387] Inst. Poet. L. II. p. 24.
- [388] Nor, with Submission, does *Vossius* suppose them inconsistent.
- [389] Poet. L. I. c. 9.
- [390] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. 5.
- [391] Auctio Davisiana.
- [392] Poet. L. I. c. 9.
- [393] Περὶ ὕψους, c. V.
- [394] As to the prior Antiquity of Comedy or Tragedy, History must be our only Guide; for I think it cannot be suppos'd that either of them existed, before Mankind knew what State and Magnificence was. Both had their Rise from the Songs at the Feasts of *Bacchus*. *Susarion* is said to be the Inventor of the first, and *Thespis* of the latter. So *Marm. Arundel.* &c. And yet *Horace* says, *Successit vetus his Comœdia*, having spoken before of Tragedy and Satire; which is reconcil'd by supposing *Epicharmus* (who liv'd later than *Thespis*) the Inventor of Comedy in *Horace's* Judgment, because he was the first *Writer* of it. See *Bentley's Answer to Boyle*, p. 238, 199, 200.
- [395] Lib. I. Sat. IV. ¶ 1.
- [396] ¶ 281.
- [397] Inst. L. II. c. 27. p. 139, 140.
- [398] Poetic. L.I. c. V. p. 27.
- [399] P. 123.
- [400] P. 45, & 367.
- [401] P. 45.
- [402] P. 125.
- [403] P. 110.
- [404] No more than he himself was aware. He observes, if, as St. *Jerome* says, it is a Copy of

common Life, for the Improvement of the Audience, it need not be mix'd with Mirth, were it not for the Sake of pleasing them.

- [405] *Vossius* takes Care to tell us, that this Definition is suited to the Old Comedy; and gives us others from *Camerarius* and *Jul. Scaliger*, that comprehend the New.
- [406] De Poetica, cap. V.
- [407] In Poet. Arist. p. 58, 59.
- [408] L. I. Sat. X. ¶ 14.
- [409] Cap. V.
- [410] Andria, Act. I. Scen. penult.
- [411] De Art. ¶ 93.
- [412] Act. V. Scen. IV. 12.
- [413] Ad August. ¶ 185.
- [414] ¶ 168.
- [415] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XXIV.
- [416] Ibid. c. XXV.
- [417] *Lipsius* was of *Varro's* Mind, who says, in a Letter to *A. Schottus*, *Terentium amo, admiror; sed Plautum magis*. This blind Love for *Plautus*, led him into a strange Affectation of his Style, for which he was expos'd by *Henry Stephens*, in his Book entitled, *De Lipsii Latinitate Polæstra*.
- [418] Ad Aug. ¶ 59.
- [419] A Mistake. *Vossius*, L. II. c. XXIII. cites *Antonius Lullius Balaris* melioris notæ Rhet.
- [420] Lib. I. Sat. I. 69.
- [421] De Art. Poet. ¶ 220.
- [422] Another Reason against it is, that Τρῦγωδία never signifies *Tragedy*, but *Comedy* only. *Casaubon*, indeed, *de Satyr. Poesi*, says, it originally comprehended both. But his Opinion depends solely on the *Etymolog. Mag.* which is contradicted by all the other Lexicographers. The Authorities he produces from *Aristotle* and *Athenæus*, make nothing for his Purpose. See *Bentley* against *Boyle*, p. 306, 307, 308. Which I mention the rather, because the ingenious Mr. *Crusius* has not in this, and some other Instances, profited by that learned Author's Observations.
- [423] See *Vossius* Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XI.
- [424] Περὶ ὕψους, cap. VI.
- [425] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XI.
- [426] Besides the Chorus, the Monologues, call'd *Cantica*, were set to Music; the Dialogues in a Kind of Recitative. See *Crusius*, *ubi supra*, § IV.
- [427] Art. Poet. ¶ 179.
- [428] Ibid.
- [429] Art. Poet. ¶ 89.
- [430] ¶ 231.
- [431] Trist. L. II. ¶ 381.
- [432] C. XIV.
- [433] Ep. III. L. I. ¶ 14.
- [434] Act. III. Scen. I.
- [435] Inst. Poet. Lib. II. c. XIV.
- [436] Art. Poet. ¶ 93.
- [437] Sat. VI. ¶ 635.
- [438] Art. Poet. ¶ 338.
- [439] Ad Aug. ¶ 210.
- [440] Lib. II. c. XIII. p. 68.
- [441] I am at a Loss here to know what *Vossius* means, who seems to intimate, that in the *Hecuba* of *Euripides*, the Death of *Ægisthus* added to the Terror and Distress of the Play. But as *Agamemnon* himself is one of the Persons in the Drama, there could be no Thoughts of revenging a Death, which had not happen'd. In the *Electra*, there is an account of *Ægisthus's* Death; but that Incident is not of so much Consequence there, as *Vossius* seems to make it in the Tragedy he alludes to. It is therefore most probable, that what is here said relates to the *Electra* of *Sophocles*; where the concluding Scene represents the meeting of *Orestes* and *Ægisthus*, and the latter is conducted off the Stage, only to be put to Death in the same Place where he kill'd *Agamemnon*. A short Sentence has probably been originally left out in *Vossius*, which would have clear'd this Matter, in Words to this Effect; *Sic tristis exitus in Sophoclis Electra, ubi Ægisthus, &c.* It is much our Author, who, upon many other Occasions, has censur'd *Vossius*, should

pass over a Mistake of this Nature.

- [442] *Vossius* guards against all the Inconsistence he is here charg'd with, which is no more than this; That it is *essential* to a Tragedy, form'd κατά την τέχνην, to end unfortunately, but not so to one made *ad populum*. He borrow'd his Sentiment from *Aristotle*, De Arte Poetica, εστιν δε ουχ άντη απο τραγωιδιας ήδονη, αλλά μαλλον της κωμωιδιας οικεια *this is not a Pleasure that arises from Tragedy, but rather of the Nature of Comedy*, c. XIV. Ed. Heins. al. XIII.
- [443] Epist. Ded. to the *Spanish Fryar*.
- [444] Inst. Poet. L. II. C. XIII. p. 61.
- [445] Those Tragedies that are writ according to the *nicest Rules of Art*, he said before, upon the Authority of *Aristotle*, do **NOT** end happily: And upon the same Authority he says, in *such* Plays the Characters are neither extremely wicked, nor perfectly virtuous. *Aristotle*, as a Heathen, was right in his Opinion, according to Dr. *Trapp's* Theory; *Vossius*, who follows him throughout, is not inconsistent. As to the Opinion in general, I will not pretend to determine, since it is *dignus vindice nodus*.
- [446] They are very easy to be found in c. XIV. of *Aristotle's* Art of Poetry, according to *Dan. Heinsius's* Edition; c. XIII. in others. All that *Vossius* has advanc'd above, is only a Comment on that Chapter. Does *Vossius* say the *best* Tragedies are conformable to these Rules? So does *Aristotle*, ή μεν κατά την τέχνην καλλιστη τραγωδια εκ ταυτης της συστασεως εστι, p. m. 270, &c. That we are not affected with Compassion or Terror at the Sufferings of the Wicked? so does *Aristotle*, ουτε ελεεινο, ουτε φοβερον φαινεται το συμβαινον, p. 269. That a middle Character is to be chosen? so does *Aristotle*, ό μεταξυ αρα τουτων λοιπος, εσι δεγοιουτος, &c.
- [447] *Ratio* in *Vossius*, is not us'd for *prudentia*, as Dr. *Trapp* seems to take it, but in the same Sense with that noted Saying, *ratio ultima regum*, the last Expedient, or Resort of Kings. The Instances alledg'd illustrate this: *Medea* is forc'd to kill her Brother *Absyrtus*, to secure her own Escape; and her Children afterwards, to prevent them from falling into such Hands as would execute greater Cruelties upon them. The Circumstance of *Oedipus*, made unfortunate not by real Crimes, is very well describ'd by Mr. *Lee*:

To you, good Gods, I make my last Appeal,  
To clear my Virtues, or my Crimes reveal:  
If in the Maze of Fate I blindly run,  
And backward trod those Paths I ought to shun,  
Impute my Errors to your own Decree;  
My Hands are guilty, but my Heart is free.

- [448] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XI. p. 47.
- [449] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XIII. p. 65.
- [450] Ter. And. Act I. Scen. I.
- [451] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. XI. p. 47.
- [452] Poet. Lib. III. p. 373.
- [453] Both borrow their Solution from *Aristotle*, c. IV. who tells us, that the *Pleasure* the Mind takes is, in *learning* the Likeness between the Representation and the Original.
- [454] Lib. II. ¶ 1.
- [455] See this beautifully illustrated, in Mr. *Pope's* *Ethic Epistles*, III. 270, &c.
- [456] Mr. *Addison* has treated this Subject with great Accuracy, in *The Spectator*, Vol VI. No. 418.
- [457] Preface to my *English* Translation of *Virgil's Aeneis*.
- [458] Ibid.
- [459] The Reader will understand this Distinction much better by the Examples which the Author has mention'd in his Preface to the *Aeneis*; and I shall, for that Reason, take the Liberty to transcribe some of them. "The Storm, in the first Book of *Virgil*, driving the Fleet on the Coast of *Carthage*, is an Incident, not an Episode, because the Hero himself, and the whole Body of his Forces, are concern'd in it; and so it is a direct, and not a collateral Part of the main Action. The Adventures of *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, in the 9th Book, are Episodes, not Incidents; *i.e.* not direct Parts of the main Action."
- [460] Thus prov'd by *Bossu*: The *Iliad* begins with the Plague, which lasts ten Days. The Poet allows for the Recovery of the *Grecians* 10, Battles that follow 5, Funeral Rites of *Patroclus* 11, and of *Hector* 11; in all, 47.
- [461] The *Odyssey*, according to the same Author, Book III. c. XII. takes up 58 Days. And the *Aeneis* is reduc'd within half a Year, or a single Campaign, beginning where Dr. *Trapp* does. I know not how *Bossu* came to be so misrepresented.
- [462] Art. Poet. ¶ 73.
- [463] Book II. c. XIX.
- [464] ¶ 103.
- [465] De Art. Poet. ¶ 121.
- [466] Ibid. ¶ 121.
- [467] Περι Ποιητικης, cap. XXIII.
- [468] *AEn.* L. III. ¶ 26.

- [469] ¶ 34.
- [470] ¶ 59.
- [471] II. XIX. ¶ 407.
- [472] Æn. III. 664.
- [473] Ibid. 672.
- [474] Æn. VII. 808.
- [475] Περὶ Ποιητικῆς, c. IX.
- [476] Ibid.
- [477] Lib I. Ep. II. 3.
- [478] De Art. ¶ 317.
- [479] ¶ 73.
- [480] Lib. I. Sat. IV. 43.
- [481] De Art. Poet. ¶ 335.
- [482] Ibid. 23.
- [483] See p. 45. of the Author's Preface to the *Æneis*, where the Comparison between these two Poets is drawn out at large. As the Case is commonly stated, *Homer* excell'd in *Fire* and *Invention*, and *Virgil* in Judgment; but Dr. *Trapp* does not allow *Homer's* Superiority in any Respect. "It is a great Error (says he) to think that all Fire consists in quarrelling and fighting, as do three Parts in four of *Homer's*, in his *Iliad*. The Fire we are speaking of is Spirit and Vivacity, Energy of Thought and Expression, which Way soever it affects; whether it fires us by Anger, or otherwise, nay, tho' it does not fire us at all, but even produces a quite contrary Effect. However it may sound like a Paradox, it is the Property of this poetical Flame, to chill us with Horror, and make us weep with Pity, as well as kindle us with Indignation, Love, or Glory. Not that *Virgil* is deficient in that Sort of Fire, the fierce, the rapid, the fighting."
- Mr. *Pope's* Sentiments of these two Poets are somewhat different; the Reader shall have the Pleasure of comparing them; "This Fire (says he) is discern'd in *Virgil*, but discern'd as thro' a Glass, reflected, and more shining than warm, but every where equal and constant: In *Lucan*, and *Statius*, it bursts out in sudden, short, and interrupted Flames: In *Milton* it glows like a Furnace, kept to an uncommon Fierceness by the Force of Art: In *Shakespear*, it strikes before we are aware, like an accidental Fire from Heaven: But in *Homer*, and in him only, it burns every where clearly, and every where irresistibly." *Pope's* Translation of *Homer's Iliad*. Dr. *Trapp* criticizes on this Passage.
- [484] Lib. III. Ep. VII.
- [485] Thebaid. L. X.
- [486] De Art. Poet. 132.
- [487] Lib. I. Ep. XIX. 19.
- [488] Lucret. IV. 1.

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